

# Jesus Teaches about Prayer

Grades  
**5-6**

## **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 in this age group will have varying degrees of experience with prayer, and at least as many ideas about what prayer is for. Channel their curiosity to explore different kinds of prayer, and help them understand that prayer is how we talk to God.



### **GENERAL SUPPLIES**

- Pens

### **LESSON SUPPLIES**

- Mural paper
- Sticky notes (3 x 3-in. and 2 x 1½ in.)

## Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Tape up a piece of mural paper to create a "Prayer Wall." Leave large sticky notes and pens for kids to write joys and/or concerns and stick them to the paper.

## Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

**How would you define prayer?** Give kids time to respond. **Raise your hand if you've prayed in the last week. In the last two days? Today? When do you pray, and who do you usually pray with?** Give kids time to respond. **Prayer can take a lot of different forms, and there's no one right way to do it.**

Pray together: **Dear God, thanks for listening while we pray and learn about prayer. Help us discover new ways to talk to you. Amen.**

## Pass out leaflets, small sticky notes, and pens.

Give kids a chance to share highs and lows—something great and something not so great—from the last week. Have them write their high on one sticky note and put it over the up arrow, then write their low on another

sticky note and put it over the down arrow. **When we pray, we can say thanks to God for our highs and tell God about our lows. We can ask God for help and tell God how we're feeling. No matter what we say, God is always listening to our prayers. Let's pray for our highs and lows: Dear God, thanks for our highs, those great things that happened this week. Help us while we cope with our lows, those challenges we face. Be with us in this new week. Amen.**



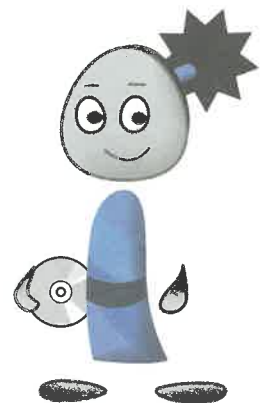
## Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

There are a lot of different ways to pray: silent, aloud, alone, with other people, standing, sitting—the possibilities are endless. Some prayers fit better in certain situations, but the thing they have in common is that they're all ways we talk to God. How do you know when to do what? Let's see how the Whirl kids work it out.

View Episode 10, "Postscript Prayer," on the Year Gold Winter Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Have you memorized the Lord's Prayer? How old were you when you learned it?**
- **What is the most meaningful part of the Lord's Prayer to you?**
- **Why do you think it's important to pray with other people, like we often do with the Lord's Prayer?**
- **Why is it important to pray on our own?**
- **When do you pray with others? By yourself?**



## Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is in the book of Matthew. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from Matthew, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1156.



Today's reading is part of the section known as the Sermon on the Mount. In it, Jesus teaches about many different things. In this section, Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray. He advises them about what to do and what not to do and gives them words to get them started.

Help kids find Matthew 6:5-15 and read it in this creative way together: Ask a single volunteer to read Matthew 6:5-9a. Then have the whole group read Matthew 6:9b-13 (the Lord's Prayer section) together. Have another volunteer finish by reading Matthew 6:14-15.

Invite kids to check out what Gabe says about Matthew 6:7-13.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- Why do you think Jesus gave pretty strict rules for how to pray?
- How do these instructions relate to how we should pray today?
- What are some ways we can address God in prayer?
- If God knows what we need before we ask, why do we still need to pray?
- What is the connection between the way we forgive others and the way God forgives us?

## Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Prayer*. **Amen** is a word common to many languages, including Hebrew, Greek, and English. It conveys truth and certainty. When we end a prayer with "Amen," we are communicating our trust that God has heard us. Invite a volunteer to write "Amen" in the box by *Prayer*.



### BIBLE BIT

Jesus used the Aramaic word *Abba* in the Lord's Prayer. It is usually translated "Father," but its meaning is closer to "Daddy," which suggests a very close relationship.

### WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, listen for the ways the Lord's Prayer is explained. How many different ways can you count?

### OUR CHURCH

Print copies of a few unison prayers used in worship at your church, such as the Lord's Prayer, a prayer of confession, a baptismal dedication, etc. Choose a couple to pray together.

# RESPOND 10

## Open leaflets and pass out pens.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **Using the same words is important when we pray in unison with a group or in our congregation. When we pray in unison, we feel united and connected as one in the body of Christ. But sometimes the words of a unison prayer aren't the same words we'd use if we were praying on our own.**
2. **The Lord's Prayer follows a framework of greeting, praising, thanking, and asking God.**
3. **In the left column on your leaflet, write the words for the Lord's Prayer that we say in church.** Help kids fill in the Lord's Prayer in the appropriate sections on the leaflet.
4. **In the right column, use your own words to write a prayer to God.** Lead kids through writing their own prayer in the second column on the leaflet. **The first block is how we greet God. Jesus used the word *Abba*, or "Father." What word describes your relationship with God?**
5. **The next block talks about God's greatness. What words would you use to praise God?**
6. **Use the next block to say something about being thankful for what God has given you.**
7. **The last block asks God to forgive us and help get us through hard times. What can you ask God for help with?**
8. **Share your prayer with a partner.**

# LAUNCH 10

## Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Prayer is the practice of talking—and listening—to God. And there are lots of different ways we can do it. What's something new you learned about prayer today?

## Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens.

Praying for ourselves is important, but it's also important to pray for others. Find a partner to form a prayer team. Write your names and answers to each question on the leaflet panel. Take your panel home to help you pray for your prayer team this week.

## 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.