

LESSON 4

PRAY WITH FAITH

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Hears Our Prayers

SCRIPTURE: James 5; 1 Thessalonians 5

GOD'S BIG STORY: As the apostles James and Paul encourage us, we are to pray continually with great faith, believing that God hears and answers our prayers.

WORD OF WONDER: But God has surely listened. He has heard my prayer. Give praise to God. He has accepted my prayer. He has not held back his love from me. —Psalm 66:19–20

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What's the biggest thing you've ever prayed for?
- Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story:
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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Pause now to read James 5:13–18.

When I first heard the term, *divine expectation*, I immediately fell in love with it.

The friend who used it was describing a tough situation. His wife was seriously ill and slowly growing weaker. And though he was juggling kids, a career, and serving as a part-time caregiver, he never left home without pausing to kiss his wife and then checking to see that her jogging shoes were by the door.

“We used to run every day,” he said. “I’m praying she recovers, and when that happens, I want to be sure her jogging shoes are where she can find them.”

That’s a guy who prayed with faith. He had faith that God is, that God was listening, and that God loved his wife. He trusted God wanted the best for his wife, and, as far as my friend was concerned, that best would include one day again lacing up those shoes.

This isn’t a miraculous healing story. His wife eventually died, and my friend eventually placed her shoes in a box he carried to a secondhand store so someone else could use them.

Praying with faith doesn’t necessarily mean God will say “yes” to your every request. But it does mean you trust He hears you and will respond. And it means you look for and praise Him in whatever response He gives you.

How will you faithfully pray with *divine expectation* today?

—Mikal Keefer

Children’s Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

First Thessalonians was written by Paul to the church in Thessalonica, and from early Christian history, James, the brother of Jesus, has been understood to be the author of the letter of James (Galatians 1:19). Both authors emphasize the need for faithful, consistent prayer.

WHAT?

These letters are very different in structure and purpose. First Thessalonians addresses the specific situation of believers who were concerned that Jesus would not return. James is a letter of general wisdom meant to circulate among different churches.

WHERE?

The letter of James is addressed to the “12 tribes scattered among the nations” (James 1:1), which may refer to all the Gentiles who believe in Jesus. Thessalonica, however, is located in northern Greece.

WHEN?

Some people think that 1 Thessalonians is the earliest written document in the New Testament, perhaps written in the late 40s or early 50s. James died around the year 62, and many scholars think his letter was written a few years earlier.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Jesus first taught His disciples to “always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1). Both Paul and James thus draw upon the teachings of Jesus in their statements about prayer.

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loopPlay high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be sure to move to their level and introduce yourself to any new friends. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

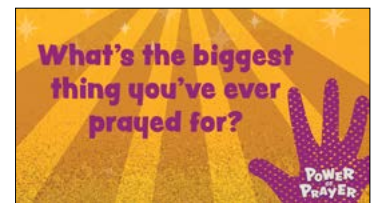
Welcome Question

Consider using a **30 or 2:00 Countdown** to let leaders and kids know it's almost time to begin!

At Your Start Time...

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

Enthusiastically welcome kids as you begin. At your service start time, call attention to the Welcome Question on the screen and invite Small Group Leaders to begin:



We all have things on our hearts that we bring to God. Today we'll discover that we serve an amazing God who hears all our prayers!

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS.**



Small Group

While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! I have a little experiment to show you today!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You listen to everything I talk with You about. (Kids repeat.)

You always hear my prayers! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)'



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words with these as a guided if needed: **God, thank You for always hearing our prayers. Whenever we come to You in prayer with praises, requests, joy, sadness, or anything else, we know You hear us. Help us hear what You have to teach us today. Thank You for being such a good and loving God! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you! Remember that some kids may have no idea why we worship or what we are doing!

WORSHIP VIDEOS: PRAISE, ALIVE WITH YOU

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE SLIDE

Gather kids together and hand a Bible to each one. Let them know today's portion of God's big story comes from the books of James and 1 Thessalonians, which are in the second half of the Bible near the back. Help kids find James 5 and 1 Thessalonians 5. If you have sticky tabs available, hand two to each kid to mark the start of each passage.

"Let's start by watch part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we will experience more of the story!"

VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY



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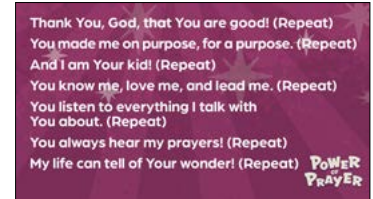
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VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY

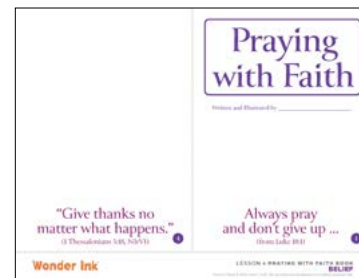


LESSON 4 PRAY WITH FAITH EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: writing and coloring utensils, medium-size containers (1 per 3–4 kids), clipboards (1 per kid, optional)

RESOURCES: *Praying with Faith Book* (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, print one *Praying with Faith Book* for each kid. Fold each along the dotted line to create a small, four-page booklet. Set them where the kids won't see them yet. Organize writing and drawing utensils into smaller containers, one for every 3–4 kids. If using clipboards, clip one book to each clipboard.



