

Power of Prayer (Pre-K)

Week 1

BIG IDEA

Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray

BIBLE

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6)

FOR LEADERS

LEADER DEVOTIONAL

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Take a moment to learn about this week's passage and to get yourself ready to lead!*
- **DID YOU KNOW...**
 - **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 the Power of Prayer Spotify playlists for background worship music.*

PLAY | Free Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tables will be set with toys and activities for kids to play until the lesson begins. This is a great opportunity to get to know kids and build relationships.*
 - *Get on the floor and be silly*
 - *Play along with what they're playing*
 - *Ask get-to-know-you questions*
 - *Learn names and use them as you interact*

CLEAN UP

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before moving onto the lesson content, play the "Clean Up" song and work together as a class to put all toys and activities away.*
 - *Place all toys in labelled tubs.*
 - *Place all tubs away in labelled cabinets Invite kids to find a "sit spot"*

INTRO

TALK

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Gather kids on the floor and welcome them to church. Lead them through a repeat-after-me declaration to start the class.*
- **Welcome to church today, friends! I am so glad to be here with all of you.**
- **Let's say these words together.**
 - **Thank You, God, that You made me!** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
 - Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.
 - **And I am Your kid!** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
 - Put your hands on your hips.
 - **Jesus loves me so much,** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
 - Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.
 - **His love for me is big.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
 - Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.
 - **The Holy Spirit leads me** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
 - Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.
 - **And I can follow You.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
 - March like you're following the leader.
 - **My life can tell Your story,** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
 - Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.
 - **I'm a wonder, this is true.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
 - Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").
- **Today we're talking about prayer. Jesus teaches us how to pray and God is always listening.**

ACTIVITY | Can You Hear Me?

- **Did you know that God can hear all of us all the time? That's pretty amazing!**
- **Let's play a game to practice our listening.**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids sit in a circle. If you have a large group, you may choose to split into smaller groups to make the activity more manageable.*
- **I'm going to whisper something in (say the name of a child)'s ear. Then he is going to whisper it in the ear of the person next to him.**
- **You are going to keep whispering it to the person next to you until it gets back to me, and the last person will say it out loud. Ready?** *Whisper a phrase from the list below into a child's ear and encourage the kids to pass the phrase around the circle by whispering it until the phrase has reached the end. Encourage the last child to say it aloud. Play several rounds, starting with a different child each time.*
- *Here are some things you can whisper in the child's ear.*
 - "I can talk to God any time."
 - "God always hears my prayers."
 - "Jesus teaches us how to pray."
 - "Prayer is talking to God."

MUSIC | Worship Videos

- Today we'll learn about how we can talk to God. Let's sing and thank Him because He is always listening!
- Will you dance and sing to God with me?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play the worship music videos on the TV. Invite kids to participate by dancing and singing along.
- Thank you for worshipping God with me!
- Now, let's pray together before we hear our Bible Story.

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, we are so glad we can talk to You! Thank You for being there to listen to us. Help us learn how to talk to You. We invite Your Holy Spirit to be with us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 6:5-13 (The Lord's Prayer)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible, which is the first book in the New Testament. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.
- Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible.
- In our story today Jesus sits on a hill and gives a famous talk called the "Sermon on the Mount."
- Sometimes what Jesus teaches is surprising because it's different than what the world tells us.
- One of the things Jesus talks about in a surprising way is prayer. Prayer is talking with God, and when Jesus lived on earth, some people used prayer as a way to make themselves look better than other people. They would pray in public places like street corners to try to get attention from others.
- But Jesus says that attention was the only reward those people would receive. Instead of praying that way, Jesus tells us to pray in the privacy of our rooms with the door shut.
- Of course, Jesus is not saying that we cannot pray with others. Instead, Jesus encourages us to pray in a way that puts the focus on God, not us.
- When we pray this way, God sees us and hears our prayers.
- Let's learn what Jesus teaches about prayer. Show me how you look when you pray. Encourage the kids to do an action that shows how they pray. Encourage them to do any action they want; it doesn't all have to look the same.
- God cares about how we pray. Some people in Jesus' day thought that prayer was a kind of magic. They believed they could make God do things for them by saying lots of words in the right order. They wanted to control God through prayer. Sometimes people today still pray like that.
- But the type of prayer God wants is very different. Jesus says we cannot make God do

anything by our many words—God knows what we need even before we ask.

- **Instead, Jesus teaches us to pray simply and clearly. Jesus even teaches us a prayer that we can use to talk to Him. We call it the Lord’s Prayer, and it comes straight from Jesus! To help us remember parts of the Lord’s Prayer, we’ll do motions with our hands.**
- **You can help as we talk about the Lord’s Prayer. In this prayer, Jesus encourages us first to refer to God as our “Father in heaven” because God loves us and wants what is best for us. He is like a perfect, loving dad ([Matthew 6:9, NIV](#)). Let’s hold up our pointer finger.**

Encourage the kids to hold up one pointer finger.

