

**FAMILY GUIDE - 5 WEEKS**

# A Praying Life





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# How to Pray

week 1

## Start Talking:

When was the last time you prayed?

## Big Idea:

Prayer is simple and extremely holy. Allow your conversation to flow!

## Key Verses:

Luke 11:1-4

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."*

*He said to them, "When you pray, say:*

*"Father,*

*hallowed be your name,*

*your kingdom come.*

*Give us each day our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our sins,*

*for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation."*

## Start Sharing:

1. Name some times you pray during the day?
2. How do you normally start your prayers?
3. What kinds of things do you normally put in the middle of your prayers?
4. How do you normally end your prayers?
5. Who do you think you are talking to during your prayers?

## Start Doing:

The hand prayer is a great tool to remember the aspects of prayer using the Lord's Prayer as a guide. Look at the diagram and practice your own hand prayer. Challenge: Use both hands and come up with 5 more topics to pray for.

1. Praise God (You're awesome, God)
2. Thank God (Thank you, God)
3. Pray for Others (Help others, God)
4. Confess Your Sins (I'm sorry, God)
5. Pray for Yourself and your daily needs (Help me, God)
6. Close (End your prayer)

## Memory Verse:

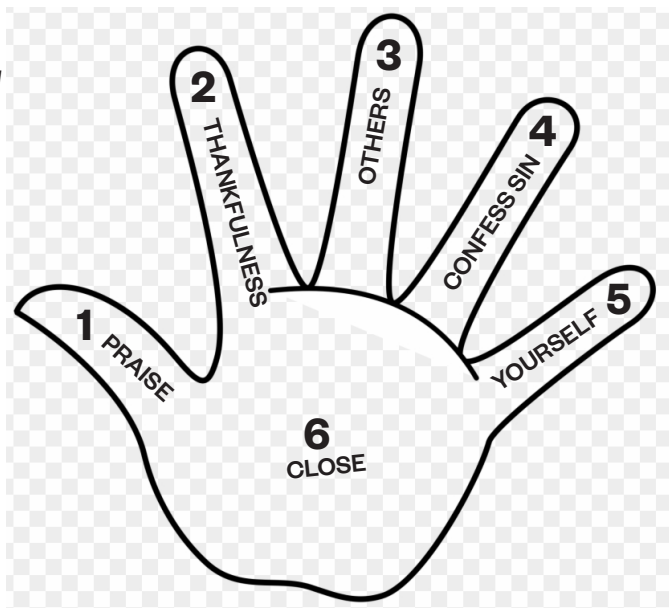
*Lord hear me when I call; have mercy and answer me.*

Psalm 27:7

## Deeper Discussion:

Actively begin learning the Lord's Prayer from Luke 11 if you haven't already. Take it one line at a time every day for a week or more until you have the whole thing memorized. Ask

questions about why God lead us to pray this way and why He included each part of the prayer.



**THE HAND PRAYER**

## Start Praying:

Dear God, thank you that I can pray to you. Help me learn how you want me to pray and then help me do it! In Jesus' name, amen.

# When to Pray

week 2

## Start Talking:

What are some things that you do all the time? (Examples: eat, walk, breathe)

## Big Idea:

Prayer should be something we do consistently.

## Key Verses:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

## Start Sharing:

1. Come up with a list of places you can pray (hint: anywhere!)
2. Talk about how to remember to pray in those places. Example: It's common to pray at the dinner table before eating, and for some people it becomes a habit. Use a couple of the places that you listed to develop an idea of how to make it a habit to pray there.

3. Come up with a list of times you can pray (hint: anytime!)
4. Talk about why it could be easy or hard to pray at those times. Pick one or two and develop an idea of how to make it a habit to pray at those times.

## Start Doing:

Depending on how long you have together, set a timer at intervals. When the timer goes off, remind everyone to pray. Example: If you have an hour together, set it every 15 minutes. If you have all day together, set it once per hour. Remember the Bible verse to "pray continually" and about everything.

## Start Praying:

Dear God, thank you that I can pray to you right now! You always hear me when I pray. Please help me to talk to you in prayer more often and about everything. In Jesus' name, amen.



