

Use Week of:

Unit 23 • Session 3

Jesus Taught About Prayer

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Luke 11; 18

STORY POINT:

Jesus taught people how to pray.

KEY PASSAGE:

John 14:25-26

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit ministrygrid.com/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

Prayer is personal communication with God. Many people aren't sure how to pray or feel uncomfortable praying. To pray effectively, then, we must be taught how to pray. This is why Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray.

Jesus began with the Lord's Prayer, not to establish the words we should use but to show how we should pray and what we should pray about. Through prayer, we demonstrate our dependence on and faith in the Lord. We should approach God as a Father and pray for His kingdom first and then for ourselves and others.

Then Jesus told a story about a man who went to his friend in the middle of the night to ask for food for a visitor. The friend did not want to be bothered but because the man did not give up, the friend finally gave him what he needed. God is not a sleepy neighbor. If a grumpy friend will reward persistence, how much more so will God! He cares about His children and is happy to give us what we need when we ask.

In a similar way, a human father who loves his child would not give him a snake if he asked for a fish. Will God give us everything we ask for? No, but when we are persistent with our prayers, we can trust Him to answer according to His glory and our good.

Jesus used another parable in Luke 18: A judge was unwilling to grant a widow's plea for justice, but the woman did not give up. So the judge gave her justice. We should not give up praying if we have not received an answer from God. God is not like a wicked judge. When we pray consistently, God will give us justice and He will act quickly.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Taught About Prayer

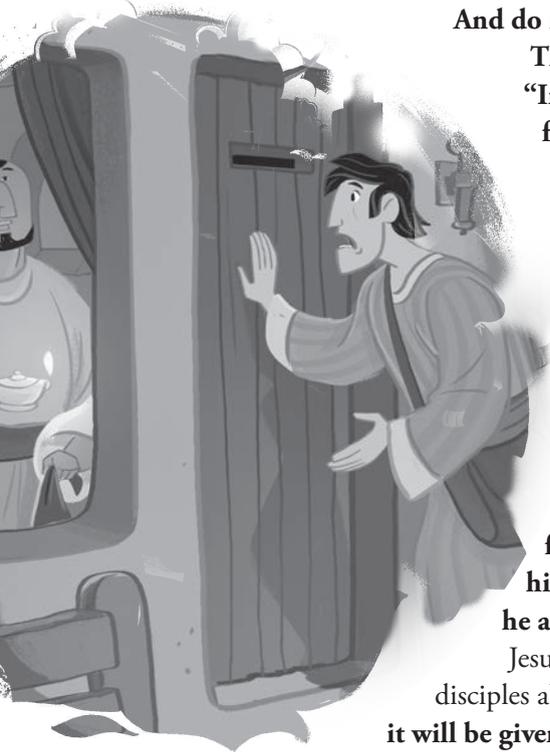
Luke 11; 18

Jesus had just finished praying when one of His disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” So Jesus told them, “When you pray, say, ‘Father, Your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us. And do not bring us into temptation.’”

Then Jesus told them a story. “Imagine one of you goes to a friend at midnight and says, ‘Friend, let me borrow three loaves of bread because a friend of mine has traveled to visit me, and I don’t have anything to offer him.’ The friend shouts from inside his house, ‘Go away! My family is in bed. I don’t want to get up to help you.’ **Even though the man does not want to help his friend, he will get up and give his friend what he needs because he asked boldly.**”

Jesus told this story to teach the disciples about prayer. He said, “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.”

Jesus asked, “Does any father, when his son asks for a fish, give him a snake instead? Or if the son asks for an egg, does the father give him a scorpion?” **Jesus said that fathers who are sinners know how to**



give good gifts to their children. God is an even greater Father! He gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

Jesus told another story—a parable—to teach the disciples to pray without giving up. “In a town was a judge who did not care about God or people. Over and over, a widow went to the judge and asked him to protect her from wrongdoing. The judge did not want to help, but after awhile he said, ‘I will give this widow what she wants so she does not keep bothering me.’”

Jesus pointed out that the unjust judge did what was right because the widow did not give up. “When people cry out to God day and night, will He ignore them?” Jesus asked. “No! He will quickly make things right.” Jesus wanted His followers to have faith that doesn’t give up.

Christ Connection: Jesus taught us to pray. Because of Jesus, we can pray to God as a Father and ask for what we need. We can trust that God is good and loving, and we can count on Him to do what is right.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Hold up props at appropriate times during the story (bread, an egg, a fish, and so on).
- **Move around:** Move to a different spot in the room to help distinguish between each of Jesus’ stories.

INTRODUCE the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to discuss if they like to talk on the phone. With whom might they talk?

