

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

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Play Stations:
 - Crazy Hair Prayers
 - Fizzy Prayers
 - Pray with Faith Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Bubbles and Phones
- Word of Wonder: From Psalm 66:19–20
- Circle Time: Sticky Review
- Craft: Bandage Prayers
- Game: Running Prayers
- Responding in Worship: Colorful Prayers
- Closing Game: Telephone Prayers



[Power of Prayer Preschool Spotify playlist](#)



INVITATION

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

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WORD OF WONDER: From 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.



LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

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WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 66:19–20

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: crayons; paper plates (1 per kid); marker (prep only); stickers

RESOURCES: [Pray with Faith 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 RBKids! 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: Crazy Hair Prayers

Set-up: Before kids arrive, draw faces with different emotions on paper plates,

enough for each kid to have one. You could draw faces that are happy, sad, worried, surprised, mad, confused, or afraid. Have several of each "feeling."

Play: Invite the kids to choose a plate that expresses the emotion they feel that morning. Give out different stickers for them to decorate the plate that they picked. At the end of play, you could hold up each of the plates and explain to the kids that we may have different feelings, but nobody is alone in their feelings. **When they finish, set aside the plates to use in a later activity.**

"It's OK to feel happy, sad, scared, or any other feeling. The best part is that we can pray to God when we are happy, sad, scared, or worried! We can pray to God anytime!"

Play Station: Pray with Faith 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 a picture of something they would like to talk to God about in prayer.



Curiosity Activity: Bubbles and Phones

SUPPLIES: cell phone (adult only), bubble solution and wand

Have kids gather around you and ask: **"If we wanted to talk with somebody who is not here at church today, how could we talk to that person?"** Allow kids to respond. If someone suggests a phone, hold up a phone and say: **Yes, we could call that person on a phone!** If no one suggests a phone, hold up a phone and ask: **Do you think we could use this phone to call the person?** Allow the kids to respond. **When we want to talk to somebody who is far away from us, we may use a phone. But what if we want to talk to God? Can we use a phone to call God? We don't need to use a phone to call God! We can talk to God any time simply by praying.**

Do you know how to pray? Sometimes when we pray, we fold our hands and close our eyes. We do this so we aren't distracted by other things around us. But we can talk to God anytime, anywhere. We don't have to have our eyes closed for God to hear us!

Use the bubble solution and bubble wand to blow a few bubbles. **When we pray, we can imagine our prayers going right to God, kind of like these bubbles as they float up. God hears us every time we talk with Him. Let's blow bubbles and think about talking with God.** Blow more bubbles and encourage kids to say some simple prayers to God while watching the bubbles. You could guide them in simple prayers, such as: "God, we love You!" or "Thank You, God, for our friends!" **It doesn't matter where we are or how we pray—God hears our prayers!"**

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, ball

WORD OF WONDER

God listens to me and hears my prayers.

I can praise Him.

—from Psalm 66:19–20

Gather kids together in a circle. **"Let's practice our Word of Wonder together!** Take some time repeating the Word of Wonder with the kids using the motions below. After practicing together a few times, show a ball to the kids. **I'm going to roll this ball to someone, and that person will say the first word of our Word of Wonder. Then you will roll the ball to someone else who will say the next word. We'll do this until we say the whole Word of Wonder. If you need help remembering the words, I will help you!"**

Roll the ball to one kid in the circle, and encourage that child to say, "God." Then have that child roll the ball to someone else, who should say, "listens," and so forth. If a kid receives the ball but doesn't know the next word, say the word and have her repeat it after you. Make sure everyone gets a chance to roll the ball and say a word.

Make It Inclusive! Some kids may benefit from holding an individual small squishy ball and repeating the verse with a buddy rather than rolling the ball with the group.

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 have you prayed and asked God about?**
- **What does it mean to praise God?**

God's Big Story / Snack

SUPPLIES: Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. **"Our God's big story today is from two letters written to the early Christians. The letters were written by two Jesus followers named James and Paul."**

Encourage the kids to say, "James" and "Paul."

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 books of James and 1 Thessalonians in the Bible."

Read James 5:13–18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 from an NIV Bible.

