Preschool–Grade 6

The Persistent Widow

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

Main point: Always pray and don't give up, because God is good, He loves His own, and He hears them day and night.
Bible passage: Luke 18:1–8 (and Luke 11:5–10). Read them before class.
Memory verse: "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" *Luke 18:1 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, paper and pencils, a wastebasket and three balls of crumpled paper, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Draw two columns on the board: "The judge" and "God."

1. Opening game: Keep Trying (5–10 minutes)

Put the wastebasket far enough away that it is hard to hit. Kids take turns tossing a paper ball until they make it, and the class counts each try out loud. Ask: *Who made it on the first try? Who needed many tries? What made you keep going?* Say: "Today Jesus tells a story about a woman who kept coming back, and He tells us exactly why He told it."

2. Bible story: She Kept Coming (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Luke 18. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Why Jesus told it. Look up Luke 18:1. Jesus spake a **parable**, a story that teaches a lesson. Luke tells us the point before the story starts: we **ought**, or should, always pray, and not **faint**, which here means not lose heart or give up.

The judge. Look up Luke 18:2. In a city there was a judge. He "feared not God," which means he did not honor God, and he did not **regard** man, which means he did not care about people. Write these on the board under "The judge."

The widow. In that city was a **widow**, a woman whose husband had died. She came to the judge and said, "Avenge me of mine adversary" (18:3). An **adversary** is someone who is against you. She was asking him to do what was right for her. The Bible doesn't say who her adversary was.

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She kept coming. He would not help her "for a while" (18:4). **Look up Luke 18:5.** The judge said within himself that because this widow **troubleth** (bothers) him, he would avenge her, "lest by her continual coming she weary me." **Continual** means again and again; **weary** means wear out.

What Jesus said. "Hear what the unjust judge saith" (18:6). **Unjust** means unfair, not right. **Look up Luke 18:7.** God's **elect** are His own people, the ones He has chosen. They cry to Him "day and night." **Bear long with them** means He is patient with them. **Look up Luke 18:8.** God "will avenge them speedily," which means quickly. Then Jesus asked: when He comes again, will He find faith on the earth? Fill in the "God" column: God is good, He loves His own, He hears day and night. Say: "If even an unjust judge would help this widow, how much more will God, who loves us!"

Another time. Jesus told a story like this in Luke 11:5–10: a man knocked at his friend's door at midnight to ask for three loaves, and because he kept asking, his friend got up and gave him what he needed. Then Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (11:9).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. Why do you think it is easy to stop praying about something when the answer doesn't come right away?
2. The widow kept coming to someone who didn't care. How is praying to God different?
3. Luke 18:7 says God's own people cry to Him "day and night." When can you pray?
4. What is something you could keep praying about this week?
5. Jesus asked if He will find faith on the earth when He comes (18:8). What does keeping on praying show about our faith?

Recall questions

1. Why did Jesus tell this parable? *(That men ought always to pray, and not to faint, Luke 18:1)*
2. What did the widow ask the judge? *("Avenge me of mine adversary," 18:3)*
3. What did Jesus call the judge? *(The unjust judge, 18:6)*

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

Explain the old words: **spake** means spoke, **to this end** means for this reason, **ought** means should, and **faint** means give up. Read the verse on the board together. 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: "The widow kept coming to the judge. God wants us to keep coming to Him too. 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: pick one thing to pray about every morning and every night, and don't give up.

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. Luke 18:1: What ought men always to do? *(Pray, and not to faint)*
2. Luke 18:2: What two things did the judge not do? *(He feared not God, neither regarded man)*
3. Luke 18:3: Who came to the judge? *(A widow in that city)*
4. Luke 18:5: Why did the judge say he would avenge her? *(Lest by her continual coming she weary him)*
5. Luke 18:6: What did the Lord call the judge? *(The unjust judge)*
6. Luke 18:7: When do God's elect cry unto Him? *(Day and night)*
7. Luke 18:8: How will God avenge them? *(Speedily)*
8. 1 Thessalonians 5:17: What three words tell us how to pray? *(Pray without ceasing)*

For more, use the **word search, crossword, maze or worksheet** (vbshq.com/bible-stories/persistent-widow).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You are good and You hear us day and night. Help us keep praying and not give up, even when we have to wait. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why God hasn't answered a prayer yet: answer gently. God hears every prayer, and He is not like the unjust judge. Sometimes He asks us to wait, and He answers in the way that is best (Luke 18:1, 18:7).

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