

Prayer Anywhere! Pray without stopping

CF07.1

Bible Verses: Matthew 6:9-13, Mark 1:35-37, Acts 9:36-42, 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

The aim of this session is to help the children to realise that prayer is something they can do any time, any place, with any words.

Leader's notes

Prayer is very, very simple. You open your mouth and talk, and God listens.

Prayer is extremely profound.... You are prompted by the Holy Spirit; you open your mouth and you pray. God acts. Things change.

Prayer is a privilege – we are able to come right to God himself, the maker of the universe. We get to sit beside him, as it were, and talk about anything we want. Prayer is our life blood as Christians – it is the time that we communicate directly with God.

People worry about prayer - about using the right words, about what they should pray for, about how long they should pray. And it is true that people can be very critical of other people's style, and it hurts. Jesus, however, made it perfectly clear when he compared the Pharisee and the tax collector that what God looks at is our heart. He knows our motivations, he knows what we are thinking – he even provides the Holy Spirit to speak for us when we don't know what to say – and there are times when we simply don't know - Try praying for the Middle East!

Prayer is our communication with God. It doesn't matter what other people think, each one of us will pray in an individual style. We need to encourage the children in our care to be able to pray freely and naturally – and you will probably have leaders on your team who also need freedom in this area because of unhelpful comments in the past. God loves to hear us – and it is He who made us – and our worship styles – so diverse.

Hunting In The Dark

Warming Up

10 mins

 Game

If you can, make your room as dark as possible. Choose a child to be the seeker, and everyone else can hide. As the children are found they can join in looking for other children. The last child found is the winner, and can be the seeker if you choose to play again.

If you can't darken your room, then play in the light as normal. Count the children before you start, especially if you have a larger group, so that no one is missed!

The Point: Just for fun, but ties in with the disciples looking for Jesus early in the morning.

Equipment

None

Good Evening Your Majesty

Warming Up

10 mins

 Game

Choose a child who thinks they recognise people's voices. That child can stand at the front of the room with their back to the group.

Point at one of the children. That child should say, "Good evening, your Majesty" in a disguised voice. If the child at the front can't recognise the voice, the child who has spoken takes his place. If the child at the front guesses correctly, point at someone else. Keep going until the child at the front is tricked.

You should get through several people at the front; if you have time let everyone have a go at guessing voices.

You might like to comment that God recognises the voice of everyone in the universe.

The Point: Just for fun.


Equipment

None

Jesus Prays

Teaching Time

10 mins

 Bible Study

Read Mark 1:35-37.

Ask the children to pretend to be Jesus. They should lie down on the floor, then pretend to wake up and tiptoe out, find another space and kneel to pray.

Bring the children back together. Ask them where Jesus went to pray? Why do they think Jesus did that? Say that Jesus liked to be on his own with God... just talking to him and listening. He always spent time with God, especially when he was busy.

Ask the children if they think there are rules about praying? Let them share freely, and disabuse them of any that will be a problem for them – such as, you have to use special language or you have to pray for half an hour.

Say that there are no rules about praying. All you have to do is talk to God. And you can talk to him anywhere and about everything! God loves us and is interested in everything we have to say.

Give the children space to talk about when they pray, how they pray, and any stories they know about God answering prayer – weigh in with some of your own so that they can see that prayer is something that happens today.

The Point: To see that Jesus found time for prayer, and to learn from him.


Equipment

A Bible.

When You Pray

Teaching Time

10 mins

 Bible Study

Look at Matthew 6:9-13 and read it together.

Say that this isn't the only way we can pray – but Jesus used it as an example of how we can pray. We are going to look at the prayer and think about what it means. Below I have written out a script, but adapt it to your group – ideally, encourage the children to come up with their own suggestions for each section of the prayer.

Say that it starts with, “Hallowed be your name”. This means, may people honour you. So when we start to pray, we should remember what God is like – and tell him how wonderful he is.

Ask the children to think about what God is like, and write the answers on your flip chart.... Holy, big, amazing might be some words.

It goes on to ask that God's Kingdom will come. That means, that people will become Christians and that people will live God's way. Ask the children what sort of things that means?

Maybe we can pray for people that we want to become Christians – let the children give suggestions. We can also pray for things that are bad in the world- if there has been an earthquake or volcano, or if children are hungry, or if there is a war. Can the children think of examples? Write them on the chart.

Give us our bread – that means, provide for our needs. We are allowed to ask God for the things we need – or want. What could we ask for?

Forgive us – We all do things wrong! We should ask God to forgive us. And we need to forgive other people. Sometimes it's really hard to forgive someone for something – but God will help us if we ask him.

Don't add to the chart here – just give children space to pray quietly to ask for forgiveness, or to ask for help forgiving someone else.

The last part asks God to keep us safe. What sort of things might we need to be kept safe from? Add these to the list.

Finally, we remember that God is great! Finish by adding some praises to God to the end of the flip chart paper.

If you have time, pray through some of your ideas together. Make it clear that every prayer does not have to be this long.... this is a real, "spend time with God" prayer. It is quite okay just to pray short prayers as well!

The Point: To look at the Lord's Prayer and to learn from it a simple structure of things that we can pray about.

Equipment

Bible, or a copy of Matthew 6:9-13. Flip chart paper and pens.

Night Sky

Take Away

10 mins

 Craft Ideas

This item can be shared with your group using the QR code:

This activity will work well with the following Teaching Time activities: Jesus Prays and When You Pray



Before the session, on each sheet of paper write "Jesus prayed" in candle – it should be invisible.

Give the children paper and ask them to use candles to draw stars around the edge of the paper.

Then they should take the paint – provide evening colours like purple and dark blue – and wash over their picture. The stars – and the surprise message – should show through.

Have a go with the paint first to make sure that it is the right consistency!

The Point: To remember that Jesus prayed on his own before it was light.


Equipment

Paper, thinned paint (with water), brushes, wax candles.

Popcorn

Response

5 mins

 Prayer

In Popcorn prayer, everybody crouches with their feet on the floor. People think of things that they would like to thank God for, and jump up (like corn popping) to shout out, “Thank you for (spring time)”, “Thank you for (good friends) and so on.

The beauty of popcorn prayer is that anyone can join in and because the prayers are so short, no one has to worry about “getting it wrong”.

The Point: To practise prayer.


Equipment

None.

For Others

Response

5 mins

 Prayer

Adults pray for each other. There is no reason why children can't do the same.

Ask your children to get into either very small groups or pairs. They can then pray for each other. Let the child being prayed for say what they want prayer for – help to keep their temper, new friends, or maybe they know someone who is ill. If they don't have any ideas, just pray that God will bless them.

Give the children a short amount of time to pray. Don't drag it out – they only need to pray one sentence prayers – but be careful not to cut the time too short: everyone who wants to be prayed for should have the opportunity. It might be a good idea to have an activity for the children to move onto as they finish – maybe a snack break?

The Point: To practise praying for other people.


Equipment

None.

Don't Stop

Response

5 mins

 Memory Verse

“Pray without stopping.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Stand in a circle. Throw the ball to one another as the music plays. When the music stops, the child holding the ball should say the memory verse. Repeat until most of the children are comfortable with the words.

The Point: To learn the Bible.

Equipment

A ball, recorded music and the means to play it.
