Preschool–Grade 6

The Lord's Prayer

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus taught us how to pray. Prayer is real talk with God from the heart, not a show and not empty words.
Bible passage: Matthew 6:5–15 and Luke 11:1–4. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." *Matthew 6:9 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Draw two columns next to it: "What we need" and "What God gives."

1. Opening game: Everything I Need (5–10 minutes)

Give the class two minutes to call out everything they need for one day, and write it in the first column: food, water, clothes, a home, family, help with a test, courage, friends. Then ask: *Who gives us these things? Did God know about all of them before we listed them?* Say: "Jesus said, 'Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him' (Matthew 6:8). **Knoweth** means knows. So why do we pray? Today Jesus teaches us."

2. Bible story: Jesus Teaches Us to Pray (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 6. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Where Jesus taught. Jesus saw the crowds, went up into a mountain and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He taught them (Matthew 5:1–2). Matthew 5, 6 and 7 are all part of this teaching. When He finished, the people were astonished, because He taught "as one having authority" (7:28–29).

Not a show. Look up Matthew 6:5. Hypocrites are people who pretend. They loved to pray standing in the synagogues (meeting houses) and on street corners "that they may be seen of men." Jesus said they "have their reward": people saw them, and that was all they got.

The shut door. Look up Matthew 6:6. A **closet** here is an inner room. Jesus said to go in, shut the door and pray to your Father, who sees in secret. **Openly** means God will reward you where it shows.

Not empty words. Look up Matthew 6:7–8. Vain repetitions are empty words said over and over. The **heathen**, people who did not know God, thought God would hear them because they talked so much. But God already knows what we need before we ask.

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The pattern. Look up Matthew 6:9–13. "After this manner" means "like this." Jesus gave a pattern for our prayers. Go through it together:

- **"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name"** (6:9): we come to God, who made us and loves us. **Hallowed** means holy; we honor His name.
- **"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"** (6:10): we ask God to rule, and for His will (what He wants) to happen here as it does in heaven.
- **"Give us this day our daily bread"** (6:11): we ask Him for what we need today.
- **"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"** (6:12): **debts** are the wrongs we have done (Luke 11:4 says "sins"), and **debtors** are people who did wrong to us.
- **"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"** (6:13): **temptation** is being pulled toward sin, and **deliver** means rescue. We ask God to keep us from evil.
- **"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen"** (6:13): **thine** means yours. Everything belongs to God. **Amen** means "so be it."

Forgiving. Look up Matthew 6:14–15. Trespasses are wrongs. If we forgive people, our heavenly Father will forgive us. If we won't forgive, He won't forgive us.

Another time. Look up Luke 11:1. As Jesus was praying in a certain place, one of His disciples asked, "Lord, teach us to pray," and Jesus taught them this same kind of prayer (Luke 11:2–4).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Why do you think Jesus said to go into a room and shut the door to pray (6:6)?
2. If God already knows what we need (6:8), why do you think He still wants us to ask Him?
3. The prayer starts with honoring God (6:9) before asking for anything. Why is that a good place to start?
4. Why is forgiving others such a big part of this prayer (6:12, 6:14–15)? Why can forgiving be hard?
5. How can you pray the way this prayer does, but in your own words?

Recall questions

1. What does "hypocrite" mean? *(Someone who pretends, Matthew 6:5)*
2. What does God know before we ask? *(What things we have need of, 6:8)*
3. What did the disciple ask in Luke 11:1? *("Lord, teach us to pray")*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **after this manner** means like this, **ye** means you, **art** means are, **hallowed** means holy, and **thy** means your. Read the verse on the board together, and ask what each part means. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus taught us to pray, 'Forgive us our debts.' God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: pray every day in a quiet place, following Jesus' pattern in your own words: honor God, ask for His will, ask for what you need, ask Him to forgive you, forgive others, and ask Him to keep you from evil.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Matthew 5:1: Where did Jesus go to teach? *(Into a mountain)*
2. Matthew 6:6: What did Jesus say to shut before you pray? *(Thy door)*
3. Matthew 6:11: What do we ask God to give us this day? *(Our daily bread)*
4. Matthew 6:14: What will our heavenly Father do if we forgive men their trespasses? *(Forgive us)*
5. Luke 11:1: What did one of the disciples ask Jesus? *(Lord, teach us to pray)*
6. Daniel 6:10: How many times a day did Daniel pray and give thanks? *(Three times a day)*
7. Philippians 4:6: What should go with our prayers? *(Thanksgiving)*
8. 1 Thessalonians 5:17: How often should we pray? *(Without ceasing. That means keep on praying.)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, Your name is holy. Let Your will be done in our lives. Thank You for giving us what we need every day. Forgive us for the wrong we have done, and help us forgive others. Keep us from evil. Everything belongs to You, forever. In Jesus' name, amen."

About "Our Father": there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). "Father" tells us God made us and cares for us (Malachi 2:10). The same one God came to earth as a man, Jesus (1 Timothy 3:16), and we pray in His name: "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14, KJV). Some children have no father at home; God is "a father of the fatherless" (Psalm 68:5).

About saying the prayer together: it is a pattern, "after this manner" (6:9). Saying it together is good when we mean every word, but it is never a magic saying (6:7–8).

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