

Any Time, Any Place, Any Prayer

LESSON PLAN: INTRODUCTION

You can use this lesson plan to give you a quick-to-prepare way of engaging with the story in *Any Time, Any Place, Any Prayer*, and with the Scripture that underpins it, helping children see what it means for them.

This plan includes:

- a suggested session for pre-school-aged children (3-5 years).
- a differentiated lesson plan for children from 5-11, with different activities signaled as being for “Younger” (approximately 5-8-year-old) and “Older” (approximately 8-12-year-old) children. Use what you judge appropriate for your children’s experience, understanding, and concentration. (You may find the “younger” questions more helpful for an older child who is unfamiliar with the Bible or the gospel message.) But try to include something from the “Let’s listen to God,” “Let’s think,” and “Let’s pray together” sections, as well as the storytelling. Feel free to cover the material in more than one sitting!

The lesson is put together so that it can be read out directly as written.

ⓘ Any explanatory notes for adults will look like this.

The lesson for 5-12s includes:

- an introductory activity that establishes a key concept which will help the children understand the passage.
- activities to help them engage as they listen to or read the Bible story.
- a storytelling segment that uses the storybook *Any Time, Any Place, Any Prayer*.
- an opportunity to think about a passage of Scripture and what it means, using appropriate questions.
- an activity or discussion that encourages the children to understand what the passage means for us today.
- encouragement for children to pray in light of what they’ve learnt about Jesus in the lesson.
- games that reinforce the learning but that also provide a concentration break and a chance to move around!
- craft activities, ranging from those requiring minimal resources to more complicated projects.
- specific suggestions for ways families can revisit what the children have been thinking about, over the course of the week.

We pray that these resources will give families and churches a way of helping their children engage with Scripture, and that they will grow in love for our powerful, loving, saving Lord!



Any Time, Any Place, Any Prayer

LESSON PLAN

5-12
year-olds



Summary...

We can talk to God our Father about anything, anytime, anyplace, just as we talk with our loved ones. The family prayer that Jesus taught his friends helps us know what to say to him.



Let's Pray Before We Start

Father in heaven, just as Jesus' disciples asked him, we ask you: please teach us to pray. Amen.



Let's Get Started

I'm going to say some examples of the sorts of things that might happen in your home on a normal, typical day. When I say each one, imagine that thing happened in your household and tell me whether you think you'd say:

- Please
- Thank you
- Sorry
- Wow!
- Help me!
- I will

i For each utterance, model and practice an action to accompany it: for instance, you might:

- clasp your hands for "Please."
- give a thumbs up for "Thank you."
- put your hand over your heart with a solemn face for "Sorry."
- spread hands and be open-mouthed for "Wow!"
- wave arms as if trying to attract attention for "Help me!"
- salute for "I will."

These actions will also be used again later in the lesson.

Here are some suggestions for possible scenarios of each type. Select a number of them or make up your own, but try to include at least one for each utterance.

- If you wanted to ask for something to eat, which of those would you say? (*Please*)
- If you wanted to ask someone to play with you, which of those would you say? (*Please*)
- If you were given something to eat, which of those would you say? (*Thank you*)
- If you were given a gift, which of those would you say? (*Thank you*)

- If you were admiring an amazing drawing that someone in your household did, which of those would you say? (*Wow!*)
- If you heard about something very brave and kind that someone in your household did, which would you say? (*Wow!*)
- If you realized that you'd not done something you'd been told to do, which of those would you say? (*Sorry*)
- If you were rude in how you spoke to an adult/parent, which of those would you say? (*Sorry*)
- If you were told to clear the table after dinner, which of those would you say? (*I will*)
- If you were told to share a toy with a brother or sister, which of those would (or should!) you say? (*I will*)
- If you couldn't work out how to do your homework, which of those would you say? (*Help me! And hopefully also "Please"!*)
- If you got stuck at the top of a tree and couldn't get down, which of those would you say? (*Help me! And hopefully also "Please"!*)

