



PARENT GUIDE

LESSON SEVEN: PRAY

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LESSON SEVEN: PRAY

OBJECTIVE: To help families follow Jesus by learning more about the Lord's Prayer and by learning to have faith that God hears and answers us, as Jesus taught.

FOCUS ON FOLLOWING JESUS

Jesus taught us to pray – to trust that God hears us and knows just what we need before we ask, and when we follow Jesus we pray as he instructed.

([Luke 11:2](#) "Jesus said to them, "When you pray, this is what you should say.")

GRIP ON THE GOSPEL

God longs to answer our prayers for forgiveness and to change us into the image of his son, we can access salvation through prayers of faith.

([Romans 10:9](#) "Say with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord." Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved.")

WHAT DO I DO?

- Read the [For Parents](#) article. Spend a few minutes thinking and praying.
- Read over the [Discipleship Lesson](#) and decide when you will do it with your family.
- Gather your family, a Bible and any supplies listed on the lesson sheet. Use the script provided to teach a [Discipleship Lesson](#) to your family, adapting as needed.
- Use the 5 mini-lessons as [Daily Bible Time](#) prompts through the week.
- Select one or more [Discipleship Activities](#) to incorporate into your week.



FOR PARENTS

This week, instead of reading another article or making a list of to-dos as a parent, we encourage you to just spend time praying for your children, maybe in a new way. There is nothing that will replace just PRAYING, although if we're out of habit or intimidated by the thought of prayer, it can be difficult to start. Nothing will help you improve your prayer life with God more than just praying.

Some ideas include:

- Using the prayer calendar on the next page as a guide to pray daily for your children's character and choices. Sometimes we don't know what to pray and prompts like this can be helpful for some people.
- When you read a passage of the Bible, turn what you read into prayers for your child (Here are some examples: "Give them ears to listen to you when you speak, like you gave Samuel" or "Let them obey the law of the Lord, and not follow the advice of evil people...Psalm 1:1", etc.).
- Set an alarm or phone notification to pray for your children while they are at school.
- Pray with your children before school, before meals, before bed.
- Pray with your spouse – if possible – about your children.
- If praying alone is difficult, remember that we were given a community of other believers to help us learn to practice spiritual disciplines, and practicing them with others is just as valuable – find a prayer partner, or attend adult prayer meetings at church. If you get together with a Christian friend to go to the gym or on a walk or to take kids to activities, see if they would pray with you.
- If you feel like words fail you often, there is nothing wrong with praying other's words – Jesus taught us to pray following his model, there is no rule that says every prayer of yours must be original! Check out books like 'Valley of Vision: Puritan Prayers' or read the prayers of others in books and articles.
- Do an internet search for 'blessings to pray for your child' and adopt or combine several to create a signature biblical prayer to pray for your children. Some parents have used Numbers 6:24-26.
- Read historic prayers from others to inspire our words and set our hearts to the kind of posture prayer requires. Sometimes we don't know how to pray or what to pray, and we can be greatly helped by the words of others.

Consider these Questions:

1. What was your prayer life like as a child or teen? What do you wish you knew? Or what have you lost from that time?
2. What circumstances in your life taught you the most about prayer?
3. In your life, do you tend to pray first, complain to others or worry first?
4. What keeps you from praying, if you were really honest with yourself?



1 SALVATION

Pray they would receive forgiveness, and choose to follow Jesus with their whole hearts

2 BELONGING

Pray that they would find their belonging and identity in God rather than the world

CHURCH

Pray that they would see Church as a place for them, that they would love to worship God there

4 FRIENDS

Pray that they would find good friends who encourage them and influence them positively

5 LOVE

Pray that they would love others deeply, and look for love in God and other believers

6 LOVE FOR GOD

Pray that they would grow in their love and knowledge of God

7 WISDOM

Pray they would make wise choices, and know the path they should take

8 PEACE

Pray they would have a peace-filled heart, and not be troubled

9 CONTENTMENT

Pray that they would grow in contentment and be grateful for everything

10 COURAGE

Pray they would have courage to face adversity and to do the right thing in daily life

11 JOY

Pray that they would have joy in their heart and choose joy in life's circumstances

12 ENDURANCE

Pray they would learn to endure discomfort, and hard work and learn how to wait for God's time

13 PURPOSE

Pray that they would have a sense of purpose, and trust God's plans for them

14 PATIENCE

Pray that they would learn patience with others, and with themselves

15 WITNESS

Pray that they would shine the love of Jesus brightly, and represent Him well to those in their life

16 FAMILY

Pray for your family that you would be unified, and your home would be a place of peace, joy and love. Pray your children will love their family

31 PRAYERS FOR YOUR KIDS

17 INFLUENCES

Pray for those who have influence in your child's life (teachers, coaches, family), pray that your child you will have good, Godly influences and great examples in life to follow

