

Power of Prayer

Week 1

BIG IDEA

Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray

BIBLE

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6)

FOR LEADERS

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

- **WHO?**

- Matthew is the first of the Gospels in the New Testament. While Mark emphasizes Jesus' miracles and Luke highlights Jesus' care for the poor and oppressed, Matthew focuses most on Jesus' practical teaching ministry.

- **WHAT?**

- [Matthew 6](#) is part of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5–7](#)), one of the five major speeches that Jesus gives in this Gospel. In this speech, Jesus helps His disciples understand what true fulfillment of God's law looks like.

- **WHERE?**

- Matthew's Gospel does not tell us exactly what "mountain" Jesus gave the sermon on. An elevated location was ideal for giving speeches to large crowds, as it allowed everyone to see Jesus and hear Him speak.

- **WHEN?**

- The Gospel of Matthew places the Sermon on the Mount immediately after describing Jesus' miraculous ministry in Galilee ([Matthew 4:23–25](#)).

- **CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

- Matthew's Gospel portrays Jesus as the prophet like Moses who was promised in Deuteronomy: "He will be one of their own people. I will put my words in his mouth" ([18:18](#)). Like Moses, Jesus instructs God's people on how to obey God and communicate with Him ([Matthew 5–7](#)).
- *Take a moment to read [Matthew 6:5–13](#).*
- It's clear that the disciples knew about prayer. As Jewish men, they prayed often. Prayer was woven into their daily lives. But Jesus taught them to pray differently. He prayed with intimacy and confidence.
- Jesus' prayers went way beyond rote repetition of familiar phrases. It was as though Jesus was talking with God, not at Him, and the disciples sensed the love that fueled Jesus' prayers.
- That is what they wanted in their prayers. Not duty, but devotion. Not performance, but passion.
- We still need Jesus to teach us to pray. If you're unsure that's true, ask yourself this: If someone was eavesdropping while you pray, how would they describe your relationship with whoever's on the other end of your words? Do you sound as though you're speaking with someone you know? Someone you love? Are you reciting or communicating?

- I ask not to shame you (or myself—we're in this together!) but because in this lesson you have a choice: You can present the Lord's Prayer as a formula for prayer or as an invitation to intimacy with God.
- Doing the first gives kids useful, straight-from-Jesus information—and that's great. But also doing the second gives them permission to open their hearts to God.
- And that's when prayer really begins.
- Thank you for helping kids understand the power of prayer this month!

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.

- **Who are the people you talk with the most?**

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: Who are the people you talk with the most?** *Call on several kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question.*
- **Today we're going to learn what Jesus taught us about how to talk with God Himself—what we call "prayer." But first, I'm curious...**
 - **How do you learn to do something new?** *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.*
- **Many of us learn by following someone's example, right? We need someone to show us what to do. We're going to look into our Bibles to see that Jesus teaches us how to pray by showing us how to do it!**

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 love for me to talk with and listen to You,** *(Kids repeat.)*
 - **So You teach me how to pray!** *(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:
 - **Our Father in heaven, we are ready to hear Your Word. Let Your Holy Spirit guide us to listen and learn as Jesus teaches us how to pray today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

