

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

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FAITH

- Play Stations:
 - Sticky Prayers
 - Praying Hand Search
 - The Lord’s Prayer Coloring Sheet
- Word of Wonder: From Psalm 66:19–20
- Circle Time: Can You Hear Me?
- LARGE GROUP
- Craft: Prayer Sensory Books
- Responding in Worship: Prayer Stations
- Optional Additional Game: Jesus Says



[Power of Prayer Preschool Spotify playlist](#)



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

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: stickers with various images on them (e.g., houses, animals, people, sun, moon, stars, toys, food, hearts), or similar images cut from a magazine, white posterboard, marker, scissors (prep only), coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [The Lord's Prayer Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

"Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?"

Play Station: Sticky Prayers

Set-up: Set out stickers with images on them (e.g., houses, animals, people, sun, moon, stars, food, etc.), write "Things I Can Pray For" on the white posterboard, and hang the poster on a wall or lay it on the floor or a table. You can also cut out images from a magazine instead of using stickers.

Play: Read the words on the posterboard to kids: Things I Can Pray For. Let the kids add stickers to the poster to show things they can pray for. As they work, encourage them to share ways they can pray for each of the things they add to the posterboard.

Leader Tip: Stickers can be difficult for preschoolers to remove from the backing. Be available to help them if needed.

Play Station: The Lord's Prayer Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the Coloring Sheet. Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw someone they talk with often.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, tape

RESOURCES: Verse Hop Word of Wonder Sheets

Ahead of time, print the Verse Hop Word of Wonder Sheet and tape each sheet on the ground in order of the verse, a few feet apart. Kids will take turns hopping on each picture of praying hands while saying the verse.

Look at the papers on the ground. Each sheet has a part of our verse, and we're going to hop from one paper to the next as we practice saying our verse!



Make It Inclusive!

For kids with physical disabilities that prohibit them from hopping, allow them to toss a beanbag to each paper as they say the words. You could also print a separate set of papers, lay them down in front of the child, and allow the child to touch the papers one at a time while saying the words.

WORD OF WONDER

God listens to me and hears my prayers.

I can praise Him.

—from Psalm 66:19–20

"Our Word of Wonder is from Psalm 66:19–20. We're learning what it means to pray and how we can talk to God! God always listens to our prayers. He is never too busy or tired. We can always talk with Him. Jesus teaches us how we can pray.

Jesus says our prayers should include praising God, asking God to forgive us for our sins (the wrong things we do), asking God to help other people, and asking for what we need ourselves.

We're going to practice saying the Word of Wonder together."

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

- **GOD LISTENS TO ME**—Point to your ears.
- **AND HEARS MY PRAYERS.**—Fold your hands together.
- **I CAN PRAISE HIM.**—Hold your hands above shoulders and turn wrists back and forth.
- **FROM PSALM 66:19–20**—Hold your hands out together with palms open, as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What does our Word of Wonder say God does?** (He listens and hears our prayers.)
- **How does it make you feel to know that God listens to you and hears your prayers?**

God's Big Story / Snack

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

Read Matthew 6:5–13 from an NIV Bible, inviting the kids to repeat each line after you.

Circle Time: Can You Hear Me?

Have kids sit in a circle.

"I'm going to whisper something in (say the name of a child)'s ear. Then he is going to whisper it in the ear of the person next to him. You are going to keep whispering it to the person next to you until it gets back to me, and the last person will say it out loud. Ready?"

Whisper a phrase from the list below into a child's ear and encourage the kids to pass the phrase around the circle by whispering it until the phrase has reached the end. Encourage the last child to say it aloud. Play several rounds, starting with a different child each time.

Here are some things you can whisper in the child's ear:

"I can talk to God any time."

"God always hears my prayers."

"Jesus teaches us how to pray."

"Prayer is talking to God."

After each phrase, ask the child who said the phrase aloud to answer one of the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Was it hard to hear the phrase that was whispered to you?**
- **In God's big story, what did people do to make themselves look better?** (*pray loudly in front of others*)
- **Do you think it's hard for God to hear us if we are whispering or praying silently in our heads? Why or why not?**
- **What is something you think Jesus wants us to pray about?**
- **What have you prayed for?**
- **When do you pray?**
- **Why do you think it's important to pray?**

Sometimes it's hard for us to listen and hear, like we may have experienced in this activity, but God always hears us! That's why Jesus teaches us to pray to God. We can always talk to Him, and He is always listening! Whether we whisper our prayers or shout them, God hears all of them. Let's talk to God now in prayer!"

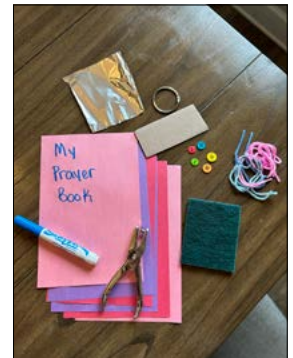
Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God for teaching us how to pray

Head to Large Group!

