

LESSON 1

THE LORD'S PRAYER

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6

GOD'S BIG STORY: As part of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches His followers how to pray by giving them a model to follow—what we often call “The Lord’s Prayer.”

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: Who are the people you talk with the most?
- Curiosity Questions
- Interactive Game: Plus One
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: Psalm 66:19–20
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Guided Prayer Experience



Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6

WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 66:19–20

Take a moment to read Matthew 6:5–13.

It's clear that the disciples knew about prayer. As Jewish men, they prayed often. Prayer was woven into their daily lives. But Jesus taught them to pray differently. He prayed with intimacy and confidence.

Jesus' prayers went way beyond rote repetition of familiar phrases. It was as though Jesus was talking with God, not at Him, and the disciples sensed the love that fueled Jesus' prayers.

That is what they wanted in their prayers. Not duty, but devotion. Not performance, but passion.

We still need Jesus to teach us to pray. If you're unsure that's true, ask yourself this: If someone was eavesdropping while you pray, how would they describe your relationship with whoever's on the other end of your words? Do you sound as though you're speaking with someone you know? Someone you love? Are you reciting or communicating?

I ask not to shame you (or myself—we're in this together!) but because in this lesson you have a choice: You can present the Lord's Prayer as a formula for prayer or as an invitation to intimacy with God.

Doing the first gives kids useful, straight-from-Jesus information—and that's great. But also doing the second gives them permission to open their hearts to God.

And that's when prayer really begins.

—**Mikal Keefer**

Children's Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Matthew is the first of the Gospels in the New Testament. While Mark emphasizes Jesus' miracles and Luke highlights Jesus' care for the poor and oppressed, Matthew focuses most on Jesus' practical teaching ministry.

WHAT?

Matthew 6 is part of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), one of the five major speeches that Jesus gives in this Gospel. In this speech, Jesus helps His disciples understand what true fulfillment of God's law looks like.

WHERE?

Matthew's Gospel does not tell us exactly what "mountain" Jesus gave the sermon on. An elevated location was ideal for giving speeches to large crowds, as it allowed everyone to see Jesus and hear Him speak.

WHEN?

The Gospel of Matthew places the Sermon on the Mount immediately after describing Jesus' miraculous ministry in Galilee (Matthew 4:23–25).

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Matthew's Gospel portrays Jesus as the prophet like Moses who was promised in Deuteronomy: "He will be one of their own people. I will put my words in his mouth" (18:18). Like Moses, Jesus instructs God's people on how to obey God and communicate with Him (Matthew 5–7).

Small Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray

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WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 66:19–20

Pre-Service (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: [Coloring Page](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

I’m curious ...

- **How do you learn to do something new?**
- **When do you talk with God?**

Leader Tip: Help kids understand that prayer is more than just talking to God. Prayer is communicating and connecting with God through talking and listening to Him.

Small Group Begins: Welcome Question 2–3 min

SUPPLIES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

As kids arrive, invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question:

“Who are the people you talk with the most?”

Right at your service time, move into Small Group time by sharing your own answers and allowing kids to talk about their answers.

Interactive Game: Plus One

Ask the your group to form a circle. **"Today we're going to play a game called Plus One. I'll start. I'm going to do a simple motion—anything I want. I think I'll start with this.** Clap your hands once. Point to the kid on your right. **Now it's your turn. You will do the motion I did plus one simple motion of your own."** Invite the kid to try it.

Leader Tip: Make suggestions if necessary, such as “pat your head” or “touch your nose.”

"Great! Now we will keep it going around the circle. Pay attention! When it's your turn, you need to do all the motions that came before you in order plus one of your own! Let the kids try it. When someone messes up the order or forgets, invite that kid to start a new pattern. Play for as long as time allows.

To play this game, we had to pay attention and follow the example of others, didn't we? You all did such a great job!

We can learn a lot from following the example of others. Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY. Jesus teaches us by showing us how to do it! We get to watch and learn from Jesus, just like we watched and learned from each other in this activity."**

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

Tell the kids that today they're going to listen to part of a message that Jesus gave His followers called the "Sermon on the Mount." Explain that they are going to learn how Jesus taught His followers to pray with a prayer we call "The Lord's Prayer." Ask everyone to turn to Matthew 6. Encourage adult volunteers to help kids find the passage.

Read Matthew 6:5–13 aloud.