(OPTIONAL) BIBLE STORY VIDEO

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Watch the [Lord's Prayer 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 | Matthew 6:5-13 (The Lord's Prayer)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ahead of time, invite another leader to be the "contestant" during the gameshow-style script. Make sure they've looked over the script before starting. Kids will be asked to help the contestant with answers. You will need the Question Cards, stacked in order and a buzzer button.
- Open a Bible to Matthew 6. **Today we're going to learn part of a message that Jesus gave His followers called the "Sermon on the Mount." In our game, "Pray Like What?" we're going to learn how Jesus taught His followers to pray with a prayer we call "The Lord's Prayer." that's found in our Bibles in the book of Matthew.**
 - *FOR OLDER KIDS:* Ask everyone to turn to Matthew 6. Encourage adult volunteers to help kids find the passage. Invite a confident reader to read [Matthew 6:5-13](#) out loud while the other kids follow along.
- **Welcome, everyone, to "Pray Like What?" Our contestant will try to figure out exactly what prayer is and how Jesus teaches us to do it. Without further ado, let's welcome our contestant!** Call the pre-selected leader up on stage. Have him stand at the front and hold the buzzer.
- **What's your name?** Allow contestant to answer. **Welcome to the show,** (contestant's name). **I'll ask you a series of questions and give you two possible answers to choose from. If at any point you don't know what to do, hit this buzzer ... Hit the buzzer ... and you'll get help from our audience!**
- **Audience members, when our contestant hits the buzzer, you'll quietly use fingers to match the answer you think is correct! 1 or 2.**
- **Let's practice. Jesus performed many miracles during His time on earth, like calming the storm, healing the sick, and raising dead people back to life. What else did Jesus come to earth to do**
 - Read 1st [Question Card](#).
- **Jesus came to earth to ... 1. teach about life with God or 2. show us the best dance moves.**
 - Contestant acts confused, then hits the buzzer, allowing the kids to show their answer with their fingers.
- **Everyone that said number 1 is correct! Jesus came to teach us about who God is and what He is like. You can put your fingers down!**
- **Next question: Sometimes Jesus' teachings are surprising because they don't match the way the world tells us we should live. One of the things that Jesus talks about in a surprising way is**

prayer.

- *Hold Question Cards up and read question 2: What is prayer?*
- **Prayer is ... 1. closing our eyes and bowing our heads or 2. talking with and listening to God.**
 - *Contestant acts confused, then hits the buzzer, allowing the kids to show their answers.*
- **This one was a little tougher. The correct answer is ... 2. talking with and listening to God!**
- *Hold up the fingers that align with the answer “talking with and listening to God”. Everyone with 2 fingers up is correct!*
- **While many people do close their eyes and bow their heads, that’s just one way to move our bodies while we pray. Prayer is talking with and listening to God, and we can do that standing, sitting, laying down, or spinning in circles! We can do it out loud or silently; we can even pray through writing, dancing, or music.**
- **Next question! When Jesus lived on earth as a man, some people used prayer to make themselves look better than others. They would pray in public places like street corners to get attention from others and show people how important and holy they were.** *Raise Question Cards and read question 3: What did Jesus say about this way of praying?*
- **Jesus said ... 1. this isn’t a good way to pray or 2. we should totally pray this way.**
 - *Contestant acts confused, then hits the buzzer, allowing the kids to show their answers.*
- **Remember—Jesus’ teachings don’t match the way the world tells us we should live. So if some people thought praying loudly on street corners was the best way to pray, then Jesus said ... this isn’t a good way to pray.**
- *Hold up 1 finger to show correct answer. Everyone that said number 1 is correct!*
- **Instead of being showy and focusing on ourselves, Jesus encourages us to pray in a way that doesn’t draw attention to us. Instead, we should pray somewhere we can focus entirely on God ... like in our rooms with the door shut. Of course, we can pray with other people, as long as the focus is on God and not on our performance. When we pray this way, God sees us and hears our prayers.**
- **Next question! God not only cares about where we pray, but also how we pray! Some people believe prayer is like magic—we can make God do things for us by saying lots of words in just the right order. If we do it just right, we can control God and get Him to do what we want.** *Raise Question Cards up and read question 4. Jesus said prayer ... 1. makes God do what we want or 2. helps us know God’s heart.*
 - *Contestant acts confused, then hits the buzzer, allowing the kids to show their answers.*
- **This is a tough one too! The correct answer is ... 2. Prayer helps us know God’s heart!** *Show 2 fingers that aligns with the answer “helps us know God’s heart”. Everyone that said number 2 is correct!*
- **Jesus says that we cannot make God do anything—God knows what we need even before we ask. Instead, Jesus teaches us to pray in a way that helps us know God better—and see God’s work in our lives.**
- **Next question! Raise Question Cards and read question 5: Jesus teaches us a prayer to help us talk with God. 1. True or 2. False?**
 - *Contestant acts confused, then hits the buzzer, allowing the kids to show their answers.*
- **The correct answer is ... 1. True! Jesus DOES teach us a way to talk with God! Everyone who said number 1 is correct!**
- **In this prayer—often called the Lord’s Prayer—Jesus encourages us to call God our “Father in heaven,” because God loves us and wants what is best for us, like a perfect, loving dad ([Matth ew 6:9](#)).**
- **Next, Jesus teaches us that God and everything about Him is holy—set apart and deserving of honor and praise.**
- **We are to pray for God’s kingdom to come so that what God wants to happen is done on earth just as it’s done in heaven.**
- **When we pray this way, we are asking God to help us want to do things His way. This prayer helps us know God’s heart!**
- **Last question. Raise Question Cards up and read question 6: We should pray for ourselves. 1. True or 2. False?**

