

Power of Prayer

Week 4

BIG IDEA

God Hears Our Prayers

BIBLE

Pray With Faith (James 5; 1 Thessalonians 5)

FOR LEADERS

DID YOU KNOW... *Use this section to get yourself ready to teach!*

- **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.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pause now to read [James 5:13-18](#).*

- 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?

WELCOME

MUSIC | Worship Playlist

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *During free time, use one of our Spotify playlists to play background music while kids play OR stream the main worship service on your classroom TV to participate in the worship happening in the Auditorium.*

PLAY | Free Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tables will be set with games and activities for kids to play until the lesson begins.*
 - *This is a great opportunity to get to know some kids and work on building relationships.*
 - *Have kids go to the bathroom prior to class beginning*
 - *At the end of Free Time, play the Countdown Video and have kids work together to clean up toys/activities and then join you for the lesson – either on risers or on the floor.*

MEMORY VERSE | Prizes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *During free time, kids may say their memory verse from the past week to any leader in the room. Place a dot sticker on their name tag to signify that they've said the verse. Give a memory verse prize **AT PICK UP** to any kids with dot stickers.*

WELCOME QUESTION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As kids arrive, warmly welcome them by name. Show them the welcome question written on the white board. Invite kids to be thinking about their answer during free play time. This question will be written on the board as a conversation starter during free time.*
 - **What's the biggest thing you've ever prayed for?**

INTRO

TALK

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play the Countdown Video to signify time to clean up. Gather kids on the floor or on the risers. It's always fun to have everyone count down the last 10 seconds together!*
- **Welcome to church today, friends! I am so glad to be here with all of you.**

- *This is a great opportunity to let kids know what the time together will look like! Walk them through the schedule and go over the class rules.*
- **I have a question for you: What's the biggest thing you've ever prayed for?** *Call on several kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question.*
- **It's wonderful to hear about the things you've prayed for. We all have things on our hearts that we bring to God. Today we'll discover that we serve an amazing God who hears all our prayers! But first, it's time to be curious.**
 - **Who is someone you really like talking with?** *Offer a few seconds to think about it, then instruct them to do a "turn and talk" with someone sitting next to them where they say, "Good morning!", give each other a high five and then, discuss their answer. Choose a few groups to share their answer with the large group.*
- **Today we're going to learn more about what it means to talk to God**

DECLARATION

- **Before we open the Bible together, I have an important reminder for everyone here. Let's declare this together. You can by repeat after me!**
 - **Thank You, God, that You are good!** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **You made me on purpose, for a purpose.** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **I am Your kid!** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **You know me, love me, and lead me.** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **You listen to everything I talk with You about.** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **You always hear my prayers!** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **My life can tell of Your wonder!** *(Kids repeat.)*

WHAT? What are we talking about today

PRAYER

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words:*
 - **God, thank You for always hearing our prayers. Whenever we come to You in prayer with praises, requests, joy, sadness, or anything else, we know You hear us. Help us hear what You have to teach us today. Thank You for being such a good and loving God! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

(OPTIONAL) BIBLE STORY VIDEO

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Watch the [Pray with Faith God's Big Story!](#)
 - *NOTE: This short video will introduce the Bible Story and give you a jumping off point for the rest of the teaching. If you split into smaller group for the re-telling of the Bible Story, watch*

the video together as a large group before doing so.

