

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:** God listens to me and hears my prayers. I can praise Him. —from Psalm 66:19–20

**CURIOSITY**

**BELIEF**

**FAITH**

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God’s Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God’s Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing





## LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

### 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:** From 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).

LESSON 1 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 6

**WORD OF WONDER:** From Psalm 66:19–20

**Welcome****Slide: Series Welcome Loop****As kids arrive...**

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

**Video: Countdown**

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

**Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions**

Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat.

**Leader:** Good morning, friends! You may remember our friend Tac, the curious cat. He's always asking questions. He has a question for you. Are you ready?

**Tac the Cat:** Hi, kids! I'm Tac the Cat! I have a very important question today.

**Leader:** What's that, Tac?

**Tac the Cat:** I'm curious ... who do you go to when you need help?

**Leader:** Hmm, that's a great question, Tac! Kids, who do you talk to most?(Encourage the kids to share about who they go to when they need help.)

**Tac the Cat:** That is great to hear, kids! I fell down when I was climbing a tree today, and I asked my dad for help! He came right away and helped me.

**Leader:** Parents are great! Did you know we have a heavenly Father who is always here for us and wants to listen to us and help us too?

**Tac the Cat:** Yes, that's God! Sometimes, my dad may be too busy to listen to every single thing, Is God ever too busy for us?

**Leader:** No, God isn't ever too busy for us. We can talk to God any time. He is always listening!

**Tac the Cat:** How do I talk with God?

**Leader:** Talking with God is called praying. We'll learn more about that in God's big story today!

**Tac the Cat:** I can't wait to hear about that! I need to go climb another tree! See you later!

**"Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: Who do you think we can always talk to? Allow the kids to respond. Do you think there are times God is too busy to hear us? Allow the kids to respond. We all see and hear things that make us curious. Did you ever stop to think about how God can hear all of us all the time? Allow the kids to respond.**

**SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH**

Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY.** Today we'll discover how we can pray!"

**Declaring God's Wonder**

**SLIDE: DECLARATION**

Encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

**Thank You, God, that You made me!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

**Jesus loves me so much;** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

**His love for me is big.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

**The Holy Spirit leads me,** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

**And I can follow You.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

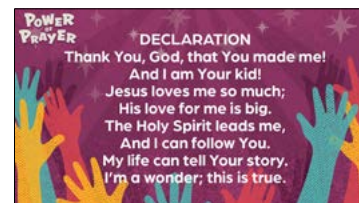
March in place like you're following the leader.

**My life can tell Your story.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

**I'm a wonder; this is true.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").



## Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use own words with these as a guide if needed: **God, we are so glad we can talk to You! Thank You for being there to listen to us. Help us learn how to talk to You. We invite Your Holy Spirit to be with us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Worship

"Today we'll learn about how we can talk to God. Let's sing and thank Him because He is always listening!"

**WORSHIP VIDEOS: PRAISE, THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE**

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible, which is the first book in the New Testament. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

### Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

**I open my Bible and what do I see?** (*Hands together then opening palms up, like opening a book.*)

**God's big story, waiting for me!** (*Point to yourself.*)

"Let's watch part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible."

**VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY**

## GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

"In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus sits on a hill and gives a famous sermon called the "Sermon on the Mount." Sometimes Jesus' teachings are surprising because they don't match the way the world tells us we should live. One of the things Jesus talks about in a surprising way is prayer.

### **Prayer**

is talking with God, and when Jesus lived on earth, some people used prayer as a way to make themselves look better than other people. They would pray in public places like street corners to try to get attention from others.

But Jesus says that attention was the only reward those people would receive. Rather than praying to get attention, Jesus tells us to pray in the privacy of our rooms with the door shut. Of course, Jesus is not saying that we cannot pray with others. Instead, Jesus encourages us to pray in a way that puts the focus entirely on God, not us. When we pray this way, God sees us and hears our prayers. Let's learn what Jesus teaches about prayer. Show how you look when you pray. Encourage the kids to do an action that shows how they pray. Encourage them to do any action they want; it doesn't all have to look the same.

God cares about how we pray. Some people in Jesus' day thought that prayer was a kind of magic. They believed they could make God do things for them by saying lots of words in the right order. They wanted to control God through prayer. Sometimes people today still pray like that.

But the type of prayer God wants is very different. Jesus says we cannot make God do anything by our many words—God knows what we need even before we ask. Instead, Jesus teaches us to pray simply and clearly. Jesus even teaches us a prayer that we can use to talk to Him. We call it the Lord's Prayer, and it comes straight from Jesus! To help us remember parts of the Lord's Prayer, we'll do motions with our hands.

You can help as we talk about the Lord's Prayer. In this prayer, Jesus encourages us first to refer to God as our "Father in heaven" because God loves us and wants what is best for us, like a perfect, loving dad (Matthew 6:9, NIV). Let's hold up our pointer finger. Encourage the kids to hold up one pointer finger.

Jesus tells us to praise God! This means to tell God how great He is! Next, hold up your first two fingers. Encourage the kids to hold up the two fingers. Jesus teaches us to pray for our own needs. Those needs aren't being rich or famous, or having the nicest clothes or the best toys. We should pray that God would give us things we actually need, such as food to eat, a home to live in, clothes to wear, and people to love and take care of us.

Now hold up three fingers. Encourage the kids to hold up three fingers. Jesus tells us we can ask His forgiveness when we sin—or do wrong things—and for strength to obey God in the future.

The next thing Jesus tells us to pray for is other people. Hold up four fingers. Encourage the kids to

hold up four fingers. **We can pray for God to help others who are sick, hurting, or need God's help.**

**Last, hold up all five fingers.** Encourage the kids to hold up all five fingers. **Jesus wants us to pray for ourselves. We can pray that we focus on the things that truly matter to God, like obeying our parents and showing kindness to others. We can understand more about God's heart and know how to speak with Him because Jesus teaches us how to pray."**

## Connecting the Wonder Truth

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

### SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

"Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

The book of Matthew in the Bible shows Jesus as the prophet—or messenger—that Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18:18: "He will be one of their own people. I will put my words in his mouth." Like Moses, Jesus instructs God's people on how to obey God and communicate with Him."

## Prayer and Blessing

Pray over kids and thank God for always listening to us.

**God, thank You for teaching us how to pray. Help us remember that you always listen to us, and we can come to you. Help us remember to praise you and ask for what we need. We love you. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them. Speak a blessing using your own words, with these below as a guide if needed.

**Blessing:** May God help you love the things He loves. May He provide for your needs each day. May you forgive others and be forgiven. May He always remind you how Jesus teaches us to pray.