

The Lord's Prayer

Lesson At-a-Glance

Scripture Reference
Matthew 6:5-15

Lesson Focus
Jesus teaches us how to pray.

Bible Memory Verse
**"[Jesus said,] 'Pray then in this way:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be
your name.'" Matthew 6:9**

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids learn about different prayer postures.	Spark Activity Pages, Spark Coloring Pages	Colored pencils
Circle Time Kids learn that we don't have to try to impress God or anyone else with our prayers.	Spark Song CD, Spark Songbook	Music source
Opening Prayer Kids pray a short, simple, quiet prayer.	None	None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
The Lord's Prayer Story Kids interact with the story by miming prayer every time they heard the word "pray."	Spark Story Bibles Spark NRSV Bible	None
Can We Talk? Kids select words to use in an original prayer.	Leaflets	Crayons or markers

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Daily Bread Kids discuss the difference between our needs, or “daily bread,” and our wants.	Leaflets, Spark Bible Stickers	Pencils or crayons
The Lord’s Prayer, Illustrated Kids make a mural of the Lord’s Prayer using their own ideas.	None	Mural paper, markers, crayons, masking tape

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Closing Conversation Kids remember there’s no wrong place, time, or way to pray.	Leaflets	None
Closing Prayer Kids pray the Lord’s Prayer using the mural they created.	Spark Family Pages	Lord’s Prayer mural from Activate Faith

Bible Background

This passage is in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus proclaimed the arrival of a new kingdom and outlined its structure and practices. With a new kingdom comes a new way to pray. Jesus dismissed the hypocrites who prayed in order to gain the attention of people around them, and reclaimed prayer as an avenue in the relationship between God and God's people. By advising his listeners to pray in secret, Jesus pointed them to a prayer life that was directed toward God alone. The Lord's Prayer is a model of prayer to be imitated, not just a prescribed prayer to be uttered word for word. Jesus said, "Pray then in this way," not "Pray this exact prayer." It starts with an affectionate term, "Abba," which is closer to "Daddy" than "Father," and then covers almost anything a person would need to pray about.

Why This Story Matters

Kids may be familiar with prayer at meals and in church, but few kids understand the way prayer connects them to God. Teaching the Lord's Prayer is critical for kids' understanding of how God is like a loving parent who listens to them and wants to give them all they need.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the Activity Page and Coloring Page and set them out for kids to try.

Welcome to Sunday school! Today we're going to learn about how to pray. Do any of you have a prayer memorized? Give the kids a chance to share a table grace or other prayer they might know. **Praying is just talking to God, and there are lots of different ways to do it. What are some ways we can pray?** Answers may include with our hands folded, with our arms upraised, with our eyes closed, on our knees, etc. Each time someone gives a suggestion, try it out as a group. **I'd like each of you to come up with your own unique prayer posture or prayer movement. This is a way to express how you want to talk with God.** Invite kids to teach their prayer posture or movement to rest of the group.

Spark Resources

Spark Activity Pages
Spark Coloring Pages

Supplies

Colored pencils

Circle Time

Invite the kids to sit in a circle. **In our story today, Jesus talks about some not-so-great ways to pray. Here's one of them.** Recite a table grace at the top of your lungs with your arms outstretched. Pause a couple times in your prayer to say, "Are you listening? Do you hear how well I'm praying? Aren't I wonderful to be praying?" **So, what was not-so-great about that?** Have a discussion about the people in Jesus' time (and now) who pray in such a way that others pay attention to them and think they're great, not just to talk to God. **What could I do instead?** (Pray quietly and in secret, or privately.) **Okay, so here's another way I might pray.** Say a prayer that is long and complicated and has huge words in it. **What was not-so-great about that one?** Talk about how Jesus pointed out those who made prayers with lots of words to try to impress God. **We don't have to try to impress God or other people with our prayers. Jesus said that God doesn't need our prayers to be long and loud. Our prayers can be short and sweet and that's just great! Jesus gave his disciples a very specific example of just how to pray, which we'll hear about in our Bible story today.**

Spark Resources

Spark Song CD
Spark Songbook

Supplies

Music source

MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Song 1: "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" (tracks 7 and 24 on Spark Song CD, page 39 in Spark Songbook)

Song 2: "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" Sing this simple song several times, pausing after each occasion for kids to offer silent or spoken prayers.

Opening Prayer

We're going to say a quiet and simple prayer this morning. Let's all stand in a circle and hold hands and close our eyes. When I finish the prayer, we'll all say "Amen" in our quietest voices.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Be sure to pray very quietly, but not whispering. **Dear God, I am so glad that we get to talk to you anytime and you listen to us. Help us to learn all about prayer today. And the children of God say, Amen.**

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

The Lord's Prayer Story

Invite kids with Spark NRSV Bibles to each find and sit with a buddy with a Spark Story Bible. Remind kids to keep their Bibles closed until you ask the kids to open them up.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bible
Spark NRSV Bible

This story is about the Lord's Prayer. We call it that because Jesus, our Lord, taught it to us. As I read the story, every time you hear me read the word "pray" or "prayer" or "prayers," fold your hands in front of you like you're praying.

Supplies

None

Demonstrate. **Then drop your hands and keep listening for the next time I say one of those words.** Read the story, pausing, if necessary, after each time you say one of the words.