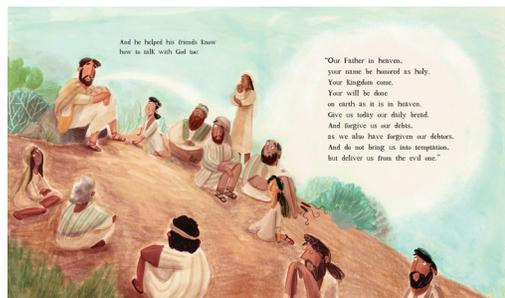
In our daily lives, we talk all the time with the people we love. We tell them all sorts of stuff. We ask them for things. We say sorry when we're wrong. We thank them. We tell them when we think they're amazing. We ask them to help us, and we tell them when we have questions.

Today we're going to think about talking with someone else. We're going to think about talking with God.

To begin with, I'm going to read to you part of the book *Any Time, Any Place, Any Prayer*. As I read, every time you hear the word "talk" or "talked", move your hands like this (*do a chattering action with your fingers*), and every time you hear the words "pray," "prayed," or "prayer," also move your hands like this (*repeat the chattering action with your fingers*).

Let's Listen to These Truths

- i** Read "Any Time, Any Place, Any Prayer" up to and including the page spread that looks like this **ONLY**. (Make sure you read any text inside speech bubbles in the illustrations—it's referred to in the discussion that follows the reading.) Other pages in the book will be summarized or used in different ways later in the lesson. You could read the rest of the book together if you want to at the end of the session.



Let's Think

- i** Choose whichever questions are more appropriate for your children, regardless of age. The groupings are just a guide. You may wish to ask older children the simpler "younger" questions first, especially if you have children who are less familiar with Bible teaching. The aims of the questions for younger children are to reinforce the idea that

- i we can talk with God about all sorts of things and to revisit some of the sorts of things we might say. The questions for older children get them ready to be taught by Jesus how to pray from the Lord's Prayer.

For Younger Children

- When we pray, what are we doing? (*Talking with God—you could do the chattering hand action to help if necessary*)
- While Adam and Eve lived with God in the garden, what sorts of things did they talk about with God and when? (*Anything/everything, anytime/ all the time—their thoughts, questions, and feelings*)

Because of sin, God's people couldn't live with him anymore, but they could still talk with him.

Let's look again at the sorts of things God's people said to God when they prayed. (*Turn back to the page spread with Miriam, Hannah, Jonah, and Nehemiah and use those pictures as a reminder*)

- Which of our six phrases do you think Miriam was saying? And Hannah? Jonah? What about Nehemiah? (*Miriam: Wow! Thank you; Hannah: Please; Jonah: Sorry; Nehemiah: Help me! I will.*)
- When God the Son, Jesus, came to earth, who did he talk to when he prayed? (*His Father, God the Father*)

For Older Children

- When we pray, what are we doing? (*Talking with God—you could do the chattering hand action to help if necessary*)

When Jesus was on earth, he prayed too!

- How would you fill in the gaps in this sentence?

When Jesus prayed, he was the perfect _____ talking with his _____ Father.

(Possible answers for the first gap: Son, man/human, example of. Possible answers for the second gap: perfect, sinless, ideal, heavenly, or a word describing God such as "listening" or "loving")

I'm going to read three sentences, and after each one I'm going to ask you a question:

- Jesus was God the Son praying to God the Father.
Why does that make him the ideal person to teach us about prayer? (*Possible answers: He has a perfect relationship with the Father and can show us what that looks like; his prayers show us what sorts of things the Son and the Father care about.*)
- AND Jesus never sinned.
Why does that make him the ideal person to teach us about prayer? (*Possible answers: He knows how to pray perfectly; his prayers were always perfect in what he said and how he said it; his prayers were always prayers that would please his Father.*)
- BUT Jesus has experienced living in a world spoiled by sin.
Why does that make him the ideal person to teach us about prayer? (*Possible answers: He understands how we feel and what makes prayer hard; he knows what sorts of things we need to pray about.*)

Jesus didn't just come to show people how he talked with his Father. Jesus came to make it possible for people to call God their Father. He died on the cross to take the punishment we deserve for sin. The Son of God swapped with us so that we could be forgiven and God could welcome us as his children. AND Jesus was raised back to life so that we could be given life forever with him. God says that anyone who asks him to forgive them and trusts that Jesus died for them can be in God's family!