18 TRUST

Pray that your child would not worry, but would trust God and learn to control worried or fearful thoughts

19 SELF CONTROL

Pray that they would learn and choose self-control - control over their actions and thoughts

20 HUMILITY

Pray that they would learn to be humble and think of others, while still knowing their worth

21 PROTECTION

Pray that they would be physically, spiritually and emotionally protected from harm

22 OBEDIENCE

Pray that they would choose to obey parents and God with joy

23 WORDS

Pray they would be careful with their words, learn not to lie or speak in anger but with love

24 GRATITUDE

Pray that they would see how much they have to be grateful for, and be grateful for gifts, time, opportunities, their whole life

25 FUTURE

Pray for your child's future, that they would choose to follow God and trust God with big choices

26 BIBLE

Pray that your children would love God's Word and understand what it says to them, that they would want to read it more

27 COMPASSION

Pray that they would have compassion for others, especially the poor, forgotten and lonely

28 GROWTH

Pray that they would grow in wisdom, spiritual maturity and character, that they would seek after God and accept trials as a means to growth

29 FAITH

Pray that their faith would be strong, and in all things they would believe in God and act upon that faith

30 WORK

Pray that they would learn to love work, and feel satisfaction in it, that they would find meaningful and interesting hobbies and passions

31 MISSIONS

Pray that they would have a heart for reaching the lost with the Gospel of Jesus, and live their lives accordingly



DISCIPLESHIP LESSON

Instructions:

- Read or teach the text using your own words
- *Text in italics is a note to the adult leading*
- This icon  indicates a question you should ask
- This icon  tells you there is a Bible verse to read
- **Text inside a grey box is a tip or idea for you!**
- **Text inside this box is a short activity or task**

The lesson should take about **45 minutes** to complete.

Supplies Needed:

- **Bible**
- Prepare ahead of time: a picture puzzle or phrase written in code to solve.

PRAYER CODE



Codebreaking Fun!

Many kids find solving puzzles and cracking codes fun! But you'll have to choose something at the right level for your kids and prepare something. Google: "secret codes for kids."

Some fun ones to try include Rebus, Pig Pen Cipher and Cipher Wheels. Learn how to use them and try writing a Bible verse in code!

For very young children, find and print a simple maze instead.

Gather your family for the family Discipleship Lesson. Remind your family that this is something exciting to do together, to look at the Bible and Jesus and learn what it means to be a disciple!

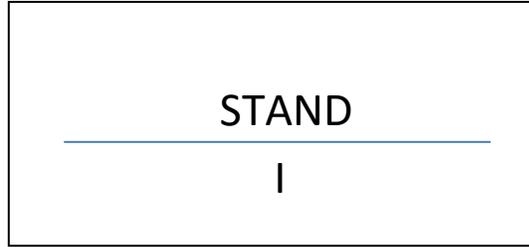
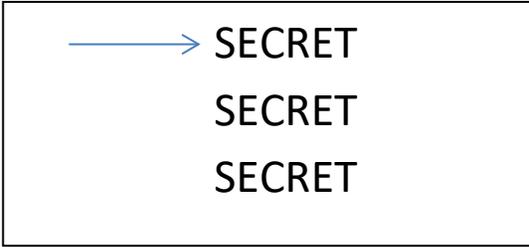
Some people find it fun to solve word puzzles and use secret codes!



**What would you use a secret code for?
(Or, what would you keep safe inside a maze?)**

A code could come in handy if you really wanted to send a message to someone, perhaps without anyone seeing it! Plus, it's just kind of fun.

Play with a few secret codes or puzzles as a family. If you can't think of something to put in code, pick a simple Bible verse, or the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who is in Heaven..."
Copy one or more of the simple puzzles on the next page onto a whiteboard, paper or screen – or find some of your own you think your kids will like!
Talk about how puzzles get a message across, but in a different way!



The answers to these puzzles are:

1. Top Secret
2. I understand
3. A walk in the Park
4. Pretty Please

Secret codes and puzzles like these can be really fun! But I'm glad that I can talk to you, my family, without having to talk in code! I'm really, really glad that when God decided to communicate to us, he didn't use a secret code that only some people could understand. He had people write down words that we could have forever! They are in the Bible. That is one way God communicates with us!



When we want to communicate with God, what is that called?

Right! It's called prayer! Prayer is what we're going to talk about today. To pray means to talk to God.

Jesus taught his friends a lot about praying and he even showed them how to pray. There is a lot of teaching in the Bible about prayer – but let's see what we already know!

(Read the following statements. Have family members vote thumbs up if it is true and thumbs down if it is false.)

