

Jesus Teaches about Prayer

Grades
1-2

PRAYER

MATTHEW 6:5-15

What's happening in this story?

In this part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, he instructs his followers concerning prayer. Jesus tells them not to be like hypocrites who pray publicly to get others' attention, nor like Gentiles who think God values long prayers over sincere ones. Instead, Jesus teaches that faith is about connecting with God, who sees even the hidden moments of our lives. Jesus then offers his disciples a blueprint to guide their own prayers.

What does this story mean for kids?

This passage invites kids to think about how they talk and listen to God. Some kids may be open to sharing prayer requests but shy about speaking their prayers aloud in a group. This passage lets kids know their prayers don't need to be perfect; in fact, God already knows what we need and is eager to connect with us!

Why this theme?

This story shows kids the context in which Jesus first taught the Lord's Prayer and helps them think about why he gave it to his followers. All Christians pray some version of this prayer, so knowing its background and pondering its meaning can help kids grow as Christians.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age understand their world in terms of "me, my, and mine." Focus prayers most frequently on kids' everyday concerns. Kids who are comfortable with prayer may become confident prayer leaders.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pencils
- Markers
- Glue

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard with markers
- Blocks
- Tissue paper (precut in 1/2-in. squares)
- Single-hole punches
- Yarn

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Invite kids to take turns drawing different faces to show different feelings (happy, scared, angry, worried, etc.) on a whiteboard. Ask them to name the feeling that each picture shows and to share a time when they felt that way.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

How do you talk to other people? Allow kids time to respond. (Telephone, email, texts, in person, etc.)

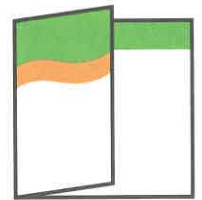
We talk to God when we pray. Draw three columns on a whiteboard and label them “What,” “When,” and “Where.” Ask kids to share what they say when praying, as well as times and places they pray. Write responses on the whiteboard. **We can talk to God anytime, anywhere.**

Pray together: **Dear God, help us remember to listen for and talk with you each day. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets, pencils, and markers.

God loves us and wants to hear from all of us. All we have to do is start talking, just like we would do with a friend. Point to the empty speech bubbles above Ada and Otto’s heads. **What do you think Ada**

and Otto might be saying to God? Kids draw pictures or write words in both speech bubbles. Allow time for them to share their ideas with each other. Collect their leaflets until Respond.



Gather kids around the screen where you’ll watch the video.

Let’s watch to see what happens when Victor and Monty try to rescue some of the Whirl kids.

View Episode 10, “Winging a Prayer,” on the Year Gold Winter PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- How does Victor and Monty’s Prayer Patrol affect the other Whirl kids as they pray?
- When or where do you pray, besides church?
- Who listens to you when you pray?
- What are some of the wrong “prayer rules” Victor and Monty tried to enforce?
- Why aren’t there a lot of rules about prayer?



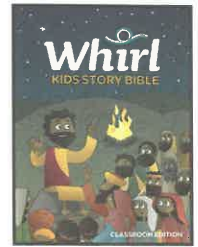
Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles.

Let's find our story for today! Help kids find "Jesus Teaches about Prayer" on page 194. Before you read, invite kids to look for how people are praying.

Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **What things did Jesus tell the crowd they could talk to God about?**
- **Which of those things do you talk to God about the most?**
- **Jesus used the words "Our Father" to begin prayer. How do you begin your prayers?**
- **Why did Jesus say we should listen to God?**
- **Jesus said to pray in any way we want. How do you like to pray?**



Gather near the Wall Chart to place today's sticker.

Point out the Testament (New), Bible section (Gospels), and character image (Jesus). **Today's Bible story is about talking with and listening for God in prayer. Let's add a sticker to remind us of how important it is to pray** (praying hands). Point to the corresponding images of Jesus and praying hands on page 194 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible.



Play together!

Jesus taught people that there are different ways to pray. We can talk to God anytime about anything. Remind kids about the prayer chart they created on the whiteboard and read each column together. Put kids in small groups and give each a pile of blocks. **Work together in your group to build a prayer tower. Take turns adding one block at a time. As you do, name a time you can pray, something to pray about, or a place you can pray.** Kids can use words from the chart or say something else. **Try to say something different each time. Continue adding blocks until the tower falls, then say together, "We can talk with God about anything and everything!"** Ask groups who finish quickly or knock down the tower to build another and pray together for someone in your church family each time a block is added.

BIBLE BIT

Jesus' teaching about prayer is part of the Sermon on the Mount, which is the longest piece of teaching from Jesus in the New Testament.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Listen to the words of the "Prayer Patrol" song. How could you change them?

Prayer Patrol! Prayer Patrol!
Guaranteed to save your soul!

OUR CHURCH

Make a list on poster board of mission partners connected to your church. Add pictures or other decorations, and display it so church members can pray for them.

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets, glue, tissue paper squares, single-hole punches, and yarn.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **What are some different ways Jesus tells the people they can talk to God?** (Give thanks, ask for what they need, etc.) Allow kids time to respond.
2. Ask kids to look at the pictures on the square. **What do these pictures tell us about praying?** (There isn't just one way to pray.)
3. **Today we are going to make a prayer banner for your home.**
4. **Fill in each letter of the word PRAY with a thin layer of glue and cover them with squares of tissue paper.**
5. **Punch a hole in each blue dot in the top corners.** Help kids thread yarn through and tie to make a hanger.
6. **Hang your banner at home where everyone in your family can see it. Each time you look at it, remember what Jesus taught us about praying.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Prayer is talking to and listening for God. Why do you think it is important to pray? Allow kids time to respond. Ask kids to share some of the things they named each time a block was added to their prayer tower. **God wants to hear from us. All we have to do is start talking!**

Pass out leaflet panels and markers.

Kids color the prayer cross. Read the words together. Invite kids to toss a button on it each day to see what they can pray for as a family.

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.