So Jesus made a way for us to call God our perfect Father and to talk to him as his child, just like Jesus did. And we're going to spend some time listening to Jesus teach us about prayer. But first...



Let's Play a Game

OPTION 1

- (i) Play a short version of any age-appropriate game in which not being able to talk or say certain things, or to talk directly with someone, makes things more difficult or more likely to go wrong. For instance the Telephone Game (sometimes called Chinese Whispers); charades or Taboo for older children (for these, make sure the tasks are challenging!)*

In that game it was sometimes frustrating not to be able to talk / it was frustrating not to be able to say everything you wanted to / the message got muddled. How brilliant to know that we have a God we can talk with anytime, who we can say anything to, and who always hears and understands us perfectly.

OR

OPTION 2

- (i) If the children are not very familiar with the gospel message, you may want to play a game based on the idea of swapping, giving you the chance to re-articulate the truth that Jesus died in our place to pay for sin.*

You need as many seats/spots as there are children (or one fewer than there are children if one of them acts as the game leader rather than an adult). The game leader calls out, "Change places if you... [have red hair / are wearing green / go to a particular school / have a birthday in May / etc]" and tries to steal the place of one of the people who are in the process of swapping, who then becomes the game leader and calls the next "Change places if..."

In that game you swapped about and changed places with someone else. On the cross, Jesus swapped with sinful people. God's sinless Son swapped with sinful people. God's innocent Son was punished instead of guilty people. And this meant people who weren't friends with God can now become part of God's forever family. So anyone who is trusting in Jesus' death for forgiveness can talk with God as their perfect Daddy anytime, anywhere, about anything.



Let's Listen to Jesus

... teach us more about that now. When he taught his friends to pray in Matthew 6:9-13, the first thing Jesus did was to remind us of who we talk with when we pray. He said we can begin our prayers with "Our Father in heaven."

We get to call God Daddy/Dad*! And he's not just any daddy/dad. He's the Daddy/Dad who is in heaven—the Daddy/Dad who is PERFECT and POWERFUL.

* Use whichever of these will be more personal/intimate/appropriate for the children.

- What are some of the ways that dads show their love for their children? (*Answers might include: They play/spend time with us, they care about us, they listen to us and talk to us, they do things for us, they provide what we need, they're there for us when we need them, they answer our questions, they help us when we can't do something, they still love us when we mess up.*)
- Some of us might not know our dads, and some of us might not live with our dads. And not all dads do those things. And no dad does all those things well all the time. In what ways is God even better than the very best of our daddies? (*Answers might include: God is perfect so he'll never let us down, we can talk to him any time because he's always with us, he is powerful and so he's able to deal with anything we might talk to him about, he never makes mistakes or messes up so we can always trust/rely on him, he's never too busy... If the children give you a description of God—for instance, he is eternal, he is omniscient, he's all-powerful—encourage them to explain why that makes him even better than the best of our earthly fathers.*)

We're going to look at the model family prayer Jesus taught his friends. Let's see what he tells us we can talk with our heavenly Daddy about!

For Younger Children

I'm going to read a line from Jesus' family prayer and then another sentence to help us know what it means. Each time, I want you to do actions to show me if you think that line of the prayer is saying...

- Wow! (*Remind them of each action.*)
- Thank you
- Please
- Sorry
- Help me!
- I will.

i In fact, all of the lines of the Lord's Prayer are saying "Please"! All are requests: for God to glorify himself and to provide for, pardon, and protect us. But the aim of the following activity is to reinforce the lesson: that we can talk with our Father about all sorts of things using the prayer Jesus taught.