SAY • If you want to speak with a person who is not with you, you can call that person on the phone. Modern technology even allows us to video call each other! But did you know that when it comes to speaking with God, things are even more convenient? We'll learn more about talking to God today.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Vowel Swap” activity page. Ask kids to use the code to add back the missing vowels. Then they will cross out any words that start with *A*, *E*, *O* or *U*. Words that start with *I* will remain.

SAY • Great job. Today we will learn that Jesus taught people how to talk to God in prayer. When do you think we can pray?

- “Vowel Swap” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: God gives good gifts

Instruct the kids to sit in a circle. Select a kid to start the game by saying a word that begins with the letter *G*. The kid to her right will then say a different word starting with the letter *G*. Continue to play in this way until a kid accidentally repeats a word, or cannot think of any words that start with the letter *G*.

SAY • You all did a wonderful job coming up with *G*-words.

Here are some other words that start with *G*: *God gives good gifts*. Today we will be learning about prayer. We will learn that God loves to answer our prayers and that God gives good gifts. Can you think of some of the good gifts God has given you?

OPTION 2: Cup telephone

Before the session, use a push pin or nail to poke holes in the center of the bottoms of the plastic cups. During the session, help kids cut string into approximately 6-foot lengths. Then demonstrate how to thread the string through the holes in the cups and tie a knot on the inside of the cup so that the string doesn't come loose. Allow pairs of kids to practice holding the cups so the string is taut and whispering or listening into the cups.

- plastic cups, 1 per kid
- push pin or nail
- string
- scissors

SAY • Those cup phones are like a direct line to your friend.

Even if you were whispering, your friend could hear you. In a way, that's like prayer. God can always hear our prayers. We will learn more about that today.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

[Leader enters wearing business casual clothing.]

LEADER • You know, after the last two weeks, I had a feeling you might be back in my classroom again. I'm glad you are here. Normally I focus on teaching school subjects—like math and reading—but I have really enjoyed teaching the Bible instead the last two weeks.

You know, Jesus was often called Teacher by those He spoke with. I wonder if He ever asked people to raise their hands before asking questions? Did you know that we can talk to Jesus whenever we wish, and we never have to raise our hands?

I'm speaking about prayer. Prayer is talking to God. We can talk to God all the time. We never have to wait for Him to be ready to listen. We can tell Him anything, too: how we feel, what we think, our desires, our frustrations, our questions. Anything you might say to your best friend or parent, you can say

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

to God. Prayer is an amazing gift. Jesus taught about prayer. I'd like to share with you what He said.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • As we get into our story, let's review the big picture question and answer we have been learning. *What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.* Jesus came to earth to live a perfect life, die on the cross for our sins, and rise again to defeat death. He also came to show us a perfect example of who God is. His teaching helps us know much more about God and what God's plans are for the world. Jesus helped explain how all Scripture points to Him.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • Two weeks ago, we learned about the Sermon on the Mount. **Jesus taught people how to live in God's kingdom.** We learned that the attitude in your heart is just as important as the behavior you show on the outside. Last week, we learned that **following Jesus is not easy, but He is worth it.** Jesus taught people that to follow Him, they might have to give up everything and would have to put Him first—even over their families or their own lives!

· Bibles
· "Jesus Taught About Prayer" video
· Big Picture Question Poster
· Bible Story Picture Poster
· Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 11; 18. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Taught About Prayer."

LEADER • One thing I love about how Jesus taught is His use of analogies. An analogy is like a comparison—a brief example used to help you understand something.

Each time Jesus gave an example of a human who gives something good to another human, He reminded people that God is much greater than a human. If humans—who are broken by sin and often choose wrong, evil actions—will respond to requests when we are reminded again and again, we can be absolutely certain that God will answer our prayer. He always does what is good and right, and He never forgets anything.

Sometimes we pray and it may feel that God didn't listen or hasn't answered, but God always answers prayers. He may not do exactly what we want Him to do, but His plans are perfect. That means when God does something different from what you asked, His choice is better. Everything He does is for His glory and our good.

God loves to give us wonderful gifts. He sent Jesus to die for our sins, which is the most wonderful gift ever. We can pray in faith, knowing that God will give us what is best whether it's the thing we prayed for or not. God loves to hear from His children.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus taught us to pray. Because of Jesus, we can pray to God as a Father and ask for what we need. We can trust that God is good and loving, and we can count on Him to do what is right.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 23, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about whether there is a right or wrong way to pray. Guide them to discuss what they enjoy about prayer and why.

· “Unit 23, Session 3”
Questions from Kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Play the missions video, pausing the video as directed for prayer. Ask for volunteers to pray aloud for each request.