## 7 DAY BACK TO SCHOOL PRAYER CHALLENGE

(Commit to praying every day for 7 days)

### Day 1 – Safety

Pray for students, teachers, and parents to be safe and feel safe. Pray that the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, would guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

### Day 2 – Students

Pray for a spirit of unity among our students, so they can love each other well. Pray that they would have a desire to learn and grow.

### Day 3 – Students with Special Needs

Pray that our students with special needs will experience God's love through their teachers and through their peers. Pray for a smooth transition into the new school year.

### Day 4 – Faculty

Pray that faculty (teachers, administrators, lunch and janitorial staff, coaches, etc.) would be equipped to pour into each individual student. Pray that they would see each student and care for them right where they are.

### Day 5 – Parents

Pray for parents to be rooted in wisdom and understanding, making the most of their days as the number one spiritual influence in their children's lives.

### Day 6 – Knowledge

Pray our students and faculty will seek Godly knowledge as they return to school. May they seek His will in their understanding. Help them to make decisions that are in line with Godly principles.

### Day 7 – Identity

Pray students and staff know that their worth is in Jesus and not what the world teaches. May each one be encouraged by God's eternal promises and feel the comfort and peace that can only be found in Jesus.

# Praying with the Holy Spirit

week 3

## Start Talking:

Have you ever tried to order food at a restaurant and not known what to say? How did that feel? Did you have to ask someone for help?

## Big Idea:

It isn't always easy to come up with the right words to say when we pray and talk to God. The Holy Spirit is here to help us.

## Key Verses:

Romans 8:26

*"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."*

Acts 1:8

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

## Start Sharing:

Sometimes it can be hard to come up with the right words. We don't always know what to say, but the Bible says the Holy Spirit speaks for us! God gave us the Holy Spirit to make it even easier to talk to him! The Holy Spirit is God. He is the third member of the trinity, and He has a purpose and a job to do. Remember that the Holy Spirit isn't some magical creature that will make your problems disappear. The Holy Spirit is God—your helper and friend who can teach you and give you peace when you're facing challenges.

1. Why do you think that it is sometimes hard to find words to talk to God in prayer?
2. Is it easier for you to talk to God in your head or out loud?
3. Do you always know what you need or want? How do you figure out what you need or want? How can prayer help you do that?



4. Read Acts 1:8. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
5. Read it again and replace the word "Jerusalem" with the name of your town. Replace the words "Judea and Samaria" with two towns next to you. Talk about whether or not you think that you can be a witness right where you live with the help of the Holy Spirit. It might be hard, but He is here to help!

## Start Doing:

You'll need:

- backpack
- numerous heavy objects (large bean bags, thick books, rocks, water bottles, etc.)
- masking tape
- marker

## Backpack Burden Challenge



**PREP** (NOTE: Prep the backpack where the kids can't see it):

Label each heavy object with masking tape and marker. Write the words fear, worry, sadness, anger, and loneliness, along with other words with similar meanings. Prepare the backpack by filling it with heavy objects.

## CHALLENGE:

- Ask a child to pick up the backpack and put it on. It should be heavy enough to make this really difficult. Ask them if they want to take this backpack to the first day of school!
- Look in the backpack together to see what is weighing it down and making it so heavy.
- For each item you pull out talk about why that item can figuratively weigh us down. Example: This heavy item says "fear". What are some things that you are afraid of? Can fear feel heavy? How?
- Repeat this process as you pull out the rest of the items, talking about each one in turn.



- Put each item back in the backpack and talk about how we all need help sometimes to carry things. The Holy Spirit is like that – He helps to carry our burdens to God.
- Read Romans 8:26 again. Help the kids find the verse in their Bibles, and invite a willing child to read it aloud.
- **Say:** The Holy Spirit helps us. The Holy Spirit has all the right words when we don't have any. We try to carry our heavy backpacks on our own, but God gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit so we wouldn't have to.

Give everyone a chance to lift the backpack/bag. Then have an adult help lift it.