- "Our Father in heaven" (CSB) means, "You are powerful and perfect! And you have made us your children."
When we say that to God, we are saying... (*Wow! / Thank you*)
- "Your name be honored as holy" means "We want everyone to treat you as awesome!"
When we say that to God, we are saying... (*Wow! Kids may also say, Please.*)
- "Your kingdom come, your will be done" means "You're the boss, and we want people to live with you in charge."
When we say that to God, we are saying... (*Yes, I will*)



- “Give us today our daily bread” means “We need you to give us everything we need.” When we say that to God, we are saying... *(Please. Kids may also say, Thank you)*
- “And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors” means “We know we’ve done things wrong and not always loved you as we should. Please forgive us.” When we say that to God, we are saying... *(Sorry)*
- “And do not bring us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one” means “We want to live your way, and we need your help to do that.” When we say that to God, we are saying... *(Please or Help me! Children may also say, Yes, I will.)*

ⓘ You can stop here or, if the children are of an age/concentration level where they could cope with one more idea, continue...

- This is Jesus’ family prayer. Did you notice how many times it said “me” or “I” in the prayer?

ZERO! Instead it says “us.”

This prayer reminds us that Jesus’ followers are part of a big family. We don’t just pray for ourselves. We pray for other people too.

- Who are some of the people we know that we could pray for?

For Older Children

ⓘ Read the sentences that follow with/to the children and encourage them to make suggestions to fill in the gaps, to help them understand the basic thrust of each line of the prayer. In each case, a number of suggestions would make sense and be appropriate, so invite the children to share their different ideas.

I’m going to read a line from Jesus’ family prayer and then another sentence to help us know what it means. In each sentence I’ll leave a gap, and I’d like you to suggest a word or phrase that would make sense in that gap.

For example:

- “Our Father in heaven” means “We pray to you, loving Dad, and you are perfect and _____.” What would make sense in that gap?

Let’s do the same with the other lines of Jesus’ family prayer.

- “Your name be honored as holy” means “We want everyone to _____ how amazing and precious you are.” *(Possible answers: know / recognize / realize / acknowledge / declare / say / show / live out.)*
- “Your kingdom come, your will be done” means “We want our lives and other people’s lives to show that you are _____” *(King / ruler / our maker / the boss / in charge / at the center of everything)*
- “Give us today our daily bread” means “We know everything we have comes from you, so please give us everything you know we _____ today” *(Need / require / will need / need for life)*
- “And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors” means “We are _____ for not living your way” *(sorry); “Please _____ us for not treating you as we should”*

(forgive); "Please teach us to _____ other people just as you have forgiven us" (forgive / love / be gracious to).

- "And do not bring us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one" means "I want to live your way so please _____ my heart" (Protect / guard / change); "Please enable me to _____ and _____ temptation to do wrong" (obey / spot / see / recognize / resist ... fight / turn from / be strong in the face of / save me from).

If There's Time...

- ① *You could also discuss some or all of the questions below as you think appropriate. They help dig a bit more into the truths and attitudes behind the words of the prayer:*
 - Who does Jesus' family prayer focus on first? Why do you think that is? Which of our six phrases do you think it's good to start with when we pray?
 - How many times does the prayer say "me"? How many times does it say "us"? Who could you pray for next time you pray?
 - All of the lines of the prayer flow out of reminding ourselves that God is "our Father in heaven." That he is our Father means he has made us his children and he loves us. That he is in heaven means he is powerful and perfect. Can you explain how remembering those two things can lead us to say: Wow!, Thank you, Please, Sorry, Help me!, I will?

- ① *Ideas might include: Remembering God's power and perfection—all the ways he is different than us—prompts WOW-filled awe!*

Remembering all he has done in grace to make us his children prompts praise and thanksgiving.