Invite the older kids to look up the story in their Spark NRSV Bibles on page 1064, and the younger kids to find The Lord's Prayer on pages 278–281 of the Spark Story Bible. Older kids can help younger kids when they have found their own pages.

Have the older kids find the orange box in the first column of page 1064 and read the "Know It!" question out loud. Then have each pair of buddies find the answer in verse 6 in the Spark NRSV Bible and on page 279 in the Spark Story Bible. Ask one of the pairs to share the answer with the group. **Do you think that's the only right place to pray?** (*No. We can pray anywhere, alone or in groups.*) **Why do you think Jesus said to pray that way?** (*It helps us stay focused on God and what we are doing.*)

Invite the buddies to find the picture of Jesus and Squiggles praying on page 281 in the Spark Story Bible. Ask someone to tell you the prayer posture they are using. **Is that the only way to sit when you pray?** (*No, we have been talking about different prayer postures.*) **Why is this a good way to pray sometimes?** (*Just like praying alone in secret, it helps us stay focused on God and what we are doing.*)

Invite the younger kids to help the older kids place an "I Looked It Up" sticker next to verse 6.

Bible Memory Verse

"[Jesus said,] 'Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'" Matthew 6:9

Have an older kid read the Bible Memory Verse out loud, and have the group repeat it. Encourage pairs of buddies to break it down and work on it together. Then challenge pairs to say it together.

Can We Talk?

God hears us when we speak, write, or think our prayers. What's your favorite way to pray? Encourage every kid to offer a response. **Sometimes we don't know what words to use. Jesus taught us some important words in the Lord's Prayer. Our leaflet has a lot of words that can be used in a prayer. Work with your buddy to write a prayer using only the suggested words.**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Crayons or markers

Invite buddy groups to share what they've written with the entire class. Ask each group to count the number of words from the word bank that they used in their prayer.

Invite kids to read and discuss the Bible Bits together.

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Daily Bread

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray for our daily bread. This means that we ask God to provide everything we need to live today. What is the difference between a need and a want? (*Needs are things we can't survive without.*) You might also explain that needs are things we must have in order to live as God would have us live. **Can anyone give an example of the things we need?** (*Food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, loving adults, etc.*)

On your leaflet there are some pictures of wants and needs. Talk with your buddy about whether each one is a want or a need, then draw a line to the word "Want" or the word "Need." Remind older kids to help younger kids understand, rather than just completing the activity on their own.

Ask for volunteers to read the Did You Know? items aloud. Invite kids to place a sticker or special marking next to the item they find most interesting.

Spark Resources
Resources Leaflets
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
Pencils or crayons

The Lord's Prayer, Illustrated

Before kids arrive, print out the individual petitions of the Lord's Prayer and the meanings as listed below, each on a separate piece of mural paper, as large as you can.

When Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer, it was an example of how we should pray. We can change it to match what we want to say using the different ideas of each part. I have each part, called a "petition," on a separate piece of paper. Lay the pieces of paper out of order on the floor. Challenge the kids to all work together to put them in order. Remind the older kids to include the younger kids in this process. They can use their Spark NRSV or Spark Story Bibles to help them. When they have them in order, have them tape them on the mural paper in order from left to right. Tip: If there isn't enough time in your morning schedule, you can have the petitions and meanings already taped to the mural paper in order.

These next pieces of paper explain what each part means and give an example. I'll read them as I tape them under each petition. Take a moment to do so, giving only one example for each.

With your buddy, choose one and come up with something you can draw on the mural paper to illustrate that petition. This may be pretty difficult for the youngest kids. Encourage older kids to help, and work with pairs to give them ideas from the examples if needed.

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
Mural paper
Markers
Crayons
Masking tape

Petition	Meaning	Examples
Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name,	God's name is holy, and we ask God to help us live the way God wants.	Listen to our parents. Pray. Go to church.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.	God is important here on earth, and in heaven too. We ask God to help us do God's will.	Take care of the earth. Work for peace. Share God's love.
Give us today our daily bread.	We ask God to give us what we need each day.	Food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care.
Forgive us our sins	We ask God to be right with us when we have done something wrong.	Disobeyed parents. Been mean to friends or siblings.
As we forgive those who sin against us.	We ask God to help us learn to forgive others.	When our friends/siblings have been mean to us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.	We ask God to take care of us when things are hard or scary.	When we're tempted to do wrong. When things make us sad.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.	We ask God to always remind us that everything in the world belongs to God forever and ever!	We are grateful for all God gives us and does for us. We can't wait to one day see God!

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

Remember that prayer is talking to God, and that God wants to hear us! You can talk to God anywhere, anytime, and in lots of different ways. It might seem like the Lord's Prayer is hard to understand, but it's really a simple example of how we can talk to our loving parent in heaven and ask for all we need. This week, it would be great if everyone tried the Faith on the Go! activity where you take some time to pray the Lord's Prayer by yourself or with a grown-up in your family.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Closing Prayer

Distribute Spark Family Pages to kids and look at the For Families to Do Together activity in the Live It section. Encourage kids to try this with their parents when they get home.

Look at our beautiful mural! Let's pray the Lord's Prayer but use the petitions we drew. Pray the prayer in the order the kids drew it. If there are any sections that did not get illustrated, simply use the original words. Invite all the kids to join you in saying **Amen**.

As you say goodbye to kids, make sure they take home their leaflets and Family Pages.

Spark Resources
Spark Family Pages

Supplies
Lord's Prayer mural from
Activate Faith