- **Say:** This is what the Holy Spirit does for you. The Holy Spirit takes the troubles you have and lets God know about them. Then he says, "Here, let me help you with that" and walks right by our side, carrying the weight.



## Backpack Burden Challenge

### Deeper Discussion:

- Talk about a time you really needed help—but you didn't get any.
- Talk about a time you really needed help—and someone helped you.
- Why might God want us to rely on the Holy Spirit and let him carry our troubles?

### Start Praying:

Dear God, thank you for giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Help us to understand how to ask for help and how to let the Holy Spirit help us. In Jesus' name, amen.

*Things that I am worried  
about for school:*



*Things that I am excited about for school:*

*Things that I can pray for about for school:*

# Praying Together

week 4

## Start Talking:

Do you ever get nervous praying in a group? Why?

## Big Idea:

When we pray together, with unified purpose, we glorify God.

## Key Verses:

Matthew 18:20

*For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.*

## Start Sharing:

1. What are some things that you'd rather do in a group than by yourself?
2. Share about some times that you have prayed in a group. How does that time feel to you?
3. Do you ever get nervous about what you are going to say that you forget to listen to others praying?
4. How do you feel normally after praying in a group?

## Start Doing and Praying:

### PRAYER WALL

Start a prayer wall by getting a long sheet of paper, poster board, or multiple pieces of regular paper and tape them to the wall.

Divide it into the following sections and have everyone write something in each section.



Spend time praying together for the things that were written. Throughout the week, look at the wall and all commit to praying for those things.

When we all pray together for the same things, unity in spirit naturally occurs.

# PRAYER WALL

## PRAISE

write why  
you love God  
and why He  
deserves your  
praise

## FORGIVENESS

write a sin or struggle  
you are dealing with

## THANKFULNESS

write things you are  
thankful for

## OTHERS

write the name of  
another person you  
would like to pray  
for and write why

## BURDEN

write a worry or  
fear that you have

## LISTENING

Don't write anything!  
Spend time quietly in  
front of this section  
and try to listen to  
your thoughts about  
God and prayer

# Praying and Listening

week 5

## Start Talking:

Last week, there was a section on the prayer wall for listening. Did you find that hard? Did you “hear” anything while listening?

## Big Idea:

Prayer goes two ways. We need to talk and also listen.

## Key Verses:

Jeremiah 29:11-13

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”*

John 10:2-4

*The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of*

*them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.*

## Start Sharing:

We can actually hear God’s voice through Scripture, through songs, as words or pictures in our hearts, minds, or even our ears (through other people or objects).

1. What do you think God’s voice sounds like?
2. What other “voices” do you have inside your head and heart?
3. How do we know which “voice” is God’s?

God’s voice will always sound like love; love for myself as an individual and love for humanity.

## Start Doing and Praying:

Three steps to help your child hear the voice of God, our shepherd:

1. **Find a quiet place.** In the Gospels, we often see Jesus going to quiet places to be alone to pray like in Mark 1:35. “Very early in



the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” If Jesus needed to get alone to be able to have a real conversation with God, so do we! This is especially true in this digital age. Even our kids feel the near-constant pull of distracting technology.

2. **Invite God to speak, asking him to help your hearts be quiet enough to listen.** Help your child get into a comfortable listening position, then pray the following prayer together. **SAY:** Jesus, please help me to listen to you today. Help my heart and mind to be quiet so I can hear you. Jesus, what would you like to say to us today?
3. **Wait in expectation.** Set a timer and be quiet for that length of time just listening. Realistically, we won’t always hear his voice. It is such a quiet voice and sometimes it is hard to identify. But chances are high that at least one of you will feel something.

Talk about anything you “heard” during your quiet prayer time.

## Deeper Discussion:

1. Have you ever acted upon something that you thought you “heard” from God? How did that go?
2. Are the distractions inside your head really loud? Test that out by going for a walk without any distractions like headphones. If you are walking in a group, try not to talk for at least 5 minutes (unless necessary) and see how that feels. Do you have more or less to say after that 5 minutes? Are your thoughts more organized when you do speak? (If you didn’t make it 5 minutes, start the timer over. If you made it 5 minutes easily, try to go for 10 minutes.)





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