Remembering that he is our Father gives us confidence to make requests, and remembering his power and perfection gives us confidence that he can answer our "please" and will do it in the best way for us. It also reminds us that he is a gift-giving, prayer-answering Father, which inspires yet more thanks!

Seeing God as our Father, with whom we enjoy a relationship, causes grief at our sin and leads us to confess and repent.

Knowing God is a Father who is both willing and powerful to help makes it natural to ask him to help.

Knowing that God is both our Father and the Ruler of heaven and earth demands our obedience, so we declare our desire to obey him and seek his help to do so.)



Let's Think and Pray Together

- ① *Here are two possible activities for this application and prayer time:*

1. Focuses on prayer as talking to God anytime, anyplace, about anything by using images from the book to prompt ideas-sharing about what people might talk with God about in different circumstances. Doesn't require children to make personal prayer responses aloud.

Display the pictures provided on pages 17-20. These are taken from the storybook, and show children in various places and circumstances, some with empty speech bubbles.

- In what different places do you notice children praying?
- At what different times of day can you see children praying?

i Invite the children to share what they think each child might be saying to God in each picture with an empty speech bubble—either in terms of the six phrases they have been thinking about or more specific ideas.

Finish by praying on everyone's behalf, perhaps using some of the ideas generated by your discussion about the pictures, and including each of the six ideas you've been looking at (Wow!, Thank you, Please, Sorry, Help me!, I will).

2. Encourages children to use the template of Jesus' family prayer to formulate as a group their own prayer to our Father in heaven.

Display the sentence-starters below and share ideas as a group in answer to the questions that follow each one. (You could do this as smaller groups and assign one part of the prayer to each group.) Write up their ideas alongside the sentence-starters so everyone can see them. Having shared all the ideas, invite the children to pray. Either you could read the scaffolding phrases and invite them to join in the prayer by calling out ideas they've already shared, when you pause at the appropriate point, or you could pray on their behalf using their ideas, or you could invite everyone to pray individually in their heads or in small groups. Judge what is most appropriate for your children.

- God, you are _____ —WOW! What words can you think of to put in the gap to describe God?
- Thank you for _____. What are some of the things all God's children can say thank you to him for?
- Please _____ your kingdom and please teach people to _____. What would you like to ask God to do so that people love and obey him?
- Please give us _____. What are some of the things we need God to give us today and this week?*
- Sorry for _____ — please forgive us. What would you like to say sorry to God for?*
- When we are tempted to _____ please keep us able to say to you "I will do what you want." What are some of the ways in which you know you might be tempted not to love and obey God in the week ahead?*

** Encourage the children to be specific here if they can.*

Craft and Activity Ideas

- Children draw round, cut out and color/decorate their hand shape. At the center of the palm they write, "We have a Father in heaven—WOW!" and then write one each of Please, Thank you, Help me!, Sorry, I will on each of the fingers. Their hand is with them wherever they go, just as our heavenly Father is—and their hand can remind them what they can say to him.
- Make a simple bead bracelet using beads of six different colors to remind them of each of the six different things we can say to our heavenly Father (ideal for non-readers).

- Decorate jars or plastic pots to keep prayer sticks in. They could write on the jar or pot, "We have a Father in heaven!" Give each child six lolly/popsicle sticks to keep in it, having written one of the following on each: Wow!, Thank you, Please, Sorry, Help me!, I will. (Or get them to write those words on the sticks.) Encourage them to use the pot while praying, pulling a stick out to remind themselves of what they can say.
- Use the wordsearches or coloring pages on pages 12-16. These are taken from the *Any Time, Any Place, Any Prayer Art and Activity book*.

Ideas that help children learn the Lord's Prayer:

- There are many free or cheap-to-purchase Bible-verse coloring pages available online. Search for one for Matthew 6 v 9-13, either for the children to color or to give them an idea of how to design one of their own.
- A similar jar-decorating activity as above, but on each of the lolly/popsicle sticks children write a line of the Lord's Prayer for them to pull out and use as the basis for their own prayers.