- When Jesus lived on earth as a man, what did some people do to get attention?
- What do we call the prayer that Jesus taught His followers?
- What do you think these words mean: "May what you [God] want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven" (Matthew 6:10)?
- How is God like a perfect, loving dad?
- How can praying to God help us to do what is right?
- What did you learn about God's heart in today's part of God's big story?
- What things do you think matter most to God's heart?

"Today in God's big story, Jesus teaches us how to pray. He helps us see that God is our Father in heaven, who wants to hear from us and care for us, like a good and loving father. Jesus shows us how praying can help us understand God's heart and teach us to care about what God cares about. Right now, we get the chance to do just that—to pray to God the way Jesus taught us to."

Make It Inclusive!

The idea that God is our loving, heavenly Father is particularly difficult to accept for kids (and adults!) without positive father figures in their lives. Be gentle when explaining what it means for God to be our "heavenly Father." If some kids struggle with this idea, assure them that it's OK and they are not alone. God is not like any earthly dad because He is perfect. All of us have hurt in our hearts that He wants to heal.

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Ask the kids to share any praises or prayer requests they have. Remind them to think about the things that matter to God's heart. Invite the kids who are comfortable to pray out loud. Consider asking some kids to specifically offer praises and thanks to "our Father in heaven" and others to ask God to meet the needs that have been mentioned. Remind them that the Word of Wonder tells us that God listens to our prayers and loves us.

Leader Tip: Jesus teaches us to pray, "May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Some kids may not be familiar with what heaven is. Help them understand that heaven is God's space where He exercises complete authority, where He is in all and over all.

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Tell the kids that today they're going to listen to part of a message that Jesus gave His followers called the "Sermon on the Mount." Explain that they are going to learn how Jesus taught His followers to pray with a prayer we call "The Lord's Prayer." Ask everyone to turn to Matthew 6. Encourage adult volunteers to help kids find the passage.

Give a brief overview of the history and context using the info on page 3 of this guide.

Invite a confident reader to read Matthew 6:5–13 out loud while the other kids follow along.

- **When Jesus lived on earth as a man, what misunderstandings did some people have about prayer?**
- **What do we call the prayer that Jesus taught His followers?**
- **Why do you think Jesus taught us to address God in prayer as "our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9)? What does this name for God mean to you?**
- **What does it mean to pray for God's kingdom to come?**
- **What did Jesus teach us about asking for things we need?**
- **What did you learn about God's heart in today's part of God's big story?**
- **What are areas in which you need God's strength to do what is right?**

"Today in God's big story, Jesus teaches us how to pray. He helps us see that God is our Father in heaven, who wants to hear from us and care for us, like a good and loving father. Jesus shows us how praying can help us understand God's heart and teach us to care about what God cares about: providing for our needs, helping us forgive others, and giving us the ability to do what is right. Right now, we get the chance to do just that—to pray to God the way Jesus taught us to."

****Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces.**

Make It Inclusive!

The idea that God is our loving, heavenly Father is particularly difficult to accept for kids (and adults!) without positive father figures in their lives. Be gentle when explaining what it means for God to be our heavenly Father. If some kids struggle with this idea, assure them that it's OK and they are not alone. God is not like any earthly dad because He is perfect. All of us have hurt in our hearts that He wants to heal.

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Ask the kids to share any praises or prayer requests they have. Encourage them to think about their prayer requests in terms of things that are in line with God's heart. Invite the kids who are comfortable to pray out loud. Consider asking some kids to specifically offer praises to "our Father in heaven" and others to ask for the "daily bread" needs we have. Provide a quiet time for kids to confess their own sins to God and talk to God about forgiving those who have done wrong to them.

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 (NIRV)

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

"The Word of Wonder for the Power of Prayer series is Psalm 66:19–20. Today, we learned how Jesus taught His followers to pray. These verses promise us that God listens when we pray and loves to hear from us. "

Have the kids open to Psalm 66:19–20 as you display the Word of Wonder Slide on the screen. Read the verses together several times. Consider starting softly and growing louder and more excited on each sentence or phrase of the verses.

