

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
- STEM Experiment: God Hears
- 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: Prayer Stations

[Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

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

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WONDER TRUTH: God Hears Our Prayers

SCRIPTURE: James 5; 1 Thessalonians 5

WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 66:19–20

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.

Small Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Hears Our Prayers

SCRIPTURE: James 5; 1 Thessalonians 5

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 ...

- Who is someone you really like talking with?
- What is prayer?

Leader Tip: Allow the kids to share their definitions of prayer, then provide this definition: prayer is communicating and connecting with God through talking and listening to Him. We can pray out loud, silently, on our own, or with others; we can pray through spoken words, writing, art, or music.

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:

“What’s the biggest thing you’ve ever prayed for?”

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

STEM Experiment: God Hears

SUPPLIES: transparent jar or glass, water, shaving cream, bottles of different-colored food coloring (2–4)

Show the kids a transparent jar or glass filled three-quarters with water.

"The water in this glass represents heaven, God's space where He exercises complete authority and is in all and over all. But do you ever wonder if God hears all of our prayers? Spray some shaving cream on the container. The shaving cream will rest on the water's surface. Sometimes we think of our prayers, or if maybe something stops Him from hearing us, kind of like this shaving cream looks like it will stop anything from reaching the water. Do you ever feel like that? Allow kids to answer. But here's the good news: God always hears our prayers!"



Show the kids several small bottles of food coloring. **These bottles of food coloring represent our prayers. Our prayers are powerful, and they always reach God. He always listens to His children.** As you're speaking, pour the food coloring from each bottle into the container one by one, starting with lighter colors. The food coloring will permeate the shaving cream and reach the water. **Do you see how the food coloring reaches the water? In the same way, our prayers always reach God. God hears all of our prayers!"**

Leader Tip: For Older Kids. Consider allowing a few older kids to pour the food coloring into the container at the proper time.

Similar to what we just saw in our experiment, God always hears our prayers. We serve an amazing God who loves us, sees us, and listens when we talk with Him. We can pray to Him about anything in our lives, no matter how big or small. This is wonderful news! Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS."**

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

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. Ask volunteers to help kids find the passage

Read James 5:13–18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 aloud.

^{3/4}

- In God's big story today, what stood out to you about how we should pray?
- When you think about prayer, what do you wonder about?
- How is it possible that God always hears our prayers?
- According to God's big story, what kind of things can we pray for?
- What does it mean to never stop praying?
- When is a good time to pray to God?
- What are things that you talk with God about? What's something small you want to talk with Him about? What's something big you want to talk with Him about?

"Isn't it wonderful to know that God always hears and answers our prayers? We serve an amazing God! Let's take some time to talk to our great God in prayer, knowing that He is listening and wants to hear from us!"

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite the kids into a time of prayer. Ask them for prayer requests and praises. Consider sharing one or more yourself. Remind them that when they talk to God, He always hears their prayers.

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

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.

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

Ask for two volunteers to read James 5:13–18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18.

- In God's big story today, what stood out to you about how we should pray?
- When you think about prayer, what do you wonder about?
- According to God's big story, what kind of things can we pray for?
- Why is prayer powerful?
- What are things that you talk with God about? What do you want to talk with Him about more?
- God hears and answers our prayers! How can knowing this affect the way we pray?
- What does it mean to pray with faith? How do we pray with faith?

Leader Tip: Ask the kids if they can think of someone in the Bible who prayed a now well-known prayer. Examples could include Moses (Psalm 90), Hannah (1 Samuel 2), David (2 Samuel 7), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1), and Mary (Luke 1). Consider reading one of these to the kids.

"We serve an amazing God, don't we? It's so encouraging to know that God always hears our prayers. Let's take some time to approach our loving God in prayer, knowing that He is listening and loves to hear from us and answer us. These truths can encourage and strengthen us as we pray!"

Leader Tip: If needed, help kids understand that when we pray with faith, we trust in our hearts that God loves us and will do what He said He will do. Praying with faith reminds us that God hears us and actively works on our behalf!

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite the kids into a time of prayer, asking for their prayer requests and praises. Consider sharing a few of your own. Take turns praying for each kid. In your prayer, thank God for being a God who hears and answers everything the group brings to Him. This will encourage the kids and build their faith as they pray.

Older Kids – Notes Page

****Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces. This is an important way for parents to see what their kids are learning each way and have meaningful conversations at home!**

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

"We're learning today that God hears our prayers. The Bible promises this to us many times in the Old and New Testaments. Today's Word of Wonder from Psalm 66:19–20 is one of those times! Let's read the Word of Wonder together."

Read Psalm 66:19–20 to the kids as they follow along in their Bibles. Then invite the kids to say the verse with you several times. Consider saying the verse while performing fun actions, such as marching in place, walking in a circle, hopping up and down, or doing jumping jacks.

For an optional discussion, gather kids to talk about these questions:

- **God listens to us when we pray. What does this show us about Him?**
- **What are ways you praise God?**

Word of Wonder Activity

Help kids form small groups. Invite each group to review the Word of Wonder together and come up with their own motions. Encourage the kids to be creative with their motions. Once all the small groups have their original motions down, allow each group to say the Word of Wonder and teach their motions to the larger group.

Leader Tip: *For Younger Kids.* If younger kids in your group struggle to come up with motions, model some simple motions for them, such as pointing up at every reference to God, pointing to themselves at every reference to me or my, and clasping their hands together at every reference to prayer.

Large Group!

Responding in Worship: Prayer Stations

SUPPLIES: paper; writing utensils; coloring utensils; sticky notes or paper slips; butcher paper (optional); jar (optional); simple, handheld musical instruments (optional); praise ribbons (optional)

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

Ahead of time, prepare several prayer stations. Space them out so that each station is in a different part of the room, such as a corner or at a specific table. Various prayer stations could include the following:

- Art prayer station (where kids can draw their prayers using paper and coloring utensils, or butcher paper on the wall)
- Writing prayer station (where kids can stick their prayers on the wall or in a jar using a writing utensil and slips of paper or sticky notes)
- Speaking prayer station (where kids can sit/stand and pray aloud, but quietly, to God)
- Silent prayer station (where kids can sit/stand and pray silently to God)
- Music prayer station (where kids can pray through dance, singing, simple musical instruments, praise ribbons, etc.)

Gather kids together.

Play worship music from the [Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist](#) and show kids each prayer station, where they can pray to God in different ways. Invite them to choose one prayer station and spend the next few minutes there praying. Remind them that God hears their prayers whether they speak out loud or not!

Give kids several minutes to pray at the station of their choice. If time allows, invite them to participate at more than one prayer station to experience different ways to pray to God. Consider praying at one or two stations yourself and encourage other leaders to do the same. Seeing adult leaders humbling themselves before God in prayer can be a powerful model for kids to follow!