Preschool–Grade 6

The Lord's Prayer

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Prayer is real talk with God, not a show and not empty words. Jesus gave us a pattern so we can pray to Him from the heart about everything.
Bible passage: Matthew 6:5–15 and Luke 11:1–4. Students read them out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." *Matthew 6:9 (KJV)* and "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." *Philippians 4:6 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Matthew 5:1–2, Matthew 6:5–15 and Luke 11:1–4. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Easy or Hard? (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "easy" and the other side "hard." Read each situation. Students walk to the side that shows how hard it would be for them. 1) Praying before lunch when your friends are watching. 2) Praying alone when nobody would ever know. 3) Praying when you don't feel like it. 4) Forgiving someone who hurt you and never said sorry. 5) Praying for something every day for a long time. Ask: *Why is talking to God easy sometimes and hard other times?* Say: "Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. Let's read it."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Tell the setting: Jesus saw the crowds, went up into a mountain and sat down; His disciples came, and He taught them (Matthew 5:1–2). Matthew 5–7 is this one long teaching.
Read out loud: Matthew 6:5–8. Old words in this passage:

- **hypocrites** (6:5): people who pretend, who act one way to be seen
- **seen of men** (6:5): seen by people; **they have their reward**: people's praise is all the reward they get
- **closet** (6:6): an inner room; **in secret**: where no one else sees; **openly**: in a way that shows
- **vain repetitions** (6:7): empty words said over and over; **heathen**: people who did not know God
- **much speaking** (6:7): lots of words; **knoweth** (6:8): knows

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Read out loud: Matthew 6:9–15. Old words in this passage:

- **after this manner** (6:9): like this, a pattern; **art**: are; **hallowed**: holy, honored as holy
- **thy kingdom come** (6:10): may God rule; **thy will be done**: may what God wants happen
- **daily bread** (6:11): what we need for today
- **debts** and **debtors** (6:12): the wrongs we have done, and people who did wrong to us (Luke 11:4 says "sins")
- **temptation** (6:13): being pulled toward sin; **deliver**: rescue; **thine**: yours
- **trespasses** (6:14–15): wrongs, times someone crossed the line

Read out loud: Luke 11:1–4. This is another time. As Jesus was praying in a certain place, one of His disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). John is John the Baptist, whose disciples also "make prayers" (Luke 5:33). Compare Luke 11:2–4 with Matthew 6:9–13: what is the same? What words are different?

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Matthew 6:5 talks about praying to be seen. What are ways people can do good things just to be seen today? How can you keep your prayers about God, not about an audience?
2. Jesus said to shut the door and pray in secret (6:6). Where is your "shut door," a place where you can be alone with God?
3. God knows what we need before we ask (6:8). Why do you think He still wants us to talk to Him?
4. The prayer starts with God's name, His kingdom and His will (6:9–10) before our own needs (6:11). What does that order teach us?
5. Right after the prayer, the one line Jesus said more about was forgiving (6:14–15). Why do you think forgiving matters so much to God?
6. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (6:13). What are some temptations kids your age face? How can praying about them help?

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4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Philippians 4:6: **be careful for nothing** means don't be worried about anything. **Supplication** means asking God humbly and earnestly. **Requests be made known unto God** means tell God what you are asking for.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Matthew 6:9 this week; keep working on Philippians 4:6 next week too.

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus taught us to pray, 'Forgive us our debts.' God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

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6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write the six parts of the pattern on the board, and have students write one or two sentences of their own prayer for each part:

1. **Honor God** (6:9): something great about who God is.
2. **His will** (6:10): one place in your life where you want God's will, not yours.
3. **Daily bread** (6:11): something you need today.
4. **Forgive** (6:12, 14–15): something to be sorry for, and someone you choose to forgive.
5. **Keep me from evil** (6:13): a temptation you want God's help with.
6. **It's all Yours** (6:13): thank God that everything belongs to Him.

   If there is time, give students a few quiet minutes to pray what they wrote, alone with God.

This week: find your "shut door" every day and pray through the pattern in your own words. Each time someone wrongs you, choose to forgive and pray for them.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, Your name is holy. Let Your kingdom come and Your will be done in our lives. Give us what we need today. Forgive us, and help us forgive the people who hurt us. Lead us away from temptation and keep us from evil. Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, 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: "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" (Malachi 2:10, KJV). The same one God was manifest in the flesh in Jesus (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus said, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9, KJV), and "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14, KJV). That is why we pray in Jesus' name. Some students have no father at home; God is "a father of the fatherless" (Psalm 68:5).

If a student asks why Jesus prayed: Jesus was God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16), and as a man He prayed and showed us how to pray (Luke 11:1).

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, and God doesn't hear us for our "much speaking" (6:7–8).

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