



PRAYER

PRAISE | LISTEN | ASK
TALK WITH GOD

WORD AND WONDER: TEACH US HOW TO PRAY

by Trevecca Okholm

This story is told in the “Godly Play” or “Children and Worship” style, with slow storytelling, simple manipulatives, and time to wonder. It may be used as a children’s sermon or class story, or told during a service to the entire congregation, using displayed images. These images are available to [download on our website](#).

Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13

Materials

- Green underlay
- Mountain (be creative if you don’t have the ‘Godly Play’ mountain. Use some rocks from your yard, or some small boxes, or an upside-down pan)
- Figures for: Jesus; several followers of Jesus
- Bible open to the book of Matthew 6: 9-13

Script

Spread green underlay on the table or floor in front of you and say:

I wonder what this might be? It is very green. (Allow time for children to wonder and maybe respond. You can make suggestions such as: I wonder if it is a big field of grass?)



Add the mountain with the figure of Jesus and say:

The followers of Jesus spent a lot of time watching and waiting while Jesus prayed, so they already knew prayer was important to Jesus.



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Add the figures of followers around Jesus and say:

They just weren't sure how they should pray as followers of Jesus. So one day, as they were sitting on a hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee, Jesus' followers asked Jesus if he would show them how they should pray.

The first thing Jesus told them was "don't pray like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly and make a big show of how important they are." In case you don't know what that means, a hypocrite is what Jesus sometimes called people who said they were very religious but didn't really act like it. Then Jesus explained to his followers that the best way to pray is in a quiet time and space when you're all by yourself.

Open the Bible and say:

After that, Jesus gave them a model prayer that they could follow. How cool is it that Jesus not only gave them a model to follow, but we still have that same model written down in our Bible for us to follow today?! Turns out that Jesus' model was so important that in a lot of churches around the world the people still pray this model prayer aloud together, every Sunday. So it looks like people around the world and over the centuries all spent time practicing prayer the same way Jesus taught his followers there by the Sea of Galilee!

Turn in the Bible to Matthew 6:9-13 and say:

You can find Jesus' model prayer in your Bible. Just turn to Matthew 6:9-13 and you'll find the prayer that Jesus taught his followers all those years ago on that hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee. I wonder if praying Jesus' model prayer regularly, every day, might be a great way to start your spiritual practice of prayer?

Invite one of the children to read the scripture out loud (or read yourself).



I wonder...

- Do you ever wonder how the followers of Jesus felt when Jesus taught them how to pray?
- Do you think it matters that this model prayer begins with praising God? I wonder if we should always begin our prayers with praise to God?
- I wonder why Jesus taught his followers to ask for God's Kingdom to come? What do you think it means when people pray for God's Kingdom to come to earth as it is in heaven?
- I wonder if you can find Jesus' model prayer in your Bible? Note: you may want to let children create their own "prayer bookmarks" that they can take home and show their parents where to find Jesus' model of prayer in their family Bible.
- Read verse 11 again and ask: What does it say about the food we eat everyday? I wonder if that makes you feel different about food if you always try to remember to thank God before you eat it? I wonder if that means to say thanks for ice cream and M&Ms, too?
- Read verse 12 again and say: Be careful with verse 12. It asks for God to forgive us just as much as we forgive others. Yikes! Are you really ready to pray that?
- I wonder why temptation is such a big deal that Jesus included it in his prayer model? What do you think? (P.s. Do you know what "temptation" even means? Let's talk about it.)
- (Optional with older children) I wonder if you can think of any other prayers that are written in the Bible? A favorite pray for many people is found in John 17. It's the longest prayer in the Bible. It is called "the prayer of Jesus" and is one of the very last prayers that Jesus prayed on earth. Can you find it and read it together?