

Today's Suggested Schedule—May 2024, Week 2

Today's Bible Story: You Say (The Lord's Prayer) • *Matthew 6:9-13*

Today's Bottom Line: Practice praying to God.

Monthly Memory Verse: *For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.* 1 Timothy 4:8 (ESV)

Monthly Virtue: Commitment—Making a plan and putting it into practice

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Use the outline of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 to guide your prayer time. Ask God to help each kid begin to develop a habit of praying that draws them into deeper conversations and connection with God.

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God

Welcome/Opener
Worship
Bible Story
Bottom Line
Prayer
Closer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration
Bible Story Review: Prayer Share
Application Activity: Friend of God
Memory Verse Activity: Verse Training
Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
Devotionals for Kids
Parent Cue App

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Use this if kids have questions about following Jesus.

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

If a child has expressed interest in following Jesus, please let the parents know so they can be a part of the conversation that their child is having about faith.

What Now?

If you put your trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him as the One who forgives your sins and makes it possible for you to know God, we are so proud of you! There is no greater single decision that you could make.

We believe that baptism is an important next step for you. Baptism is your way of telling your friends and family, “Hey, I'm a follower of Jesus!” If you're interested in learning more or participating in baptism, talk to a staff member about the next steps you should take.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Story Exploration

Have you ever been friends with someone you never talked to or communicated with?

If you want to know someone, you talk to or communicate with them. You say things and they listen. They say things and you listen. It's how you get to know each other.

The same is true when it comes to God. If you want to know God, pray to Him. And here's the really great news – because of Jesus, you aren't just praying to some far-off, mysterious, unknown god. You're praying to someone who really understands.

Here's something you might not know:

Before Jesus came to earth, the Israelites-God's people- would connect to God through priests. The priest would regularly offer things like animals to God to make up for the bad decisions of the Israelites. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would walk through a curtain into a very holy place in the temple and offer a sacrifice to God to make up for all the sins of the people.

On the day that Jesus died, actually at the exact moment Jesus died, that curtain-the one that separated the very holy place in the temple from the rest of the world-was torn. The separation between God and people was over. Jesus defeated sin and changed the way we connect with God from then on.

Now, Jesus is like our High Priest. **READ HEBREWS 4:15-16**

Isn't that incredible? You connect with God through prayer because of Jesus. And Jesus understands what it's like to live on this planet, feel hurt, and be tempted.

He understands. Not only because He's God and He knows everything. He understands because He has walked on this planet and experienced life in a human body. But He did not sin. Instead, he defeated sin.

That means you can come to Him. Anytime. Anywhere. Boldly.

And because you know a little bit about Jesus, you already know who you are talking to. So, remember this: If you want to know God, pray to Him. Make it a habit. Still not sure how to start? That's ok. Here are some ways you can pray.

Read Matthew 6:6:

Prayer is your way to connect to God. It's your time to show that you are thankful for everything from your favorite sweatshirt to Jesus paying for your sins. It's your time to be open and honest about things you're having trouble with and to listen to what His Spirit has to say. You just might be surprised by what can happen when you find space to pray alone. So, this week, go into your room, close the door and pray to God. You can pray out loud, silently or write your prayers out.

Read Matthew 6:7-8

Quick question. Which prayer is God more likely to listen to?

- “O dearest Heavenly Father, who art residing among the heavens, as of late I have found myself in dire need of assistance and wisdom as it pertains to the relations between myself and my mother.”
- “God, help me not to fight with my mom so much.”

Trick question! God hears both prayers! (Of course, one of those prayers might seem a little more normal for you). Either way, God already knows your fighting with your mom. He knows you need help studying for your test. He knows your friend is sick. So when you pray, remember you aren't connecting with a far-off Someone in the sky. You connecting with a Father who is closer to you than your own skin. So don't pray to God and try to impress or put on a show, pray to the one true God who knows you.

Prayer is a conversation with God, and He delights in hearing from His children. Don't worry about using fancy language or getting everything "right." Just come to God with sincerity and humility, knowing that He loves you and desires to be in relationship with you. Pray with gratitude for all God has done, Pray honestly (He already knows), and pray for forgiveness. Forgiveness should be a big part of our conversations with God. We're telling Him we messed up and we need His help, not only to clean up the mess we made with our sin, but to remind us to give others the same forgiveness He has given us.

Here are other some Bible verses about prayer:

- Philippians 4:6-7
- James 5:16b
- Matthew 21:22
- Matthew 7:7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Do:

Ask:

- Is there a right way to pray?
- How do you pray to God?
- When can you pray?
- Is it difficult to make time for prayer? Why or why not?
- Why does prayer take practice?
- Why should you pray to God?