Craft: Prayer Sensory Books

SUPPLIES: construction paper (3 sheets per kid), scissors (prep only), hole punch (prep only), binder rings (1 per kid), markers, scour pads (1 per every 2 kids), soft fabric (3" x 3" piece per kid) or yarn (3" piece per kid), cardboard (3" x 3" piece per kid), aluminum foil (3" x 3" piece per kid), assorted buttons (5 different types per kid), glue or hot glue gun (leader only), string (optional, 1 small piece per kid), stapler and staples (optional)

Ahead of time, cut construction paper in half and put into books with six pages each. Use a hole punch to create a hole at the top left corner of each piece and use a binder ring to connect the six pages together. Instead of a binder ring, you can simply tie string through the hole or staple the books together. Make one book per kid. On the front, write "My Prayer Book." Cut the scour pads in half, then cut the fabric into small square pieces so there is one for each child. Cut the cardboard box and aluminum both into 3" x 3" square pieces, enough for each child to have one of each. Give kids the supplies for their prayer books. Each child will need one binder-ring-connected paper book with six pages, five different buttons, one half of a scour pad, one square of fabric, one square of cardboard, and one square of aluminum foil. Set out glue and markers for kids to share.



Encourage the kids to follow along with you as you guide them in assembling their prayer books.

"Today we're learning how Jesus teaches us to pray. We are going to make a prayer sensory book to help us remember some of the things Jesus teaches us to pray about! You can take this book home and use it to remind you how to pray.

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all different, there are so many different things we can praise God for. We can praise Him because He helps us. We can praise Him because He loves us, He is good, and He is kind. Like buttons connect pieces of clothing, prayer connects us to God. Encourage the kids to glue the five buttons to the first page of their paper book. If regular glue doesn't hold the buttons, you can use a hot glue gun (adult only) to glue the buttons (and the following supplies) onto the paper.



On the next page, we will glue the soft fabric or yarn. It's almost like a blanket, which keeps us warm when we're cold and gives us something to snuggle. This will help us remember to ask God for the things we need and go to Him for comfort. Encourage the kids to glue the fabric or yarn to the next page.

Next, we will glue down the scour pad. When you feel it, it is rough and scratchy, and it doesn't feel very soft. This reminds us that when we sin and make bad choices, it doesn't feel good, but we can ask God to forgive us for those things! Encourage the kids to glue the scour pad to the next page.

Next, we will glue down the pieces of cardboard. Is cardboard hard or soft? Allow the kids to respond. **Yes, hard! We probably know people who are going through hard times and need God's help, so we can pray for them.** Encourage the kids to glue the cardboard piece to the next page.

Last, we will glue down this aluminum foil. It is kind of like a mirror. When we look into a mirror, we see ourselves. This reminds us to pray for ourselves. We can ask God to help us forgive and love others, do what God wants us to do, and follow God! Encourage the kids to glue the aluminum foil to the last page.

Leader Tip: Have a leader available to help the kids glue and assemble books as you go through the talking points for each page. You can even use the book to pray with the kids.






You can take your books home to help you remember ways you can pray!"

Responding in Worship: Prayer Stations

SUPPLIES: toy musical instruments, play food, clean blanket, clean clothing items 2-3 mirrors per room

RESOURCES: [Lord's Prayer Sheet](#) (1 per classroom), music from the [Power of Prayer Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Print the Lord's Prayer Sheet and cut out each symbol. Cut these out. Tape each image to the wall at different spots around the room, so as kids travel around the room, they can stop and participate in that part of the prayer. Include items that correspond to that station near the symbol:

-  • Praise—Set out toy musical instruments, musical note labels glue sticks, and play music from the Power of Prayer Early Childhood Spotify playlist.
-  • Needs—Set out the play food, a clean blanket, clean clothing items.
-  • Forgiveness—Set up a posterboard with a cross drawn on it.
-  • Others—Set up a posterboard with people pictures drawn on it.
-  • Self—Set out a few mirrors

Kids can go through the stations one at a time or in groups with a leader. You can explain ahead of time what they do at each station, or place a leader at each station to explain as kids arrive.

- Praise—Kids will use the musical instruments to play music to praise God. They will listen to worship music that is playing and can sing and dance to praise and thank God. They can pray and tell God how much they love Him and thank Him for being so amazing.
- Needs—Kids will touch the play food, blanket, and clothing, and thank God for providing for their needs. They can ask Him to continue to provide for their needs.
- Forgiveness—They can look at the cross (or use a marker to draw their own cross) and thank God for forgiving their sins through Jesus. They can confess sins to Him and pray, asking God for forgiveness.
- Others—Kids can pray for people they know who need help.
- Self—Kids can look at themselves in the mirror and pray for anything they want to ask God for.

Optional Additional Game: Jesus Says

Have kids play a game that is similar to “Simon Says,” but with a twist. You will call out things Jesus did or didn’t tell us to do from today’s story. If Jesus *didn’t* say it, have kids give a thumbs down. If He *did* say it, have kids give a thumbs up and jump up.

Examples:

- Jesus said ... pray super-loud and in front of everyone. (thumbs down)
- Jesus said ... pray for God to help others. (thumbs up)
- Jesus said ... to ask for forgiveness when we make a bad choice. (thumbs up)
- Jesus said ... to ask God to give us lots of toys. (thumbs down)
- Jesus said ... praise God and tell Him how much we love Him. (thumbs up)
- Jesus said ... ask God for things we need, such as a home, clothes, and food. (thumbs up)
- Jesus said ... complain to God when we don’t get chocolate cake for dessert. (thumbs down)
- Jesus said ... we can ask God to help us obey and do the right thing. (thumbs up)
- Jesus said ... we can pray for someone who is sick. (thumbs up)
- Jesus said ... God always hears our prayers. (thumbs up)

"Wow, that was a lot of fun! Jesus said some important things in God’s big story today, and you did a great job remembering the things Jesus said and the things Jesus didn’t say!"

Leader Tip: Preschoolers don’t need to be “out” if they mess up. If they seem upset, encourage them to keep trying.