- **Jesus tells us to praise God! This means to tell God how great He is!**
- **Next, hold up your first two fingers.***Encourage the kids to hold up the two fingers.*
- **Jesus teaches us to pray for our own needs. The things we need aren’t new toys, or having the nicest clothes, or lots of money. We should pray that God would give us things we actually need, such as food to eat, a home to live in, clothes to wear, and people to love and take care of us.**
- **Now hold up three fingers.***Encourage the kids to hold up three fingers.* **Jesus tells us we can ask His forgiveness when we sin—or do wrong things—and for strength to obey God in the future.**
- **The next thing Jesus tells us to pray for is other people. Hold up four fingers.***Encourage the kids to hold up four fingers.* **We can pray for God to help others who are sick, hurting, or need God’s help.**
- **Last, hold up all five fingers.***Encourage the kids to hold up all five fingers.* **Jesus wants us to pray for ourselves. We can pray that we focus on the things that truly matter to God, like obeying our parents and showing kindness to others.**
- **That’s how Jesus teaches us to talk to God! We can praise God, our loving Father***(hold up one finger)*. **We can ask God for what we need***(hold up two fingers)*. **We can ask God to forgive of for our wrong choices***(hold up three fingers)*. **We can pray for others***(hold up four fingers)*. **And we can ask God to make us the kind of people that we wants us to be!***(hold up all five fingers)*
- **That’s our Big Idea today: Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray!**

VIDEO | The Lord's Prayer

- Watch the [Lord's Prayer God's Big Story!](#)

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 66:19-20

- **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 with Him. Jesus teaches us how we can pray.**
- **Jesus says our prayers should include praising God, asking God to forgive us for our sins (the wrong things we do), asking God to help other people, and asking for what we need ourselves.**
- **We're going to practice saying our Memory Verse together.**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.*
 - **GOD LISTENS TO ME**—*Point to your ears.*
 - **AND HEARS MY PRAYERS.**—*Fold your hands together*

- **I CAN PRAISE HIM.**—Hold your hands above shoulders and turn wrists back and forth.
- **FROM [PSALM 66:19–20](#)**—Hold your hands out together with palms open, as if opening a book.
- **Great work, friends! We're going to keep practicing together each week.**
- **Now we get to talk with our friends about what we learned in God's big story. Let's head to our tables.**

SHARING TIME

SNACK

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Gather kids around the tables and serve snacks, while you move on to circle time. As the kids eat, you can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse.
 - **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Don't forget to check name tags for food allergies.

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As kids finish their snack, distribute the [coloring page](#) along with crayons and continue discussion and prayer time.

DISCUSSION | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Discuss the Bible story with the following questions. Feel free to repeat questions so that everyone has a chance to respond.
 - **Was it hard to hear the phrase that was whispered to you?**
 - **In God's big story, what did people do to make themselves look better?** (*pray loudly in front of others*)
 - **Do you think it's hard for God to hear us if we are whispering or praying silently in our heads? Why or why not?**
 - **What is something you think Jesus wants us to pray about?**
 - **What have you prayed for?**
 - **When do you pray?**
 - **Why do you think it's important to pray?**
- **Sometimes it's hard for us to listen and hear, like we may have experienced in our game today, but God always hears us! That's why Jesus teaches us to pray to God. We can always talk to Him, and He is always listening! Whether we whisper our prayers or shout them, God hears all of them. Let's talk to God now in prayer!**

PRAYER

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God for teaching us how to pray.

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 66:19-20

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to practice the memory verse together, following along with the motions. Award prizes to kids that say the verse.
 - **GOD LISTENS TO ME**—Point to your ears.
 - **AND HEARS MY PRAYERS.**—Fold your hands together
 - **I CAN PRAISE HIM.**—Hold your hands above shoulders and turn wrists back and forth.
 - **FROM [PSALM 66:19-20](#)**—Hold your hands out together with palms open, as if opening a book.
- **Great job! You can keep practicing at home this week, too. Maybe you could teach the verse to your family!**

PLAY TIME

EXTRA TIME ACTIVITY | Jesus Says

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids play a game that is similar to "Simon Says," but with a twist. You will call out things Jesus did or didn't tell us to do from to today's story. If Jesus didn't say it, have kids give a thumbs down. If He did say it, have kids give a thumbs up and jump up.
Examples:
 - Jesus said ... pray super-loud and in front of everyone. (thumbs down)
 - Jesus said ... pray for God to help others. (thumbs up)
 - Jesus said ... to ask for forgiveness when we make a bad choice. (thumbs up)
 - Jesus said ... to ask God to give us lots of toys. (thumbs down)
 - Jesus said ... praise God and tell Him how much we love Him. (thumbs up)
 - Jesus said ... ask God for things we need, such as a home, clothes, and food. (thumbs up)
 - Jesus said ... complain to God when we don't get chocolate cake for dessert. (thumbs down)
 - Jesus said ... we can ask God to help us obey and do the right thing. (thumbs up)
 - Jesus said ... we can pray for someone who is sick. (thumbs up)
 - Jesus said ... God always hears our prayers. (thumbs up)
- **Wow, that was a lot of fun! Jesus said some important things in God's big story today, and you did a great job remembering the things Jesus said and the things Jesus didn't say!**