

**LESSON 3: PRAY OFTEN**

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

**1. LEADER PREPARATION****LESSON OVERVIEW**

The concept of prayer can seem intimidating, especially for new Christians. How do we talk to Jesus? What do we talk to him about? Jesus knows we need guidance, so he provides a model for prayer, often referred to as the Lord's Prayer. In this lesson, students will explore the privilege of talking to Jesus through prayer.

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. **WHAT:** The Bible provides many examples about when to pray, how to pray, and what we can pray to Jesus about.
2. **WHY:** Because prayer can be daunting, having a model of prayer from the Bible gives us an idea of how to begin.
3. **HOW:** Students can grow in their comfort with praying to Jesus when they see how he prayed, specifically through his example of the Lord's Prayer.

**PRIMARY SCRIPTURE**

Luke 11:1-4

**SECONDARY SCRIPTURE**

Philippians 4:6

**TEACHING PREP**

**LEADER  
TIP**

**Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.**

Read Luke 11:1-4.

This gospel was written by a Gentile doctor named Luke. In this profession, Luke would have valued details, and that's obvious in how he recounts Jesus' life. From start to finish, Luke is the most comprehensive of the four gospels.

Being a Gentile, Luke most likely felt like an outsider. So he writes from an outsider's viewpoint and emphasizes that Jesus' salvation extends beyond the Jews to *everyone*—no matter their background.

In Luke 11, Jesus' disciples ask him to teach them to pray. Interestingly, the disciples were already very familiar with prayer; it was part of their culture. They prayed and were around other people who prayed publicly and privately. So why do they ask Jesus to teach them to pray?

The disciples have been observing Jesus in action—his power, healing, teaching, love, and prayer. They recognize that the way he prays is different and has amazing results. The disciples are motivated to truly learn and experience God's power as they see Jesus experience it.

The value of the Lord's Prayer isn't necessarily in reciting it word for word, but in using it as a model for our conversations with God: praising him, asking for his vision for our life and not our own, requesting what we need, confessing our sins, and receiving forgiveness. These are all important elements in our prayer life.

Like Jesus' disciples, we can learn from him and have access to his power to heal, love, and make a difference. The power of prayer is available to everyone who follows Jesus.

## **THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]**

### **TEXTS OR TWEETS**

**Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.**

- *Ever wonder if there's a "right way" to talk to Jesus? Don't miss a great topic this week!*
- *What's the big deal about the Lord's Prayer? We'll take the mystery out of it!*

### **PARENT EMAIL**

**Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.**

Dear Parents,

This week in our series "My New Life With Jesus," we focused on the practice of prayer. Specifically, we talked about the Lord's Prayer and the model it offers for our own prayers.

We read Luke 11:1-4, where the disciples ask Jesus to help them learn how to pray. Jesus takes the time to share a structure and order for talking with his Father, and he encourages his disciples to model their conversations with God that way.

We discussed our priorities when we pray—first praising God, then asking for our needs, and finally understanding the value of being forgiven and also forgiving others.

This week, I encourage you to talk with your teenager about the lesson and what they discovered. Consider focusing on these questions:

- *Jesus is someone we treat with great honor—how does that impact the way you pray?*
- *What real needs come to mind as things you want to pray about?*
- *When you think of being completely forgiven for every sin you've ever committed, is it hard or easy to get your mind around that? How is it possible to extend that kind of forgiveness to other people?*

Thanks for all your prayers and support. Have a great week!



**LESSON 3: PRAY OFTEN**

**2. LESSON GUIDE**

**GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]**



**LEADER  
TIP**

Beforehand, decide what kind of model to have students build, depending on the available space, time, and resources—as well as the group's size, creativity, and skill. Suggestions include:

- *Use sugar cubes to make a model of an igloo.*
- *Use toothpicks and marshmallows to make a model of a log cabin or the Eiffel Tower.*
- *Use Legos to make a town.*
- *Use craft sticks to make a bridge.*

Students also can make models of various structures using just their bodies.

The goal is to have fun with the concept of a model. You decide how long to spend on the activity and whether to work in one big group or in teams.

You'll also need the words to the Lord's Prayer (as your church or group says them), either written on a white board or printed on slips of paper, one per student.

**Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then leads students in this opening activity:**

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Let's start by having some fun creating a model. Using the supplies here (or using only yourselves), build a model of \_\_\_\_\_. The goal is to see how realistic or creative you can make the model.*

As students complete this activity, encourage laughter and interaction. When time is up, admire the model(s) together.

**ASK:**

- *How does your finished model stack up to the real thing—what did you do well, and what could be improved?*
- *What are some challenges of building or following a model?*
- *What are some primary reasons why models are helpful to us?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Today we'll hear about a model from the Bible. It's a model of prayer Jesus gives us, called the Lord's Prayer. You may have heard that phrase or prayed that prayer before. As we talk about prayer, we'll see why the Lord's Prayer is an important model for our own prayer lives.*

## TEACHING POINTS



Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Luke 11:1-4 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Let's talk about what elements the Lord's Prayer models for our own prayers.*

### 1. THE LORD'S PRAYER MODELS OUR PRIORITIES

#### ASK:

- *Who is someone you admire, and why? What about Jesus do you admire?*
- *Sometimes it's tough to think of Jesus as a real person, but he actually lived on this earth as a baby, toddler, child, teenager, and man. What are some things Jesus would have experienced that we experience that you normally don't associate with him (bad breath, tiredness, laughter, pain, friendship, etc.)?*
- *In this Bible passage, Jesus models a structure we can use to pray. What does Jesus start with in verse 2, and why do you think he chooses that?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Jesus, as a human, needed prayer to help him stay focused on the right things. He prayed to God his Father often and used those conversations to direct his actions. Jesus also prayed regularly to remind himself that as a man, he needed God to supply his needs.*

### 2. THE LORD'S PRAYER REMINDS US OF OUR NEEDS

#### ASK:

- *What's your favorite snack?*
- *In verse 3, what do you think Jesus means when he says we should pray for food?*
- *In the second half of verse 4, Jesus prays about dealing with temptation. Why do you think he includes that?*
- *What kinds of things tempt you that you know aren't really good for you?*
- *Do you think Jesus experienced regular temptations? If so, from what?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *The Bible talks about a time of temptation Jesus experienced. In his humanness, Jesus needed God's strength to battle challenges from the devil. The Lord's Prayer helps us remember that, like Jesus, we need God's help and strength to overcome challenges. When we pray, we can keep our priorities straight and remember that we depend on God.*



### 3. THE LORD'S PRAYER SHOWS THE VALUE OF FORGIVENESS

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *We humans all sin, but the Lord's Prayer addresses God's plan to deal with sin. Jesus shows us what to do when we mess up by sinning—and when other people sin against us. Forgiveness is God's answer for sin.*

**ASK:**

- *Think of the worst thing you've ever thought, said, or done. Would that thing keep you from being elected, if you were running for President or Prime Minister? Why or why not?*
- *Although no one else may know your "worst thing," Jesus does. Do you typically confess your "worst things" to God or others, or do you keep them to yourself? Explain.*
- *Jesus says he'll forgive us when we ask; are there any situations where it's inappropriate or even wrong to forgive someone? Why or why not?*
- *Why do you think forgiving others matter so much that Jesus includes it in his example of how to pray?*

#### EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three. Have them read aloud Philippians 4:6 and then discuss these questions.

**ASK:**



- *What's your current "worry-to-prayer" ratio?*
- *How can praying to Jesus help you conquer the tendency to worry?*
- *What does it mean to you that you can talk to Jesus about anything and everything?*

Bring everyone back together, and ask a few people to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

#### LIVING IT OUT

**ASK:**

- *What stands out to you the most about Jesus' model of prayer?*
- *For you, what's the most challenging part of prayer: your priorities, your needs, or getting and giving forgiveness?*
- *What's one practical prayer-related step you'll take because of this discussion?*

Point to the words of the Lord's Prayer on a white board, or hand out the words written on slips of paper.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Let's say the Lord's Prayer together now. When we finish, be quiet for a few minutes so you can pray on your own. You can follow Jesus' model or just talk to him about anything that's on your heart. Then I'll end with a closing prayer.*

Close in prayer.

## SUMMARY



Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

## FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

*"Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. Give us each day the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation"* (Luke 11:2-4).