

# RI.C11. Spiritual Habits - Prayer

Matthew 6:5-13, Acts 1:14 & 2:42, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, Matthew 6:6

## Learning Objectives

1. The students will be able to explain the importance of prayer.
2. The students will identify specific things they can do to further establish the discipline of regular prayer time with God.

**Memory Verse:**                    *“The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed.”*

*--Acts 2:42 (NIRV)*

## Getting Started

“Tell Your Story”:

See: [www.teensundayschool.com](http://www.teensundayschool.com) → Games → “Fast Talkers”

Select several volunteers to test their talking skills before the rest of the class. The object is for each student to tell a story, talking without stopping for 1 minute. The catch is that you will also select a letter. The students cannot say any words in their stories that start with that letter or they are out. If they pause for more than 2 seconds, they are also out. (You may need to recruit some volunteers to add to your class for the day.) The rest of the class will listen carefully and call STOP if the story teller makes any mistake. Please see the above website for detailed instructions and a guide to the discussion.

## Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities

**Message:**                    *Never Stop Praying!*

*Start the lesson by asking the students the following questions. Discuss openly together.*

- What do you think “prayer” is?
- How often do you think a person ought to pray?
- How often do you pray?
- Can you think of someone whose life is filled with prayer?
- How is their life different?
- Do you think there is a relationship between how much—and in what way—a person prays and their closeness to God? What is it?

Remind the children that developing spiritual habits in our lives is all about building a relationship with God. Prayer is one of those spiritual habits. Can you imagine having a relationship with God and never talking to Him? (*Discuss together.*)

## Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

DID YOU KNOW? If you searched the Bible for the word “pray” or “prayer”, there are 365 verses in the Bible that have either of these words written in it. Prayer is an important part of our New Apostolic Christian lives and something we should know (at least) a little bit about.

*NOTE: Look up and read together each of the following Bible verses in today’s lesson.*

### **Matthew 6:5-13**

<sup>5</sup> "When you pray, do not be like those who only pretend to be holy. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners. They want to be seen by others. What I'm about to tell you is true. They have received their complete reward.

<sup>6</sup> "When you pray, go into your room. Close the door and pray to your Father, who can't be seen. He will reward you. Your Father sees what is done secretly.

<sup>7</sup> "When you pray, do not keep talking on and on the way ungodly people do. They think they will be heard because they talk a lot. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup> "This is how you should pray.

*(The following is taken from the New King James Version of the Bible, to be consistent with how we recite the Lord’s Prayer in the divine service.)*

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come.

Your will be done  
On earth as *it is* in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What does Jesus say our attitude should be like when we pray? (*Humble, not showing off.*)
2. If God knows what we need before we ask, why do you think we pray? (*Discuss together.*)
3. If you could summarize the Lord’s Prayer (verses 9-13) into a couple statements, what would they be?

The goal of prayer is not to simply rattle off a bunch of requests (we want this, please do that, etc.). Instead, prayer is a way to connect with God. Maybe God tells us to pray (even though He knows what we’re going to say) because He loves us, plain and simple. He wants to have a relationship with us. Remind the children that this is what developing these Spiritual Habits is about: building up our relationship with God.

### **Acts 1:14**

<sup>14</sup> They all came together regularly to pray. The women joined them too. So did Jesus' mother Mary and his brothers.

## Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

### Acts 2:42

<sup>42</sup> The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What was the priority of prayer in the early church, based on these two verses? *(It was a high priority.)*
2. How often did they devote themselves to prayer? *(Continually, constantly.)*
3. Acts 2:42 describes the lifestyle of early Christians. If you were to describe your lifestyle, or the lifestyle of our class, in one verse, would it sound like this? *(Discuss together.)*
4. What is the priority of prayer in your life? *(Let the children reflect on this question in their journals at the end of the lesson.)*

Our next verse is short, but direct and powerful.

### 1 Thessalonians 5:17

<sup>17</sup> Never stop praying.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. How often does this verse say we should pray? *(It says we should never stop.)*
2. What do you think it means to pray without ceasing? *(Discuss together.)*
3. How often do you pray? *(Use this opportunity to help the children learn to find and make the time to talk to God. Discuss together.)*

Tell the children: “Some of us may already pray a lot. But we all have growing to do. So, how do you start having better conversations with God? Let’s look at some ideas on how to start a habit of prayer in your own life.”

