

Jesus Teaches about Prayer

PreK-
K

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

Young kids like to make noise and move around. This lesson teaches that there are lots of ways to pray. Encourage the kids to explore praying with their voices and their bodies. Be sure kids pray with all their senses. Kids can be prayer models for others.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Crayons

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Play dough

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Invite kids to have a conversation with each other. **What did you do yesterday? Who were you with? Did you go somewhere?** Encourage kids to take turns talking and listening. **Part of having a conversation is listening.**

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Invite kids to say, "Hello, God," in a normal voice. **Say it again in a shout. Now whisper. Say it again in an elephant voice. Now say it like a mouse. Say it in your head. Which voice do you think God hears best? God hears our prayers no matter how we say them. And God wants to talk to us too. We can talk to God wherever we are about anything. We can thank God or say, "I love you, God!" or ask God to help.**

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for prayer so we can talk to you. Help us to hear each other, and to hear your voice too. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets.

There are lots of ways to pray. Invite kids to point to the picture they think shows someone praying. Kids will probably point to the kid in the traditional prayer pose. Invite kids to point to the kid on the phone. **You can**

share prayer requests or even pray together on the phone. Have kids point to the girl who's drawing. **Some people write prayers or draw pictures for God.** Have kids point to the two girls. **These girls might be sharing a prayer request or a reason to praise God with each other.** Collect their leaflets until Respond.



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

In the video today, two of the Whirl kids are confused about how prayer works. Watch for how they act as they figure it all out.

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **How is Ada praying?**
- **What is the Prayer Patrol?**
- **Who gets tickets for praying?**
- **Why does Victor think there are rules for praying?**
- **What would you tell a kid visiting your church about prayer?**



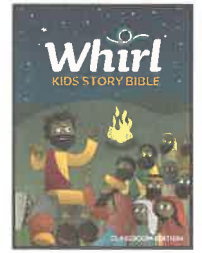
Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles.

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 people praying in lots of different ways.

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

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **What is prayer?**
- **Why does a mother tell her son to be quiet?**
- **What does Jesus teach about prayer?**
- **Why is it important to pray?**
- **How do you pray?**



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

Point out the Testament (New) and character image (Jesus). **Today's Bible story is about Jesus teaching a huge crowd how to pray. Jesus said there are no rules, but to pray about anything and everything! Let's add a sticker to remind us of Jesus teaching the people about prayer** (praying hands). Point to the corresponding images of Jesus and praying hands on page 194 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible.



Play together!

Let's pray with play dough. Pass out play dough. **One way to pray is by giving thanks to God.** Invite kids to use the play dough to make something they're thankful for. When everyone is done, have kids share their creations. Pray this prayer together:

Thank you for our hands, God. (Kids repeat and hold up their hands.)

Thank you for our church and our friends. (Kids hold hands with each other.)

Thank you for toys like play dough. (Kids hold their play dough creation.)

Thank you for _____. (Have each kid fill in what they are thankful to God for.)

BIBLE BIT

The Lord's Prayer is found after Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It was common for large crowds of people to gather and listen to Jesus teach.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, have the kids think about which of the ways to pray shown in the video they would most like to try.

OUR CHURCH

Find out how your church keeps track of prayer needs within the congregation. Choose an age-appropriate request to share with the kids. Take a moment to pray.

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **Jesus taught the people how to pray. Let's learn how to do a Five-Finger Prayer together.**
2. Have kids place their hands inside the outlines on the leaflet. Kids can pray out loud or silently, as they are comfortable.
3. **We'll start with number one. Your pinkie finger is for praise. Praise means to honor God.** Have kids wriggle their pinkie fingers. **Use words that tell how excited you are about God! "God, I love you! You are _____!"**
4. **Next comes number two. Your ring finger is for thanks.** Invite kids to rub their ring fingers back and forth. **Say thanks to God for God's good gifts. "Thank you, God, for giving me _____."**
5. **Three is your middle finger. Let's pray for others.** Have kids curl their middle fingers in and out. Pray for someone you know. **You can ask God to help them or bless them. "God, please help _____."**
6. **Four is your pointer finger. We can ask God for forgiveness.** Invite kids to make circles with their pointer fingers. **Asking for forgiveness means saying you're sorry for something you did wrong. God loves you and forgives you when you ask. "God, forgive me for _____."**
7. **Five is your thumb. We pray for ourselves.** Have kids tap their thumbs. **You can ask God for anything you need. "God, I ask you for _____."**
8. **Let's finish by praising God again.** Invite kids to raise their hands in the air and wriggle all their fingers. Say together, **"I love you, God! Amen!"** If time permits, pass out crayons for kids to color the hands on their leaflets.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Today we learned what Jesus taught about prayer. There aren't any special rules. Prayer is talking to God and listening to God talk to us. You can talk to God anywhere, anytime, about anything and everything! What new idea did you learn about prayer today? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Pass out leaflet panels and crayons.

Invite kids to draw a picture of what they want to talk to God about this week. It can be something they've already shared or something new. **Jesus teaches us to talk to God about everything!**

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.