

Children's Lesson for Week of Prayer 2010

What Should We Pray About? Everything!

Lesson Objective:

The students will learn that they can take any request, big or small, to God in prayer.

Memory Verse: Philippians 4:6

Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God (KJV).

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (NIV).

Introduction

Children, perhaps even more than youth or adults, might tend to think God should not be bothered by everyday things when they pray. Only big things like major decisions, accidents, or sickness, i.e., "adult" things, warrant His attention. They need to know, however, that God desires that we go to Him with any and all concerns or needs we may have, regardless of our age. He deeply cares about the everyday things as well as the big things we face. When we go to Him with sincere prayer, we show trust, faith, and confidence in His ability to help us.

Getting Started

Ask: Have you ever knelt down to pray and just couldn't think of anything to pray about? Have you had trouble knowing where to start? (*Invite responses.*) Sometimes we don't know what to pray about because we're not sure God is really interested in hearing some things. Maybe we feel it's too simple or too hard for God. Or there may be so many things to pray about we don't even know where to start.

Lesson Focus

Ask: What kinds of things should we pray about? (*Invite responses.*) Let's take a few moments to focus on some of those things.

Big Things/Little Things

Distribute the "Things to Pray About" work sheet to each student. Ask them to think of as many things to pray about as they can in the next 3 to 5 minutes and write them down on their sheets. Suggest that they try to split their ideas under the "Big Things" and "Little Things" headings.

Afterward, allow students to share some things they have written. Note that there might be some concerns, such as family problems, illness, or finances, that students would not want to share openly and should not be pressed to do so.

Say: There are lots of things we can pray about, aren't there? In this lesson we will learn that God wants us to pray about anything and everything. He cares about every detail of our lives and the lives of people we care about. Sometimes it's hard to decide what would be a big thing or little thing to pray about. What might be really big to one person is a little thing to another. A lot of things people prayed for in Bible days were pretty big things.

Ask individual students or groups of two or three to look up the passages below (as time allows) and tell about the kinds of prayers that were prayed.

- Moses prayed for help to cross the Red Sea (Exodus 14:13-16).
- King Solomon prayed for wisdom to rule the people of Israel (1 Kings 3:1-13).
- Elijah prayed that fire would come down and burn a sacrifice to prove God is the one true God (1 Kings 18:22-38).
- Peter was freed from prison when other people prayed for him (Acts 12:6-11).
- Paul prayed for the father of an important official and God healed the father of a serious illness; after that many other people were healed as well (Acts 28:7-9).

Say: God is able to answer really big needs; but not all our needs are as big as these. Sometimes our needs are regular, everyday things like having food, clothing, and shelter. However, there also can be some very serious things happening in our lives or families that we can pray about.

To Pray or Not To Pray

Say: Let's think about some possible examples of things to pray about and discuss whether these are things that should be taken to God in prayer, and why or why not. *(As you discuss the children's answers, jot the following sample prayer requests on the board: Amy's shoes, Kyle's move, Aaron's mom, and Katelyn's puppy. Then explain them as follows, asking if students think these would be good prayer requests, and why.)*

- Amy badly needs a new pair of shoes for school. The soles on the pair she has now are worn through in places. She gets only a small allowance and money is pretty tight at home.
- Kyle just learned that his family has to move to another city because his dad's company is moving there. Kyle really likes the school and church he attends now. He has made a lot of good friends. He is worried about moving to a new city and going to a different school and church where he doesn't know anyone.
- Aaron's mom has been diagnosed with cancer. She will need surgery and months of chemotherapy afterward. The doctors are not very hopeful about her recovery.
- Katelyn's new puppy wandered off and has been missing for two days. Katelyn is really worried.

Do you think God would be interested to hear about each of these needs? Absolutely! How might each person pray about the situation they're facing? *(Invite responses.)*

Say: In part of the Lord's Prayer that Jesus taught His disciples (Matthew 6:9-13), He told them to pray for pretty big things like asking that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. He also said they should pray about being forgiven of their sins as they forgive the wrongdoings of others. Then He added that they should pray about being delivered from temptation. All of those things are pretty huge for us today, too. When we think about the challenges of living like God wants us to live on this earth, receiving forgiveness for sins and forgiving others who do wrong things to us, and not being tempted by all the things we see on TV or by other students at school or in the neighborhood, we know those are really big things to pray about.

Ask: What did Jesus tell His followers to pray about in verse 11? He told them to pray, "Give us today our daily bread." While that might seem like a pretty small thing, to some people, especially those who have very little money, having enough food to eat is a huge need. But no matter how much money we have, praying for our daily food shows that God wants us to pray for everyday things as well as things we might think are a lot more important. He cares about it all!

Needs in Your Life

Invite students to share things they have prayed about. Talk about some things you have prayed about, too. Also share answers to prayer, being sensitive to the fact that answers don't always come when or in the way we think they should.

Explain that there is nothing too big or too little for God to care about. God is as willing to listen to a prayer about a scratch on your arm as He would be to a prayer about a broken arm. God is pleased whenever we pray to Him, because it shows that we are looking to Him for help and that we trust in Him.

Ask a student to read or recite **Philippians 4:6**, the Memory Verse for this lesson.

Say: God invites us to pray about everything, regardless of whether we think it's big or small. (*Refer again to the "Big Things/Little Things" lists the students made earlier.*) Some of you wrote down some pretty big things that we can pray about. Maybe some of you have really big things in your own lives or in your families' or friends' lives that need God's help.

Invite students to share some things they would like to pray about; however, be careful that no one feels coerced into sharing something that might be uncomfortable. Give the students blank sheets of paper and pencils or pens, and ask them to write a prayer to God about a big thing that they know about. Let them know they will not have to share or read aloud their prayers. Those will be kept between them and God. However, if a student wants to share a big need and would like for you and the class to pray about it, take time to do so.

Say: God cares about both the big things and the little things in life. He wants to protect us in time of danger, heal us when we're sick, and help us when there seems to be no way to get help. He also wants us to be healthy, to have a place to live, good food to eat, and clothes to wear. That's when they become big instead of small things to pray about.

Taking It Home

Say: Developing a personal prayer life is one of the very best things we can do as Christians. Sometimes we can get so busy that we forget to take time to pray. But if we develop a habit of praying each day, it will be a lot easier to do.

In your personal prayer time, developing a prayer guide can be really helpful. It might be a slip of paper in your Bible or a notebook. Whatever you use, write down the names of people in your family, your friends, and others you care about. You also might include things like your school work, making friends, making good choices, and other areas that are important to pray about. Using a list like this can help guide you as you pray. You probably will discover that your list will grow and grow over time.

As your list grows, you also will discover that God has been answering prayers along the way. That's why writing down your prayers can be a great practice in your prayer life, too. As time goes along, you can look back at some of your earlier prayers and see how God has answered and helped in various ways. It's a great reminder that prayer works!

(If you gave each student a small spiral-bound notebook at the end of the first lesson, remind them to keep journaling their prayers. Let them know that they don't have to write a lot, just a sentence or two each day. As time goes along, they might begin writing in more detail. As students receive answers to their prayers in the weeks ahead, give opportunity for them to share those answers with the class.)

Prayer Response

Say: Let's take time to give thanks to God for letting us pray about everything in our lives, whether big or small. Let's thank Him for caring so much for us and being interested in every part of our lives.

Give students the option to pray together with you or write out their prayers. As time allows, have volunteers share the prayers they have written.

Prepared by the Assemblies of God National Prayer Center
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