

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

Bible Story Review: Phone a Friend

Application Activity: Tiny Bible Training Guide

Memory Verse Activity: Kickball Verse

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. Phone a Friend

[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 Need: *Optional: Bible marked at Matthew 6:9-13*

What You Do:

- Instruct the group to join you in a seated circle.
- Say: “We’re going to play a game where we whisper phrases from the Lord’s Prayer that Jesus taught His disciples and see if we can get them correctly around the circle!”
- One phrase at a time, whisper a phrase from the Lord’s Prayer (below) to the kid sitting on your right.
- Instruct that kid to whisper the phrase to the kid beside them and so on until the phrase travels around the circle.
 - Direct kids to wait quietly as the phrases are whispered so everyone can hear and share.
- Invite the last kid to share the phrase they heard with the group.
- Correct each phrase as needed.
- Allow kids to change spots in the circle after each phrase so different kids get to start/end each round.
 - Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored.
 - May your kingdom come.
 - May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven.
 - Give us today our daily bread.
 - And forgive us our sins, just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.
 - Keep us from sinning when we are tempted.
 - Save us from the evil one.

NOTE: The wording of the Lord’s Prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 NIV is listed above. Use a Bible marked at Matthew 6:9-13 in a different translation if an alternate translation is preferred.

What You Say:

“That was a fun game! Sometimes it can get silly, but we saw today that it can remind us how we can talk to God! Saying the words from Jesus’ prayer and hearing our friends say them were a great way to **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God.**

“When we pray, we can tell God what we’re thinking, feeling, or even what we need. Jesus’ example of prayer can help us keep that conversation with God going anytime, anywhere, and that will help our faith grow!”

[Make It Personal] (Tell about a time when your conversation with God helped you make a decision or know what to do in a difficult situation.)

* 2. Tiny Bible Training Guide

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Prepared “Tiny Bible Training Guide” Activity Page, and crayons or colored pencils

What You Do:

- Give each kid a prepared “Tiny Bible Training Guide” Activity Page booklet.
- Review the parts of the Lord’s Prayer by reading through it and looking at each picture.
- Set out the crayons.
- Invite kids to color each page of their mini-book.
 - Direct them to color the kid on the first page and last page inside the mini-book to look like them.
- While kids are coloring, discuss what the different parts of the Lord’s Prayer mean by asking them what each phrase means.
- Use the following talking points with each page (the NIV is below), as needed:
 - *“Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored.”* God is in heaven, and we want to show and talk about our love for God.
 - *“May your kingdom come.”* God promises to make everything right in our world, just like it is in heaven where God lives.
 - *“May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* We can be a part of making the world better and showing others what God is like.
 - *“Give us today our daily bread.”* We can ask God for anything we need—like food, or even friends or patience.
 - *NOTE: Please be sensitive to those dealing with various insecurities and steer the conversation towards being able to go to God about anything, versus the things we tangibly have or don’t have.*
 - *“And forgive us our sins, just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.”* When we mess up, we can ask God for forgiveness.
 - *“Keep us from sinning when we are tempted.”* Sin is anything that breaks our relationship with God and God wants to help us avoid it.
 - *“Save us from the evil one.”* We can ask God to help us make wise choices and protect us.
- When kids finish coloring, say: “This Training Guide is so small, you can put it in your pocket and have it with you all the time!”
- Ask kids to write their names on the back of their mini-book.
- Set the mini-books aside for the Prayer and Dismiss activity.

What You Say:

“We can **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God** wherever we are and at any time! These little Training Guides can help you remember that God is always with you and that God is always ready to hear you! If you feel stuck, sad, worried, thankful, or whatever it may be—use Jesus’ example prayer to help you talk to God. When we **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God**, it becomes something we start to remember to do. Talking to God is one of the ways we can grow in our faith!”

3. Kickball Verse

[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: “Memory Verse Poster” Activity Page, and kickball

What You Do:

- Instruct the group to form a standing circle.
- Place the “Memory Verse Poster” Activity Page in the middle of the circle.
- Review the Memory Verse by reading it from the “Memory Verse Poster” Activity Page.
- Read the Memory Verse again, one phrase at a time.
- As you say each phrase, encourage the kids to repeat the phrase after you.
- Grab the ball, say the first word of the verse, then gently kick (or roll) the ball to one kid.
- Invite that kid to say the next word of the verse (prompt as needed), then gently kick (or roll) the ball to another kid, and so on.
- Continue until you’ve reviewed the entire verse.
- Direct kids to move to new spots in the circle and repeat.

What You Say:

“That was some great practice! It took teamwork and commitment! The more we practiced, the faster we got both with our footwork and with our knowledge of God’s Word! It’s great to **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God** AND to practice learning God’s Word.

“Our verse reminds us that when we exercise our body, it helps our body right now. When we practice being godly, training our minds and hearts by learning God’s Word, that helps us now AND later in our lives! When we **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God**, that is one way we can put our plan to grow in our faith into practice!”

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: Mini-books from the Tiny Bible Training Guide Activity, and paper

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Give each kid their mini-book from the Tiny Bible Training Guide Activity.
- Say: "We're all going to take some time to **[Bottom Line] practice praying to God.**"
- Place the four pieces of paper in four different places around your small group space.
- Divide your group into four groups.
- Instruct each of the groups to move to one of the pieces of paper.
- Say: "We are going to pray at this first spot and then move around to another place to pray. You can use your mini-books to pray like the Lord's Prayer, or you can pray your own prayer—silently or spoken quietly. Remember, you're having a personal conversation with God, and this time is not for anyone else to hear or see."
- Direct the kids to start to pray.
- When you say "switch," instruct the groups to head to a different piece of paper and repeat.
- When you say "finish up," direct the kids to finish up their prayers and return to the group.
- Close your group time in prayer.

What You Say:

"God, thank You for being such an amazing God that hears us anywhere we are and anytime we pray! Thank You for wanting to help us when we are happy, when we are sad, and anything in between. Help us remember that we can always talk to You! We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, remind kids to take their Tiny Bible Training Guide with them to help them remember what they can say to God anytime, anywhere! Encourage them to share their mini-book with a friend or adult!

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 #2.*

1. Phone a Friend

[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 Need:

- *Optional: Bible marked at Matthew 6:9-13*

*** 2. Tiny Bible Training Guide**

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Print "Tiny Bible Training Guide" Activity Page on paper, one for each kid
- Crayons or colored pencils, enough for a Small Group to share
- Before group time, prepare each "Tiny Bible Training Guide" Activity Page:
 - Fold along all lines, then unfold.
 - Fold the paper in half hamburger style, then cut a slit along the dotted line.
 - Unfold the paper, then fold hotdog style with the slit along the top.
 - Push in both ends of the paper until the paper folds like a book.
 - Be sure that the paper is folded so that the Lord's Prayer cover page is on top.
- Video explanation: <https://bit.ly/47MCZ9A>

3. Kickball Verse

[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:

- Print "Memory Verse Poster" on 11" x 17" paper, one for each Small Group
- Kickball, 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:

- Mini-books from the Tiny Bible Training Guide Activity
- Paper, four pieces for each Small Group

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**