

SABBATH SCHOOL

Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level 4 • Unit 10 • Week 1

PRAYER

OBJECTIVE:

Our communication with God is very important. One aspect of communicating with God is prayer.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Say: Jesus is our best example in praying to God. Jesus taught us one way of praying to God during His sermon on a mountain (Matthew 5-7). This prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. During the Lord's Prayer, Jesus showed us several topics that God the Father is greatly interested in. Let's take a look at this model prayer.

Do: Read Matthew 6:9-13, an outline of prayer, and then discuss the following:

Verse 9: A very important step in praying to God is to know that He is ruler of all creation. Knowing this, we honor God by telling Him how great He is! He controls the entire universe, provides us with our daily needs, such as food, water, air, clothing and a spiritual home called the Church. We need to show Him that we understand that He is truly awesome.

Verse 10: One duty that the Church has is to teach all nations about God's way of life. A part of this teaching is the coming Kingdom of God. This world has many problems—crime, starvation, wars, people hating people and the list goes on and on. The only true hope for this world is the return of Jesus Christ to the earth! We must pray for His return daily.

Verse 11: We look to God to supply us the daily food to keep us going. We also need spiritual food each day. By reading the Bible and talking to God, we can have this spiritual food. Attending Sabbath services each week also provides us with spiritual food.

Verse 12: We must always be in a forgiving attitude. When we ask God to forgive us of our sins, we must be able to forgive others of the sins they have shown toward us. If we can't forgive others, then God has a harder time forgiving us. God's forgiveness is one key to eternal life!

Verse 13: Satan the devil is always trying to persuade us to sin. Sin in the world is always around us. We must ask God for His protection from Satan, sin and the world. The last part of the verse tells us that we must know that the Kingdom of God belongs to God and He alone can rule over it. That was one mistake that Satan made, thinking that he could rule God's kingdom better!

BIBLE LESSON:

PRAYER—TALKING TO GOD

When we pray to God, we are talking to Him! He listens to our expressions of love for Him. He hears our problems and the problems of others. He also reveals the answers to many of our questions and problems in the Bible. Communicating with God is a two-way street: We talk to Him in prayer and sometimes He answers in the Bible. Sometimes God answers our prayers by performing a miracle in our lives. Other times God may answer no to our request. In all matters, we must trust in God's answer.

IS GOD INTERESTED IN WHAT WE SAY?

God is anxious to hear our prayers. He waits patiently on us to communicate to Him. Our prayers are like "sweet incense" rising up to God in heaven (Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4). Talking to God is like talking to our best friend. We laugh at funny events we share and are sad at unhappy ones. God is our best spiritual friend and we should share with Him all of our accomplishments and problems. He truly cares and loves us!

DOES GOD REALLY LISTEN TO US?

God has promised to hear us every time we pray—when we pray sincerely and with enthusiasm. We should not repeat the same old prayers over and over. We wouldn't say the same things over and over to our friends or parents—that would be extremely boring to all of us. Can we ask for anything and expect to receive it? How about a new bike, or new home, or better school? God may say yes and give us these things if they are true needs. God may say no if He feels we will be better off spiritually without them. All things are done according to God's will, not ours (1 John 5:14).

We must also trust in God. We put our faith in Him, that whatever we ask He will provide to us if it is His will. If we don't believe that we will really receive what we ask for, then we haven't acted in faith toward God and His power (Mark 11:24 and James 1:6-7).

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE TALK TO GOD?

We should pray to God on a regular basis (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). We can set aside a certain time of day to pray to God, or we can also pray in times of certain needs. Don't limit yourself to praying only once a day. Daniel prayed to God three times a day (Daniel 6:10). The Bible doesn't say how long he prayed each time, but he made it a regular habit to talk to God. The Bible shows many examples of Jesus praying. The Lord's model prayer is one of them. There are many examples in the Bible showing that God's servants prayed more than once a day. Psalm 55:17 is another example.

WILL GOD EVER REFUSE TO HEAR OUR PRAYERS?

Some of our prayers are answered in the pages of the Bible. The Bible is one way that God talks to us.

We must study the Bible to know God's will. Part of God's will is for us to obey Him. The best way to start to obey God is to understand and follow the Ten Commandments. When we obey the Ten Commandments, our relationship with God grows stronger. If there comes a time when we break one of God's laws, or the Ten Commandments, we must immediately pray to Him for His forgiveness. But if we continue to break God's law and don't ask for forgiveness, our relationship with Him grows weaker and weaker.

Just like not talking to a friend or treating them unkindly weakens a friendship, not talking to God zaps us of our spiritual strength. Not understanding God's will from the Bible and not obeying Him causes us to drift away. If we refuse to obey God's law, then our prayers can become ineffective. Can we expect our parents to give us good gifts when we don't obey them? It is the same with God. We must try to obey Him and pray regularly, asking in faith and expecting our prayers to be answered.

KING HEZEKIAH OBEYS GOD

One of ancient Judah's kings was Hezekiah. He obeyed God and followed His way of life (2 Kings 18:3). The Bible says that Hezekiah trusted in the Lord so much that there were no kings after him as good as he was (verse 5). Hezekiah read God's Word and held fast to all of it (verse 6). Because Hezekiah stayed close to God, God prospered him in everything that he did (verse 7). Hezekiah is an excellent example of one of the benefits of staying close to God.