At Home

Take every opportunity to pray in the week with and/or in front of your children:

- Enjoying God's creation? Or struck by an amazing truth about him. Tell him, "Wow!"
- Aware of enjoying a gift from God? Stop and say thank you.
- When you have sinned, let them hear you saying sorry to God.
- Going shopping? Ask your Father to give you what he knows you need.
- Feeling anxious or are your children worried about something? Bring all your requests to God with a "Please."
- Struggling to do something / find something / fix something? Stop and ask for God's help.
- Can you sense that your heart or the hearts of your children are struggling with sin? Stop and ask for God's help to resist sin and to keep saying and meaning "I will do what you want."
- And take every opportunity to draw their attention to answered prayer too.

Use what they made as a craft activity in the lesson to help you pray together.

Invite them to listen to you pray: pray from the Lord's Prayer to show them what it sounds like to use Jesus' family prayer as the basis for ours. Using the Lord's Prayer as a springboard for our own prayers is a great thing to model to our children.

Learn a memory verse about prayer together. You could write up the verse somewhere and cover words with sticky notes, or write out the initial letters only, or try setting it to a familiar tune as you learn it. Great verses on prayer to memorize include:

- Ephesians 6 v 18a • Philippians 4 v 6 • 1 Thessalonians 5 v 16-18 • James 5 v 13

Enjoy a song about prayer: search for songs on prayer from your favorite Christian musicians, or ask your pastor/worship pastor/children's ministry leaders for suggestions.

Wordsearch

h	e	v	q	o	r	a	t	l	e	s	q	c	f	i
e	g	f	r	i	e	n	d	s	p	g	n	x	r	o
z	n	e	f	o	h	y	b	t	n	o	x	e	v	k
z	i	e	g	j	t	p	w	g	e	d	y	r	c	p
q	h	b	t	p	a	l	w	q	d	a	m	l	w	u
h	t	g	b	l	f	a	d	k	r	q	g	x	g	q
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t	a	o	e	p	a	q	k	e	t	s	h	i	c	f
t	f	g	m	t	h	o	e	a	r	t	h	z	n	x
i	r	z	i	e	m	f	e	e	l	i	n	g	s	h
i	y	e	t	w	r	l	o	c	c	o	v	y	h	p
w	l	d	y	d	m	t	b	l	z	n	r	c	g	l
w	h	j	n	u	s	h	n	x	a	s	z	u	t	h
n	h	f	a	r	u	t	j	j	j	e	s	u	s	d

garden

prayer

Jesus

friends

anything

feelings

questions

anytime

earth

God

anyplace

Father

Wordsearch

s	a	l	m	f	v	z	h	e	l	p	f	r	f	x
y	f	o	r	d	a	u	c	z	t	m	g	e	w	w
k	r	v	n	o	y	f	z	z	i	q	c	f	n	t
u	a	e	x	b	s	a	n	h	n	w	a	i	c	w
p	i	w	w	t	i	m	o	n	h	y	x	l	a	m
b	d	w	d	d	a	i	l	v	v	t	j	w	i	i
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w	o	r	z	g	y	e	y	p	f	q	a	q	j	q
r	e	v	e	r	o	f	d	s	i	u	v	r	z	f
o	t	n	h	i	v	c	t	m	l	r	y	j	a	l
x	j	h	p	d	e	g	p	r	o	m	i	s	e	i
f	z	o	u	v	f	e	o	x	v	a	q	t	p	a

heaven

love

talk

Spirit

life

forever

promise

help

family

afraid

obey

forgive

Now Jesus' friends didn't ever have to be afraid of talking with God... about anything, anytime, anyplace.

You can tell God every thought you have.

You can pray...







You can pray...

For a friend
who is sick.

After a dream
you had.



About adventures you
want to go on.



Most of all, you can pray for God's help to love the things he loves, and obey the things he says.