Circle Time: Sticky Review

SUPPLIES: sticky hand (or a piece of painter's tape rolled into an inside-out circle, taped to the end of a piece of yarn), scissors (prep only)

SUPPLIES: Prayer Story Chain Sheet (2 copies per SG)

Ahead of time, print two copies of the Prayer Story Chain Sheet (also used in God's Big Story) and cut apart the pictures. Gather kids in a circle and place two copies of the Prayer Story Chain Sheet in the middle of the circle, face down. If you don't have a sticky hand, cut a piece of yarn about 12 inches long and roll a small piece of painter's tape into an inside-out circle so the sticky side is facing out. Stick the tape to one end of the yarn and let the kids toss the sticky end onto the papers instead of using the sticky hand.



"In God's big story today, we made prayer story chains that will help us remember how to pray. Let's use some papers from our prayer chain to help us remember what we learned about prayer. Sticky hands are fun to play with! They remind me that when we pray, God hears our prayers, and our prayers stick! We are going to use this sticky hand (or sticky tape) to grab a piece of paper with a picture reminding us of prayer."

Give a sticky hand to one child and let him use it to "grab" one of the pieces of paper from the middle of the circle. Ask him if he knows what that paper reminds us of, then ask one of the corresponding questions from below. Repeat with the other kids and remaining pieces of paper. You can reuse some pieces of paper if you have a large group of kids. Prepare some backup sticky hands in case the hand loses its sticky quality. If you have enough, you can give each kid a sticky hand to take home as a reminder that our prayers stick with God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

We can pray to God!

- **What is prayer?** *(talking to and listening to God)*
- **What did Jesus' early followers think about prayer?** *(that it was important and powerful)*

We can pray about everything!

- **What is something we can pray for?**
- **Does God always give us everything we pray for? Why do you think this is?**

We can pray any time!

- **When can we pray?** *(We can pray day or night. We can pray all the time!)*
- **Should we only pray when we are sad?** *(No, we can pray when we are happy or sad. We can pray all the time!)*

God hears our prayers!

- **How do you talk with God?**
- **Which of our prayers do you think God hears?** *(All of them! God hears our prayers!)*

"We can pray to God anytime, about anything. He hears our prayers! 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 hearing our prayers.

Head to Large Group!

Responding in Worship: Colorful Prayers

SUPPLIES: circular plate; cup of water; hard-shelled, chewy fruit candies (at least 1 per kid)

Set out a plate and a cup of water. Give each child a hard-shelled, chewy fruit candy.

"I am going to give each of you a candy, and you can place it along the edge of the plate and say a prayer. Your prayer could be as short as "I love You, God!" I'll go first. Demonstrate how to place the candy in a circular pattern along the inside edge of the plate, and then say a prayer. Give a candy to the kids one at a time. Allow the kids to place the candies in a circular pattern on the plate and say prayers. If you have a large group of kids, you may need more than one plate. Creating a pattern with the colors of candy will create a pretty design.



Once everyone has had a turn to pray and the plate has a circle of candy on it, say: **God loves to hear our prayers! The Bible tells us our prayers come together in a beautiful way for God. Let's see what happens when we add water to this plate.** Gently add water to the plate, starting pouring in the middle of the plate, until the candies are covered in water. The candy coloring will begin to spread toward the center of the plate, creating a beautiful design! **Our candies created a beautiful picture, like our prayers are beautiful and special to God!"**



Leader Tip: If you have a smaller group, kids may need to place more than one piece of candy on the plate to fill the inside edge and get the best effect.

Allergy Alert! Some kids might be allergic to food dyes in the candies. Have gloves available for kids who cannot touch the dyes.

Game: Running Prayers

Have kids line up along the wall on one side of the room.

"God hears our prayers. It doesn't matter if we pray with our eyes open or closed, or if we pray when we are happy or sad. God hears our prayers! Let's play a game about different times when you might pray. Listen to the phrases I'll call out. If you can pray for whatever I say, run to the other side of the room after I say each phrase."

Call out different statements starting with "I can pray ..." using the list below. If the kids believe they could pray during the situation you call out, they will run to the other side of the room.

You can use the following statements:

- I can pray ... for my family.
- I can pray ... for my friends.
- I can pray ... for someone who is sick.
- I can pray ... when I'm feeling sad or worried.

- I can pray ... for my teachers.
- I can pray ... for people who are not nice to me.
- I can pray ... when I'm happy.
- I can pray ... for my church leaders.
- I can pray ... for people I don't know in other countries.

"These are all times we can pray! God hears our prayers!"