#### **PLACE & TIME:**

We often read that Jesus got up early in the morning to pray. He did this not because we have to get up early, but because it was at this time he was able to get off by Himself, which was important. (See Mark 1:35; 6:46)

### Mark 1:35 ~ Jesus Prays in a Quiet Place

<sup>35</sup> It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where He could be alone. There He prayed.

### Mark 6:46

<sup>46</sup> After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray.

If you want to develop a habit of prayer in order to grow in your relationship with God, you do need to decide upon a good time and place to pray. Maybe it’s first thing in the morning. Maybe it’s at the end of the day. Where you pray also matters. If you try to pray while watching television, it might not work out so well. Do you need to get off by yourself? Go to your room? Spend time outside?

## **Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued**

### **Matthew 6:6**

<sup>6</sup> "When you pray, go into your room. Close the door and pray to your Father, who can't be seen. He will reward you. Your Father sees what is done secretly.

Jesus tells us in this verse (Matthew 6:6) to go off by ourselves to talk to God. So wherever you pray, try to find a place where you can really concentrate.

### **Optional Activity:**

Have everyone in the class start to talk loudly with one another. They can say anything—their ABC's, singing songs, or talking about their own stuff. Then, instruct two people to have a conversation in the middle of this setting. (Recruit volunteers as needed to make this work.) The point will be clear—it's hard to talk and hard to hear when everything around you is stirring.

## **Application to Real Life**

*The following is meant to help your children with the concept of prayer developing their relationship with God. Use your easel or white board to reinforce the points. Label the top of the board "Helpful Hints for Prayer" or something similar. As you go through these, write them down on the list, and encourage the children to take notes in their journals or on another paper so that they can remember them when they go home. Add to the list as well, with any other suggestions that your children make during the discussion.*

### **Ideas to help you with PRAYER and developing a relationship with God:**

#### **1. *Make a Prayer List***

Keep a prayer list on your computer, phone, or even on a piece of notebook paper. Maybe there's a list of friends you are praying for. Post your list in your locker at school. Perhaps there's a place you go to pray. Keep your list there.

#### **2. *Pray Out Loud***

Praying out loud changes the way you feel when you pray. It can also help you concentrate, which is a good thing. Find a quiet place to go, and try it.

#### **3. *Prayer Walks***

Go on a walk when you pray. Praying outside, in nature, or maybe while you listen to some appropriate music can help you connect with God on multiple levels.

Ask the children: "How many of you have tried any of these things? How did they work? Have you tried anything else that works well for you?" (*Discuss together.*)

Remind the children that we want to live a life full of prayer. We learned in today's lesson to never stop praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17). All of us have knee-jerk reactions to things in life. If our parents get onto us, we often rebel. If a teacher is hard on us, we shut down. If a friend is mean to us, we feel hurt. What if your "knee-jerk reaction" in every situation was to pray? What if, instead of having a formal prayer for every situation, you were constantly in conversation with God in your heart? Talk about this together as a class. How would that change your relationships with God?

End your class time together by giving students a few minutes to practice their new habits. Give them more time than usual, and let them know when they are finished praying that they can leave class.

## Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

## Journal Reflection Questions

- What would a lifestyle of “prayer” look like in your day-to-day? Be specific. Write about it.
- How might you find your attitude changing if you adopted a lifestyle of prayer? What kind of effect do you think it might have on your life? Write about it.
- Consider your current schedule. Decide on a time each day that you can spend a few minutes in prayer with God. Commit to your “prayer time” with God each day for 30 days. Do you think you can do this task? Why or why not.

## Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **A Visit from the Wise Men** as well as Matthew 2:1-12 and Luke 2.
- Learn the memory verse:  
“...I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life.” --John 8:12 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith #\_\_\_\_\_.
- What was the best present you ever received, and why? What was the worst present you ever received, and why? Write it down or draw a picture. Bring it to class to share.