Enter the stage area and sit downstage center, looking thoughtful. **"What sort of things do you talk with God about? Prayer is connecting with God through talking and listening to Him, so I suppose a different question would be: What do you pray about? Allow time for kids to respond. Some people only pray at certain times of the day. Some people only pray when big things are happening in their lives. Some people hardly pray at all.**

Get up and retrieve a *Praying with Faith Book*, being careful not to show the kids the booklet yet.

But Jesus and His disciples believed in the importance and power of prayer, in praying with the belief that God hears everything and responds to us when we talk with Him. This is known as praying with faith—trusting that God hears us. Jesus taught His disciples to “always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1). He also promised that if two of us gather together in prayer, God will hear and answer us. Jesus teaches us that prayer is powerful, and today you will create your own book showcasing what it means for you to pray with faith!

Pass out a *Praying with Faith Book* to each kid. Pass out containers with writing and drawing utensils and direct kids to put their names on the line on the front cover of their books.

The first page of your book shows the book's title: “Praying with Faith.” At the bottom is Jesus' encouragement to His disciples: “Always pray and don't give up.” Prayer is powerful. It is how we communicate directly with God. And we can pray in so many ways! What are some ways you pray? Take some responses, making sure to describe different postures and attitudes (such as kneeling, head bowed, eyes closed, eyes open, through singing or writing, silently or out loud). On the first page of your booklet, draw a picture of yourself praying to God.

Allow time for kids to draw; then ask kids to put down all coloring utensils and look at you.

The book of James is a letter that was written to early Christians. In it, James tells Jesus-followers to pray for those who are in trouble and to praise God when they experience joy. He encourages the sick to ask the elders, or leaders, of their church to pray with faith for them, that God will heal them. God will also forgive people of any wrong things they have done. When we pray with faith, we trust in our hearts that God loves us and will do what He said He will do.

The book of James encourages us to ask God for big things—He loves us, He sees us, and He hears our prayers. God does not always choose to heal our sicknesses or answer our prayers in the ways we think they should be answered, but praying with faith reminds us that God hears us and is working.

Turn to the second page of your books. Who would like to read what it says at the bottom? Call on a volunteer to read “Pray for big things.” Write or draw a picture of some big things you’ve talked with God about or you want to talk with God about.

Allow time for kids to draw; then ask kids to put down all coloring utensils and look at you.

Leader Tip: Some kids may be new to church and unfamiliar with prayer. If they have never prayed before, that’s OK! Encourage them to write and draw things they want to pray about rather than things they have already prayed for.

A prayer that asks for big things like healing is a prayer of faith. James shares a story about the prophet Elijah in the Old Testament book of 1 Kings. The prophet Elijah prayed with faith that it wouldn’t rain in the land of Israel for three and a half years, and God stopped the rain from falling. The King of Israel and many of the people worshiped the false god Baal and believed Baal had power over the weather. But only the true God of Israel has the power to water the earth. So, when Elijah prayed again, God sent a downpour. We can have faith in God like Elijah and pray for big things!

God wants us to pray for big things, and He also wants us to pray all the time. In the book of 1 Thessalonians, Paul tells us to “always be joyful” and “never stop praying” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–17). The words “never stop praying” are Paul’s way of encouraging us not to give up in our prayers. We can pray about anything and everything in our lives—no matter how big or small. And we know that God always answers us in the way that is best, even when the answer is not what we expect or want.

Turn to the third page of your books. Who would like to read what it says on the bottom? Call on a volunteer to read “Never stop praying.” Write or draw a picture of something you’ve prayed for before and need a reminder to keep talking with God about it.

Allow time for kids to draw; then ask kids to put down all coloring utensils and look at you.

Because God always answers our prayers in the way that is best, Paul teaches us to “Give thanks no matter what happens” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). When we are willing to pursue God in prayer and trust His answer, we are truly living by faith.

Turn to the last page in your books. Who would like to read what it says on the bottom? Call on a volunteer to read “Give thanks no matter what happens.” Write or draw a picture of ways God has answered your prayers in the past.

Allow time for kids to draw, then ask for all coloring utensils to be put down and eyes to be on you.

God does not always answer every prayer the way we want Him to. But that’s not a reason to stop praying or only pray for small things. God invites us to pray big—to ask with trust and confidence that He hears us. We can pray about everything. We can pray courageously because Scripture tells us that God hears our prayers."

If there’s extra time, encourage kids to turn to a partner or share in their small groups their Praying with Faith Books!

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Jesus taught His disciples to "always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1). Later, as Paul and James wrote letters to encourage the church, they drew upon Jesus' teachings in their words about prayer."

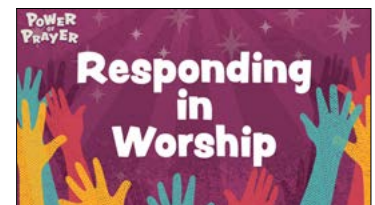


Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Give a special explanation for baptism and show the video. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

*****Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. There are no motions to this video. Kids should still stand and leaders should model worship like they would in adult service. Please refer to the Worship Posture Tutorial on the resource page before leading.**



Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. Use your own words, with these as a guide if needed

Blessing: May you leave today knowing that God hears your prayers. Be encouraged and strengthened in your faith today, trusting that God will never withhold His love from you. May you pray with faith to the almighty, perfectly loving God who listens and accepts all your prayers.