Talk about these questions:

- **How does it make you feel to know that God listens to our prayers?**
- **Jesus teaches us to praise God when we pray. How do these verses help us do that?**

Word of Wonder Activity

If the kids are not already in small groups, help them form several groups. **"Today we're going to have a little concert—and all of you will be the singers!** Give each group a melody. Suggested melodies include "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Twinkle, Twinkle," "I'm a Little Teapot," "B-I-N-G-O," and "Clementine." **Each group will sing the Word of Wonder to the tune I have given you. You may feel silly—that's OK!** Give groups time to prepare. Consider assigning an adult or youth leader to help each group, especially those with younger kids.

After groups have prepared their Word of Wonder songs, invite them to perform for everyone. **Let's hear your songs! I can't wait to hear all the ways you can share the Word of Wonder."**

Encourage the kids to cheer loudly for each group.

Leader Tip: Practice with one of the tunes ahead of time so you can demonstrate!

Large Group!

Responding in Worship: Guided Prayer Experience

RESOURCES: [Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Gather kids together.

Play the instrumental song “I Could Sing of Your Love Forever” from the [Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist](#) at a low volume.

“Today we have learned how Jesus taught us to pray. Now we can pray His words for ourselves, just as He taught them to His followers.

Find a place in the room where you have some space around you. You should be able to reach side to side without touching anyone. Wait while kids find their places.

I’m going to read a portion of the Lord’s Prayer from Matthew 6 then give you an opportunity to pray silently in your own words and thoughts.

Lead the kids through each section of the prayer.

Jesus begins the prayer like this: “Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored” (Matthew 6:9). **Jesus invites us to praise God—to honor His name. Stand with your arms raised and your palms facing the sky.** Pause while the kids move to their prayer position.

Spend a few moments silently telling God how great, powerful, good, and loving He is. After the kids have had a few moments to pray silently, repeat the opening verse of the prayer, asking them to repeat it after you. You may wish to break it into shorter phrases. **“Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored”** (Matthew 6:9).

Next, Jesus says, “May your kingdom come. May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). **Sit down and put your hands on the floor.** Pause while the kids move to their next prayer position. **Pray for the things that please God to happen here where we live just like they do in heaven.** After the kids have had a few moments to pray silently, repeat this verse of the prayer, asking them to repeat it after you. You may wish to break it into shorter phrases. **“May your kingdom come. May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven”** (Matthew 6:10).

After lining our hearts up with what God wants, Jesus says, “Give us today our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). **Hold your hands out in front of you, palms up.** Pause while the kids move to their next prayer position. **Talk to God about the things that you need each day and ask Him to give them to you.** After the kids have had a few moments to pray silently, repeat this verse of the prayer, asking them to repeat it after you. You may wish to break it into shorter phrases. **“Give us today our daily bread”** (Matthew 6:11).

Next, Jesus invites us to ask God for what we need most of all. He says, “And forgive us our sins, just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us” (Matthew 6:12). **Kneel and bow your heads.** Pause while the kids move to their next prayer position. **By bowing and kneeling, we show that we are sorry for what we have done and that we need God’s help to forgive others. Share with God the wrong things you’ve done. Ask Him to forgive you. And talk to Him about anyone you need to forgive.**

After the kids have had a few moments to pray silently, repeat this verse of the prayer, asking them to repeat it after you. You may wish to break it into shorter phrases. **“And forgive us our sins, just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us”** (Matthew 6:12).

Finally, Jesus reminds us to rely on God for the strength to do what’s right. He prays, **“Keep us from sinning when we are tempted. Save us from the evil one”** (Matthew 6:13). **When we sin, we disobey God and make wrong choices. When we turn away from the temptation to sin, we go in the opposite direction of sin. We turn toward God and run to Him. Stand up, then turn around and face the other way, showing that you want to go in God’s direction.** Pause while the kids move to their next prayer position. **Ask God to give you strength to do what’s right.** After the kids have had a few moments to pray silently, repeat this verse of the prayer, asking them to repeat it after you. You may wish to break it into shorter phrases. **“Keep us from sinning when we are tempted. Save us from the evil one”** (Matthew 6:13).

When you are finished, invite all the kids to join you in saying, **Amen.**

Make It Inclusive!

If you have kids with mobility challenges, offer prayer postures that don’t involve standing and kneeling. Instead, they can just raise their hands, point to the floor, hold out their hands, bow their heads, and point behind them.

Leader Tip: If you have kids who might struggle with engaging in this prayer experience, have paper and crayons available for them to “draw” their prayers instead.