* 1. Prayer Share

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: “Prayer Share” Activity Page, “Prayer Share Leader Guide” Activity Page, highlighters, pencils, poster board, markers, and wall tape

What You Do:

- Divide the group into five teams.
 - For smaller groups, create 3-4 teams.
- Give each group a “Prayer Share” Activity Page, a highlighter, and a pencil.
 - For smaller groups, give some teams more than one page.
 - Make sure all five pages of the “Prayer Share” Activity Page are given out.
- Instruct each group to work together to read the section of Jesus’ prayer listed on their page and highlight words or phrases that stand out to them.
- Direct each group to rewrite their section in kid-friendly language on the lines of the “Prayer Share” Activity Page.
 - To assist, ask: “What does this section mean to you?”
 - Prompt kids with ideas from the “Prayer Share Leader Guide” Activity Page, as needed.
- As groups finish, give each group a poster board.
- Set out the markers for groups to share.
- Instruct the kids to write out on the poster board the kid-friendly language they came up with for the section of their prayer.
- Encourage kids to decorate their poster board prayers with the markers.
- When teams have finished, bring the entire group back together.
- Invite each team to share their prayer!
- Display the poster boards (lean them somewhere in your group space since they will be needed in Prayer Time).
- Use the “Prayer Share Leader Guide” Activity Page to review the Lord’s Prayer one more time as a group.

What You Say:

“The Lord’s Prayer is an example of how we can **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God!** Jesus used this prayer to teach His followers how to pray. It helps us know how we can pray too! We can follow this outline, or we can simply talk to God about what’s in our heart or on our mind like we’re talking to a friend. We can tell God what we need when we’re having a tough moment. We can continue to grow in our faith when we practice talking to God. Remember that you can talk to God anytime, anywhere!”

[Make It Personal] (Share when, where, and how you like to talk to God. Maybe you like to talk to God during mealtime and bedtime. Maybe you find quiet moments in the morning when you’re making coffee or traveling. Or perhaps you like to talk to God when you’re feeling worried or sad, which helps you remember that you’re not alone!)

2. Friend of God

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: “Friend of God” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- One at a time, read a scenario that kids might encounter from the “Friend of God” Activity Page.
- Give kids a few moments to think quietly about that scenario.
- Ask:
 - What could you thank God for in this situation?
 - What could you ask God for in this situation?
 - What is something true about God that might be helpful for you to remember in this situation?
- Invite kids to share ideas of how they can talk to God in that moment.
- Repeat for each scenario.

What You Say:

“There are so many ways we can talk to God! We can thank God, we can ask for forgiveness, we can praise God, and we can ask for help. We can talk to God anytime, anywhere—it’s just like talking with a friend! Just like any friendship, we feel closer to God when we share what’s going on in our lives. When are some times of the day you like to talk to God? (*Invite responses.*) Do you like to talk to God when you’re feeling a certain way? (*Invite responses.*)

“There are so many ways we can **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God**, and the more we talk to God, the more we can grow in our faith!”

3. Verse Training

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Bibles, and ball

What You Do:

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle with you.
- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up 1 Timothy 4:8 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide kids to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like. When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find “1 Timothy” in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find 1 Timothy, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find 1 Timothy. Help the kids find the page. When they find 1 Timothy, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 4. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 8 in chapter 4.

- Repeat the Bible verse several times together.
- Instruct the kids to close their Bibles and set them behind them, outside of the circle.
- Say one part of 1 Timothy 4:8, then toss the ball to a kid.
- Ask that kid to repeat the part of the verse, then toss the ball back to you.
- Repeat the first part several times with different kids, then move on to the next part of the verse, and so on.
- Continue until all kids have had several chances and made progress towards memorizing the verse.

What You Say:

“Wow! You all did a great job practicing our Memory Verse together. It’s amazing how much we can learn when we keep practicing! Even if we make a mistake, we keep going. The more we practice, the better we get! It’s great to practice memorizing Scripture, just like we **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God**. By filling our minds with God’s Word and talking to God regularly, we can continue to grow in our faith.”

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Say:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember?
- How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission?

What You Need: Poster boards from Prayer Share Activity, and a device for playing calm worship music

What You Do:

- Put the poster boards that were created during the Prayer Share Activity at different locations around the room.
- Play calm worship music.
- Invite kids to quietly move about the room.
- Instruct the kids to pray to God at each poster board, using the Lord's Prayer outline.
- Allow kids time to freely talk to God apart from the outline, as well.
- Close your group time in prayer.

What You Say:

"I'm so glad we all had time to talk with God today. Remember, we can talk to God anytime and anywhere! Jesus taught His followers how to pray with the Lord's Prayer, and sometimes that can be helpful when we're not sure where to start. But we can always talk to God with any thoughts or feelings we have too! No matter how we talk to God, it's important that we **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God**. Find some special time this week to make a habit of praying to God! I'm going to close our group time by talking to God right now!"

"God, thank You for teaching us how to pray and then listening to every prayer we pray. We are so grateful that You listen to us and that You value what we have to say. Remind us to talk to You continually, like we talk to a friend. We want to be close to You. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, invite the kids to share one part of the Lord's Prayer and what it means to them in their own words.

GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible Story applies to real-life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)

** If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #1.*

*** 1. Prayer Share**

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need:

- Print "Prayer Share" Activity Page on paper, one set for each Small Group
- Print "Prayer Share Leader Guide" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group
- Highlighters, five for each Small Group
- Pencils, five for each Small Group
- Poster board, five for each Small Group
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share
- Wall tape, one roll for each Small Group

2. Friend of God

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need:

- Print "Friend of God" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set for each Small Group

3. Verse Training

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need:

- Bibles, one for each kid
- Ball, one for each Small Group

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need:

- Poster boards from Prayer Share Activity
- Device for playing calm worship music

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app**