· “How to Pray for
Kesavan” missions
video
· list of missionaries
your church
supports

LEADER • **Jesus taught people how to pray.** He wanted them to understand how important it is. One way we can support missionaries is by praying for them. No matter where we are, we can pray for Christian workers all over the world. This week, remember to pray for missionaries all over the world, like Kesavan and [*names of missionaries your church supports*].

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 14:25-26. Then sing the key passage song.

· Key Passage Poster
· “I Have Spoken
(John 14:25-26)” song

LEADER • Jesus taught all kinds of wonderful things about God, God’s kingdom, and the Scriptures. It was more than any of us could remember or obey on our own. This key passage reminds us that everyone who believes in Jesus has the Holy Spirit living within. He helps us remember what Jesus taught so we can obey out of love.

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • God doesn’t expect you to pray special words. He will listen to your prayers however you offer them.

· “Just As I Am” song

He loves us just as we are and sent Jesus to transform us into new creatures. Let's sing to Him.
Sing together "Just As I Am."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You that You hear all our prayers.

Help us trust You to always do what is best. Give us faith to talk to You about everything we think, feel, want, and need. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Tip: Use sign language in your motions to increase inclusivity.

Develop hand motions to go with the key passage. You may use the motions for suggested phrases below.

- *Spoken*—Raise your index finger near your mouth, then move it away.
- *Holy Spirit*—Make your left hand into an O shape. Hold together your right thumb and index finger with the other three fingers sticking out. Move your right hand upward in a spiral away from your left hand.
- *Father*—Open your right hand wide and place the thumb against your forehead.
- *Teach*—Hold both hands with the thumb pressed against the other four fingers, like a pinch. Move both hands back and forth from your temples outward.

SAY • **Jesus taught people how to pray.** The Holy Spirit also helps us pray and remember Jesus' words.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find Luke 11; 18. Remind the kids that Luke is in the Gospels division.

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)
- paper
- pencils

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did Jesus say the friend would help his neighbor even late at night? (*His neighbor asked boldly, Luke 11:8*)
2. What did Jesus say a father would not give his son? (*a snake, a scorpion; Luke 11:11-12*)
3. Why did the unjust judge do the right thing for the widow? (*She kept asking, Luke 18:4-5*)
4. How do these parables encourage us to pray? *Guide kids to see that in each case, the person being asked was a sinner and still did the right thing. Jesus wanted people to see that because God is much greater than people, He can be trusted to hear our prayers and respond in the perfect way.*
5. Can you think of a time you prayed for something specific? What happened? *Guide kids to provide specific examples from their lives. Do not allow any kids to shame kids for asking for things that may seem silly or unimportant. Encourage kids to discuss honestly if they got the answer they wanted and how they knew.*
6. What are some things you are praying about now? *Encourage kids to share their requests with the group if they want to. Write them down. Offer time for the kids to pray for one another. Close the time by thanking God for always doing what is best. Challenge the kids to pray for one another throughout the week.*

SAY • Jesus taught people how to pray. Jesus wanted people to understand that God loves His children. He enjoys giving us the good things we need. We can pray in faith, knowing God always answers.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)**OPTION 1: Church planters**

Assign one kid to be the church planter and stand in the center of the room. Read the following statements, asking other kids to join the gathering in the center after each statement is read. Continue adding kids until everyone is standing in the center, representing a new church.

Encourage the kids to act out the statements as you read.

- A church planter prays and asks God to help build a church.
- A few friends join the church planter to pray and worship. They usually start meeting in someone's home.
- They invite more friends to come and hear about Jesus. They sing, pray, and fellowship together. They hear stories from the Bible.
- As people become Christians, they invite more and more people to come. They baptize new believers and more people start coming to find out about Jesus. Sometimes the group gets so big that they have to move to another building.

SAY • Some missionaries are called “church planters” because they start churches from the very beginning. They don’t actually “plant” anything, but they begin to worship with a few people and invite others to come. They don’t have to have a fancy building that says “church” outside. Kesavan’s church meets in a high school gym! Don’t forget to pray for Kesavan’s church this week!

OPTION 2: Prayerwalk

Explain to your kids what a prayerwalk is. Then, gather

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

your group and begin walking through the building, encouraging kids to pray silently or aloud as you walk. Guide them to pray for specific things your church needs.

SAY • Jesus taught people how to pray. Prayer is really just talking to God. We can tell Him anything, just like we might tell a trusted friend. He cares about how we feel, what we think, what we need, and what we want. Sometimes going on a prayerwalk can be a great way to remind yourself of other groups or places that may need our prayers too. You could even do a prayerwalk around your neighborhood or school, asking God to save the people who live or attend there.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

Note: A prayerwalk is an activity that involves walking and praying in the places you expect God to answer the prayers. During a prayerwalk, pray for others rather than for yourself.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.