HEZEKIAH BECOMES SICK

After Hezekiah had been king of Judah for several years, he became sick. He was so sick that he was near death. Hezekiah had followed God and had been close to Him. God sent the prophet Isaiah to speak to Hezekiah. Isaiah didn't have good news for the king. Isaiah told him, "Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live" (2 Kings 20:1).

This, of course, upset Hezekiah greatly. But Hezekiah did not get angry with God or reject Him. Hezekiah knew what he had to do.

HEZEKIAH PRAYS TO GOD FOR HEALING

So Hezekiah turned his head toward the wall and prayed. He didn't pray a long prayer but told God "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight" (2 Kings 20:3). And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

After Hezekiah's prayer, God changed His mind! God told Isaiah to go back to Hezekiah and tell him that God had heard Hezekiah's prayer and seen his tears and that He would heal him! And God added 15 years to Hezekiah's life (2 Kings 20:5-6).

LAZARUS DIES

During the days of Jesus, there was a certain man named Lazarus. Lazarus was a friend of Jesus. Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, sent a message to Jesus telling Him that their brother was very sick. Jesus planned a trip to see Lazarus, but Jesus had a greater purpose and lesson for His disciples. Jesus didn't go to Lazarus right away—He stayed where He was for two days. Jesus wanted to show His disciples His power and how to pray to God the Father for our needs (John 11:1-6).

Jesus told those around Him that Lazarus had died, but they were still going to the place Lazarus was (John 11:14-15). When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead in the tomb four days (John 11:17).

When Martha saw Jesus she said to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You" (John 11:21-22).

Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus with Mary, Martha and His disciples. Jesus then told them to roll away the stone covering the tomb. And Jesus lifted up His eyes to Heaven and prayed to God the Father, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." Then Jesus cried, "Lazarus, come forth!" (John 11:41-43)

And Lazarus who had been dead came out of the tomb. He was covered with grave clothes and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus told them to remove the grave clothes from Lazarus. Many of those who were standing there then believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

HOW WE CAN ENTER GOD'S PRESENCE

If you wanted an appointment to meet with the leader of most countries, you could not go directly to the leader. You would use a mediator who would set up the appointment with the world leader. In the same way, we come to God through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:25). Before He died, Jesus Christ told His disciples that whatever they asked the Father in His name, God would give them (John 16:23, 26). So just as the high priest under the Old Covenant came to God on behalf of the people, Jesus Christ as our High Priest does the same for us (Hebrews 4:14-16). Then we can talk to God personally. When we end our prayers, we should always tell God that we are coming to Him in the name of, or by the authority of, Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

- We should make prayer a regular daily habit. We should pray more than once a day.
- Praying is our way of talking to God. The Bible is the way He talks to us.
- Don't repeat the same things over and over in prayer.
- Pray for those things that are pleasing to God. Remember to pray for others.
- Be enthusiastic in prayer. Believe that what you ask for will happen.
- If you cannot think of something specific, remember the Lord's model prayer and the subjects that God is interested in.
- Honor God.
- Ask for the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. "Thy Kingdom come!"
- Ask for spiritual food.
- Ask for forgiveness of our sins. And remember to forgive others.
- Ask that you be protected from Satan and his evil influence.
- Honor God.
- Always pray in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ.

MUSIC:

Sing "God Is Calling Children," page 51 of the United Church of God hymnal.

MEMORY VERSE:

1 John 5:14 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us"

family activity

THE POINT:

Our communication with God is very important. This lesson covers one aspect of communicating with God—prayer. Jesus gave us a model prayer—the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. We should pray daily. God answers our requests when they are His will. Examples of God answering prayer are Hezekiah and Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

ASK ME...

- Jesus gave us an example by giving us the Lord’s Prayer. What are seven subjects that Jesus talked to God about during this prayer?
- How do we talk to God? How does He talk to us?
- Does God hear our prayers? Is He really interested in what we say? How often should we pray? Can God refuse to hear our prayers and if so why?
- What was the story about Hezekiah? What happened to Hezekiah because of his prayer to God?
- What was the story about Jesus and Lazarus? What happened to Lazarus when Jesus prayed to God for him?
- By what authority can we come before the presence of God in prayer?

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Talk about the Lord’s Prayer. Show your child how the model outline can be tailored to today’s blessings and problems. Honor God in various ways, be thankful to God and remember to pray for others.

Start a prayer journal with your child. Buy a notebook and let them write down the date, time and a few things that they prayed for. It is not necessary to read the journal, but ask them questions about what they prayed for. Were those subjects in God’s will? How often are they praying? In what ways are they honoring God?

MEMORY VERSE:

1 John 5:14 “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

ANSWERS

SEVEN SUBJECTS

1. Honor God
2. Thy Kingdom come
3. Spiritual food
4. Forgive our sins
5. Forgive others
6. Protect us from Satan
7. Honor God

DAILY HABIT

1. Prayer
2. Lazarus
3. Mary
4. Praying
5. Kingdom
6. Sins
7. God

What we should be doing daily: PRAYING.

SECRET DECODER

Talk to God by praying!