BIBLE STORY | James 5; 1 Thessalonians 5 (Pray with Faith)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ahead of time, gather the Praying with Faith Books and writing/coloring utensils.
- Open a Bible to James. **Today's portion of God's big story comes from the books of James and 1 Thessalonians, which are in the second half of the Bible near the back.**
 - FOR OLDER KIDS: Help kids find [James 5](#) and [1 Thessalonians 5](#). If you have sticky tabs available, hand two to each kid to mark the start of each passage.
- **What sort of things do you talk with God about?**
- **Prayer is connecting with God through talking and listening to Him, so I suppose a different question would be: What do you pray about?** Allow time for kids to respond.
- **Some people only pray at certain times of the day. Some people only pray when big things are happening in their lives. Some people hardly pray at all.**
- **But Jesus and His disciples believed in the importance and power of prayer, in praying with the belief that God hears everything and responds to us when we talk with Him.**
- **This is known as praying with faith—trusting that God hears us. Jesus taught His disciples to “always pray and not give up” ([Luke 18:1](#)).**
- **He also promised that if two of us gather together in prayer, God will hear and answer us.**
- **Jesus teaches us that prayer is powerful, and today you will create your own book showcasing what it means for you to pray with faith!**
- Pass out a Praying with Faith Book to each kid. Pass out containers with writing and drawing utensils and direct kids to put their names on the line on the front cover of their books.
- **The first page of your book shows the book's title: “Praying with Faith.” At the bottom is Jesus' encouragement to His disciples: “Always pray and don't give up.”**
- **Prayer is powerful. It is how we communicate directly with God. And we can pray in so many ways! What are some ways you pray?** Take some responses, making sure to describe different postures and attitudes (such as kneeling, head bowed, eyes closed, eyes open, through singing or writing, silently or out loud).
- **On the first page of your booklet, draw a picture of yourself praying to God.**
- Allow time for kids to draw; then ask kids to put down all coloring utensils and look at you.
- **The book of James is a letter that was written to early Christians. In it, James tells Jesus-followers to pray for those who are in trouble and to praise God when they experience joy. He encourages the sick to ask the elders, or leaders, of their church to pray with faith for them, that God will heal them. And that God will also forgive people of any wrong things they have done. When we pray with faith, we trust in our hearts that God loves us and will do what He said He will do.**
- **The book of James encourages us to ask God for big things—He loves us, He sees us, and He hears our prayers. God does not always choose to heal our sicknesses or answer our prayers in the ways we think they should be answered, but praying with faith reminds us that God hears us and is working.**
- **Turn to the second page of your books. Who would like to read what it says at the bottom? Call on a volunteer to read “Pray for big things.” Write or draw a picture of some big things you've talked with God about or you want to talk with God about.**
- Allow time for kids to draw; then ask kids to put down all coloring utensils and look at you.
 - **Leader Tip:** Some kids may be new to church and unfamiliar with prayer. If they have never prayed before, that's OK! Encourage them to write and draw things they want to pray about rather than things they have already prayed for.
- **A prayer that asks for big things like healing is a prayer of faith. James shares a story about the prophet Elijah. The prophet Elijah prayed with faith that it wouldn't rain in the land of Israel**

for three and a half years, and God stopped the rain from falling. The King of Israel and many of the people worshiped the false god Baal and believed Baal had power over the weather. But only the true God of Israel has the power to water the earth. So, when Elijah prayed again, God sent a downpour. We can have faith in God like Elijah and pray for big things!

- **God wants us to pray for big things, and He also wants us to pray all the time. In the book of 1 Thessalonians, Paul tells us to “always be joyful” and “never stop praying”** ([1 Thessalonians 5:1 6–17](#)).
- **The words “never stop praying” are Paul’s way of encouraging us not to give up in our prayers. We can pray about anything and everything in our lives—no matter how big or small. And we know that God always answers us in the way that is best, even when the answer is not what we expect or want.**
- **Turn to the third page of your books. Who would like to read what it says on the bottom?***Call on a volunteer to read “Never stop praying.” Write or draw a picture of something you’ve prayed for before and need a reminder to keep talking with God about it.*
- *Allow time for kids to draw; then ask kids to put down all coloring utensils and look at you.*
- **Because God always answers our prayers in the way that is best, Paul teaches us to “Give thanks no matter what happens”** ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)). **When we are willing to talk to God in prayer and trust His answer, we are truly living by faith.**
- **Turn to the last page in your books. Who would like to read what it says on the bottom?***Call on a volunteer to read “Give thanks no matter what happens.” Write or draw a picture of ways God has answered your prayers in the past.*
- *Allow time for kids to draw, then ask for all coloring utensils to be put down and eyes to be on you.*
- **God does not always answer every prayer the way we want Him to. But that’s not a reason to stop praying or only pray for small things. God invites us to pray big—to ask with trust and confidence that He hears us.**
- **We can pray about everything. We can pray courageously because Scripture tells us that God hears our prayers.**
- *If there’s extra time, encourage kids to turn to a partner or share in their small groups their Praying with Faith Books!*