1. God only hears us when we pray out loud! (FALSE)
2. The Bible says we should bow our head and fold our hands to pray. (FALSE)
3. God already knows what we will pray before we pray it. (TRUE)
4. The Bible says we should pray all the time. (TRUE)
5. The most important time to pray is right before bed. (FALSE)
6. Praying is mostly for adults, pastors and Sunday school teachers. (FALSE)
7. God listens to us pray even if we are just a little kid. (TRUE)



You could add or subtract questions from this list, based on what you know your children already know.

If your kids need to move around a bit, designate one wall as **YES** and one wall as **NO**. Have them run to the wall that answers your question.



See? You know lots about praying already! You have learned this as we pray as a family, and watching other people pray. Still, the Bible teaches us so much more about praying, and even adults who have been praying their whole lives can learn a little bit about prayer! So today we're going to talk about three really important ideas we need to know when we follow Jesus!

1. GOD ALWAYS HEARS US

If all of us whispered really quietly to ourselves something we've asked God for, I might not hear you at all. If I was listening as hard as I could, maybe I could hear one of you – but I'm just an ordinary person! God is much, much different than me! See, even if a billion people on earth were praying at the exact same time, God hears every one of them as clearly as if they were the only voice! God hears our prayers even when we whisper super quietly or even if we just think prayers in our head!

God hears your prayers if they are very short or very long. God hears you if you use a big loud voice or a tiny whisper!



Your kids might be interested to know some of the background of why Jesus was teaching about prayer the way he was! Share with them that religious people used prayer to show others how religious they were and to try to make themselves popular and powerful. They didn't pray because they really wanted to talk to God. Jesus had to help people 'unlearn' all kinds of things like this!



Matthew 6:6-8



What is most surprising to you about these verses?

Do you think it surprised the people who first heard Jesus?



Hebrews 4:16, 1 John 5:14, Jeremiah 29:12



What do these verses mean?

The Bible describes us as God's beloved children and invites us to ask God for whatever we need, and to talk to him about whatever is on our hearts. It also describes God like a King sitting on a throne, and we have permission to go and talk to the King! We shouldn't be shy to do this, because we know God always hears us. But at the same time, we shouldn't be too silly when we pray – God is very important and our prayers are important.

The God who cares for the WHOLE WORLD hears us and wants to help us!



2. GOD ALWAYS ANSWERS US

The second big thing about prayer is that God answers us! When we pray to God he doesn't ignore us, like your sister or brother might! No, God gives us an answer to our prayers, every time! Here's the important thing about that though – there are lots of ways of answering.

So, let's say you asked a question of me, such as, "Can I have a cookie?"



How might I answer you? *(Let your children give you answers, maybe they will see that it depends on the situation – when, where and how you ask!)*

If you ask for a cookie after your lunch, I might say yes. If you ask for one after breakfast, I'll tell you to wait until snack-time. If you can't have an ingredient in the cookie, or we don't have any cookies, or it wouldn't be good for you right now because you've just brushed your teeth and you're in bed – I would say no!



Why might God say no to something we ask?

When might God want us to wait for something?

Can you think of examples?



1 John 5:15

3. GOD WANTS US TO PRAY ALWAYS

When you have a problem – who do you go to first? Sometimes we go to a parent or friend or look it up on the internet. Sometimes we try to solve our problem all by ourselves. But what does the Bible say?



1 Thessalonians 5:17



There may be a better example for your family, or a recent example of a time you might have answered your children with a yes, a no or a wait.

**What does this verse mean? What does it mean to never stop praying?**

Prayers can look like lots of things. Simple prayers like THANK YOU and HELP are still prayers! When we think about God all the time and know he is with us, praying to him becomes easier!

As a family this week, we're going to learn more about prayer and practice praying together, and especially looking at what Jesus taught his disciples about prayer. We have the ability to talk to God, which is amazing! As a family that follows Jesus, prayer is very important to us!



Your kids will pick up on your enthusiasm and excitement about prayer. Making prayer a privilege and joy instead of a chore is a great discipleship task!

Close by praying together that God would help your family to be disciples and pray always.



DAILY BIBLE TIME

Take a few minutes each day this week to spend some time together reading from God’s Word and discussing it together. Questions and verses are provided for you below. Use the Bible version your children are used to. NIV is a good one for very young children.