- Contestant acts confused, then hits the buzzer, allowing the kids to show their answers.
- **The correct answer is ... 1. True! Everyone who said number 1 is correct!**
- **God wants to hear about our needs and desires ... He loves us! But Jesus reminds us to focus on the things that truly matter to God's heart. Instead of new toys, or lots of money, or the nicest clothes, or the best video games, we pray that God would give us food to eat, forgiveness for when we sin—or do wrong things—and strength to avoid doing wrong things in the future. We can understand more about God's heart and know how to speak with Him because Jesus teaches us how to pray.**
- **Thanks for joining us today on our gameshow, "Pray Like What?" Hopefully you've learned a little more about prayer and how Jesus teaches us how to pray. See you next time! Thank the contestant and dismiss him.**

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

BIG IDEA | Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray

- **Great job following along! That was a fun way to learn God's word.**
- **We're learning that prayer is an important part of following Jesus. Prayer is how we talk with and listen to God. And best of all, Jesus shows us how to do it!**
- **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: Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray**
- **This month, we're learning what it means to pray and how we can talk to God! God always listens to our prayers. He is never too busy or tired. We can always talk to Him. And Jesus teaches us how to pray. He is the perfect example of how to live a life following God. He teaches us how to obey God and how to communicate with Him.**

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 66:19-20 (NIV)

- **I'm so excited because our new memory verse is all about prayer, too!**
- **This verse is from Psalm 66:19-20. We're going to work together all month long to memorize these words.**
- **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! When we memorize God's word, we let it live in our hearts and remind us of**

who God is and who we are. This verse reminds us that God always hears our prayers!

- **Now, we're going to have a chance to talk with our friends in small groups about everything we learned today and ask any questions you might have.**

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.*
- **Read the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:5-13**
- **When Jesus lived on earth as a man, what did some people do to get attention?**
- **What do we call the prayer that Jesus taught His followers?**
- **What do you think these words mean: "May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." ([Matthew 6:10](#))?**
- **How is God like a perfect, loving dad?**
- **How can praying to God help us to do what is right?**
- **What things do you think matter most to God's heart?**
- **Today in God's big story, Jesus teaches us how to pray. He helps us see that God is our Father in heaven, who wants to hear from us and care for us, like a good and loving father. Jesus shows us how praying can help us understand God's heart and teach us to care about what God cares about. Right now, we get the chance to do just that—to pray to God the way Jesus taught us to.**

PRAYER

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask the kids to share any praises or prayer requests they have. Remind them to think about the things that matter to God's heart. Invite the kids who are comfortable to pray out loud. Consider asking some kids to specifically offer praises and thanks to "our Father in heaven" and others to ask God to meet the needs that have been mentioned. Remind them that our Memory Verse tells us that God listens to our prayers and loves us.*

CLOSING

EXTRA TIME ACTIVITY | Plus One

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play in small groups OR Gather kids together on the floor or benches to explain*

the game. Have kids sit in a circle.

- **Today we're going to play a game called Plus One. I'll start. I'm going to do a simple motion—anything I want. I think I'll start with this.** *Clap your hands once. Point to the kid on your right. Now it's your turn. You will do the motion I did plus one simple motion of your own.* *Invite the kid to try it. Make suggestions if necessary, such as "pat your head" or "touch your nose."*
- **Great! Now we will keep it going around the circle. Pay attention! When it's your turn, you need to do all the motions that came before you, in order, plus one of your own!** *Let the kids try it. When someone messes up the order or forgets, invite that kid to start a new pattern. Play for as long as time allows.*
- **To play this game, we had to pay attention and follow the example of others, didn't we? You all did such a great job!**
- **We can learn a lot from following the example of others. We learned today that Jesus teaches us how to pray. Jesus teaches us by showing us how to do it! We get to watch and learn, just like we did in this activity.**