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

BIG IDEA | God Hears Our Prayers

- **Sometimes we wonder if God even hears our prayers. Do you ever feel like that?***Allow kids to answer. But here’s the good news: God always hears our prayers!*
- **That’s our Big Idea today!**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the Big Idea slide on the screen or the poster on the white board while you have kids repeat after you.*
- **Let’s say the Big Idea together: God Hears Our Prayers!**
- **Our prayers are powerful, and they always reach God. God always hears you.**
- **We serve an amazing God who loves us, sees us, and listens when we talk with Him. We can pray to Him about anything in our lives, no matter how big or small. This is wonderful news!**

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 66:19–20 (NIV)

- We're learning today that God hears our prayers. The Bible promises this to us many times in the Old and New Testaments. Our memory verse this month is one of those examples from the Old Testament book of Psalms.
- Here's what it says:
 - "But God has surely listened and has heard my prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!" Psalm 66:19-20
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the verse to the kids, then encourage them to stand and repeat after you with the following motions:
 - **But God has surely listened** (Point up)
 - **and has heard my prayer.** (Point to ears)
 - **Praise be to God** (Lift hands in praise)
 - **who has not rejected my prayer** (shake finger as if saying "no")
 - **or withheld his love from me!** (cross hands over heart)
 - **Psalm 66:19-20** (clap hands together, then open like a book)
- Nice work, friends! This verse reminds us that God always listens to us when we pray.
- Now, we're going to have a chance to talk with our friends in small groups about everything we learned today and spend some time talking to God.

SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSSION | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you haven't already, split kids into smaller groups, ideally by grade. Use the following questions to help reinforce the lesson.
 - *NOTE:* Invite kids to share any questions they might have. Some kids have an easier time listening if their hands are busy. You may choose to pass out coloring sheets and allow kids to color as you discuss. You might also consider having kids lead the discussion by asking the following questions.
- **How is it possible that God always hears our prayers?**
- **According to the Bible, what kind of things can we pray for?**
- **What does it mean to never stop praying?**
- **When is a good time to pray to God?**
- **What are things that you talk with God about? What's something small you want to talk with Him about? What's something big you want to talk with Him about?**
- **Isn't it wonderful to know that God always hears and answers our prayers? We serve an amazing God! Let's take some time to talk to our great God in prayer, knowing that He is listening and wants to hear from us!**

PRAYER

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite the kids into a time of prayer. Ask them for prayer requests and praises. Consider sharing one or more yourself. Remind them that when they talk to God, He always hears their prayers.

EXTRA TIME ACTIVITY | Who Is That?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In this game, kids will talk in silly voices to disguise their real identity. Choose one kid to be the guesser. (If your group is large, consider choosing several kids to be “guessers” at once. You will need one blindfold for each guesser and a volunteer to guide each guesser.) Gently tie the blindfold over the guesser’s eyes and instruct everyone else to get up and find a spot around the room. Guide the guesser to each kid. When the guesser reaches someone, have that person say, “But God has surely listened. He has heard my prayer,” in a funny voice. The guesser will then try to guess who spoke. Explain that the goal of the kids talking in funny voices is to trick the guesser into thinking they are someone else. If the guesser correctly guesses someone’s identity, pick a new guesser and play again. After several rounds, gather kids together.*
- **This game made you listen to each other very carefully. You had to listen well to figure out who was speaking! It’s a good thing that God always listens to us. In our Bible story today, we see that we can pray for big things because we know God is listening. Another way to say this is that we can pray with faith. God loves us. We can trust that He hears us too!**