1	<p><u>Matthew 6:9-13</u></p>	<p>Read the Lord’s Prayer together. <i>Consider reading it from two other versions your family doesn’t use regularly (ESV, CSB, NIV along with NLT, the Message or Amplified).</i></p> <p>What are some things that Jesus tells us are important to pray for?</p> <p>What <i>isn’t</i> included here in the Lord’s Prayer?</p> <p>Why might Jesus have taught us to ask for our ‘Daily Bread’ instead of to have all the food we needed forever?</p> <p>When you pray to God, what one part of prayer do you usually focus on? (older kids)</p> <p>Pray together using some of the words from the Lord’s Prayer with your own as well. Take turns praying with your family until everyone has had a chance to pray.</p>
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2	<p><u>Matthew 6:9-13</u></p>	<p>Read the Lord’s Prayer together again.</p> <p>What are the main things we are told to pray for?</p> <p>When should we praise and thank God?</p> <p>When should we ask for what we need, and for forgiveness?</p> <p>As a family, re-write the Lord’s Prayer in your own words. Post it somewhere your family will see it this week. Use this as a pattern for your prayer together.</p>
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3	<p>Write out a selection of verses from this box ahead of time (or others your children know)</p>	<p>Other than the Lord’s Prayer, many portions of the Bible teach us how to pray, and we can use the Bible as a pattern for our words. While God loves to hear us use our own words and thoughts, sometimes we are not sure what to pray. Bible words remind us what is true, what God promises and what we can expect when we pray.</p> <p><i>As a family, talk about how to use the Bible for prayer.</i></p> <p><u>Isaiah 41:10</u> could become, “Lord, let Mary not be afraid because you are with her. Don’t let her be terrified, even though she is facing a scary time. You are her God. You will make her strong and help her, please hold her safe in your hands as you have promised.”</p> <p>Copy the following verses onto papers, and have children who can read choose one to pray for themselves or someone else. For non-readers and very young children choose one verse to use as a family.</p> <p>Prayers for yourself: <u>Psalm 19:14</u>, <u>Psalm 139:14</u>, <u>John 3:16</u>, <u>Philippians 4:6-7</u>, <u>4:8</u>, <u>4:13</u>, <u>Joshua 1:9</u>, <u>Proverbs 3:5-6</u>, <u>Matthew 5:16</u>, <u>2 Timothy 1:7</u>, <u>Deuteronomy 31:6</u>, etc.</p> <p>Prayers for others: <u>Isaiah 40:29-31</u>, <u>Psalm 23</u>, <u>John 14:27</u>, <u>Matthew 11:28</u>, <u>Psalm 37:4</u></p>
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4	<u>Psalm 86</u>	<p>There are other types of prayers given to us in the Bible. King David was just a little boy when he started to follow God – long before he became King! David prayed to God, sometimes he wrote the prayers down and turned them into songs. Read Psalm 86 – or just a few lines from the beginning and end.</p> <p>What do we notice about David’s prayer? What does he tell God about? What does he ask God for? What does he affirm about God? Can a song be a prayer? What is the difference between singing a song and praying it?</p> <p>If you wish, choose a favourite worship song and sing it together as a family.</p>
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5	<u>Psalm 103</u> <u>Psalm 145</u>	<p>Praising God is part of prayer! When we look at prayers in the Bible, such as the Psalms of David or the Lord’s Prayer, we start and finish by talking about how God is amazing. God doesn’t need to hear those things, but they are a great reminder for us – and help to get our mind in the right place. Read over one or both Psalms. Together as a family, you are going to be “God Detectives”. Look for clues to who God is! Make a list of the things these Psalms say about God, then spend time praising God for who He is!</p>
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DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES

Use any of the following activities to extend the learning and disciple your child in everyday life.

- **Pray Together:** Take time to begin a new prayer habit as a family – together before your day begins, at bedtime together, or once a week spending a little time together praying for one another and others.
- **Memorize:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 together as a family. Talk about these verses in daily life.
- **Missions:** Consider expanding who you pray for to include those in other countries. Look at a map and use an app like Operation World to help you pray for people in another country, or use prayer calendars offered by missionary agencies and pick one region or need per week to pray for together.

Daily Life:

- **Prayer Sticks:** Collect 10-20 popsicle sticks and paint them with acrylics paints. Paint each stick one solid colour. While the sticks are drying, come up with a list of people, groups, places or ministries to pray for. Ask your kids who they think needs God's help and remind them that God hears our prayers and loves to help when you pray. Write one prayer request on each stick. Choose one a day, or one per person per day, depending on your family, and move it to the 'empty' jar to know you have prayed for them. Start again when you run out of sticks!
- **Prayer Drawings:** We can pray without speaking words out of our mouths, just thinking thoughts in our head directed to God. We can also pray with our hands – and draw out our prayers. They don't have to be works of art, and may be pictures of people, with hearts or circles around them, or lists with doodles attached. You could draw a bandage on a figure of someone you are asking God to heal, a heart filled with names of people you need help to love, etc.
- **Make a playlist of your favourite prayer-songs.** Sing along as a family and let them inspire you to pray! Some kid-friendly suggestions to check out include : 'Lord I Need You' by Matt Maher, 'My Everything' by Owl City, 'Oh How I love You' by Hillsong Kids, 'Look at Me' by Amber Sky