

The Prayer Parables

Scripture: Luke 11:11–13

Lesson 7 Snapshot

Lesson Aim: Prayer is simply talking to God.

Welcome Time (10 minutes)

- ▶ Week 1 Bible Action Word: PRAY

Circle Time (15 minutes)

- ▶ Object Lesson: Things We Say to Mom, Dad, or Grandparents
- ▶ Bible Story
(supplies: felt board or whiteboard for illustrating Bible story)

Snack (10 minutes)

Learning Activities (30 minutes)

- 1. Action Verse (Matthew 7:7)**
- 2. Song: “Our Good Father”**
- 3. Object Lesson: Prayer Stations**
(supplies: building blocks; 2 poster boards or 1 roll of butcher paper; crayons or markers; bowl of red foam stickers)
- 4. Art Activity: Praying Hands**

Puppet Skit (optional) (15 minutes)

- ▶ “Smart Alex” Puppet Show

Closing Prayer & Wrap-Up (5–10 minutes)

Lesson Overview:

Jesus taught the prayer parables in response to the disciples’ request, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). First, Jesus began his answer to their question by teaching the disciples the Lord’s Prayer. After the prayer, Jesus taught the parable of the friend arriving at midnight, and continued by sharing the parable we will study for this week’s lesson, the parable of the generous father. The goal of this lesson is to help the children understand that prayer is simply talking to God the same way you would talk to your dad. .

For the Teacher:

Take time during the week to read through the Scripture, Lesson Overview, and Lesson Aim, and to meditate on this week's Bible passage. The most important instruction you will give your students is the example of your own personal love for God and his Word.

Take time to read through the lesson and gather items for the object lessons you would like to include. We've given you more content than you may be able to fit in your time. Feel free to scratch or rearrange the lesson to suit your classroom. Where the object lessons are more involved, we've sought to include a simplified alternative.



WELCOME TIME

Preparation: Prior to class, print out this week's Bible action word page and hang it at the front of the classroom.

Review Past Bible Action Words of the Week

Use the images on the previous puzzle pieces to help remind the children.

Ask: **Does anyone remember the last Bible action word of the week?** (The last Bible action word of the week was "love.")

What did we learn last week? (Use a copy of last week's lesson to help you review with the class.)

Bible Action Word of the Week – "Pray"

Each action word (and accompanying graphic) will be represented on a page that will hang at the front of the classroom. Each week's page can be hung next to the page from the previous weeks, for easy review. One option would be to hang the pages in such a way that by the end of the curriculum, all twelve words could hang together in the final form of a cross. (Optional: Additional copies of the action word page can be printed out for use as a coloring page.)

To start the class, hold up today's Bible action word picture.

Ask: **What is this a picture of?** (Hands of a person praying; "prayer hands")

Say: **Each week we are going to learn a new Bible action word. Our Bible action word for this week is "pray." Can anyone tell me what the word "pray" means?** (Praying is simply talking to God. We can pray to tell God we love him, and we can pray and ask God to help us.)



CIRCLE TIME

Things We Say to Mom, Dad, or Grandparents

The purpose of this object lesson is to introduce the idea that praying is talking to God, just like we speak to our mom or dad (or another trusted family member).

Ask for volunteers to silently act out the following four scenes (you may want to create simple labels for each character to wear, and read those labels to the



class): 1) a dad hugging his kids; 2) a boy with an empty plate, holding it up to his mom; 3) a girl who fell off her bike calling to her dad nearby; 4) a boy and girl walking with their grandma, holding hands.

Tell the class that you want them to guess what the children are saying in each of these scenarios. After the kids give you their answers, use the descriptions below to teach the children the different ways we relate to God:

A dad hugging his kids – **The children are telling their dad how much they love him. We tell God how much we love him when we sing praises to God in worship on Sunday morning. We can also tell God we love him by thanking him for all he has given us.**

A boy with an empty plate – **The boy is asking his mom to give him some food. Our parents (or other family members) provide the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the place we live. If we are hungry we ask them for something to eat. When our shoes are too small we can ask them for new shoes. When our room is cold we can ask them to turn the heat on. The Bible tells us that all that we have comes from God above, and that we can ask God for what we need, too.**

A girl who fell off her bike – **The girl is calling out to her dad to help her because she fell off her bike. We can also ask God to help us when we are in trouble.**

A boy and girl walking with their grandma – **We can talk to our trusted family members about anything at all. We can tell them how school is going, what our favorite sports team is, or just talk about the weather or the beautiful things that we see as we walk. We can talk to God just the same way we talk to our family members. We can tell God about our day, our friends, or we can tell him how much we enjoy the world he created.**

Bible Story

Read the parable passage below. Use a felt board to illustrate the story as you go along with the children.

Say: **What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!** (Luke 11:11-13).

Our parable today is teaching us about prayer and how God loves to give us good gifts. One day the disciples were with Jesus and they asked him, “Can you teach us how to pray?” Jesus thought that was a good idea, and taught the disciples all about prayer. The Bible passage I just read was part of that teaching. That is where Jesus said that God is our Father in Heaven.

Jesus wanted the disciples to know that God our Father in heaven is happy to give us good things when we ask. God gives us the food we eat. (Demonstrate eating an apple) He provides the clothes we wear (pull on your

jacket or shirt to illustrate). **And the Lord keeps us alive with every breath.** (Inhale demonstratively) **But there is one, very special thing, he loves to give more than anything else. God the Father loves to give his Holy Spirit to anyone who asks him (that's God, living inside us).**

Let's think about the picture Jesus used in the parable. Jesus said, if a little boy asked his father for a fish to eat, would his father give him a snake? (Make a scary face and hold up your hand like a snake and strike at the nearest children.) **No way! A dad would never give his little boy a snake with fangs** (curve your index and middle finger like fangs and lunge out toward the class). **God is a good Father who gives his children good gifts.**

Imagine, Jesus said, if a little boy asked his father for an egg to eat. Would his father give him a scorpion? (Make a scary face and hold up your hands like claws.) **No way! A dad would never give his little boy something that would hurt him.**

If a little boy asked his dad for a fish or egg to eat, his dad would give him a fish or an egg.

The same is true for God. If we ask God to give us his Holy Spirit, he is glad to send him to us.

God sends his Spirit to live inside everyone who believes in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the best gift God could give his children because the Holy Spirit is God. The best gift God can give is himself. The Holy Spirit helps us understand the Bible. He is called the Helper and helps us know when we are doing something wrong to convict us of sin. The Holy Spirit fills us, helps us to pray, and prays on our behalf because he knows just what we need (Romans 8:26-28).

So, when it comes to praying, God is eager to give us good gifts, especially his Holy Spirit, who is the best gift of all. When God sends his Spirit into our hearts, the Spirit of God changes our heart of stone into a soft heart that loves God and believes in Jesus. He helps us not to sin and helps us love God and helps us live for God. And the Holy Spirit helps us to pray.

If God the Father was willing to give up his only Son Jesus to die for us on the cross and God the Father was willing to send his Spirit to live with us, then we should expect that he is happy to answer our prayers. That is why we can boldly run to God (run across the room) with our prayers, just as we would run to our parents when we skin our knee.



Use this time to prepare for the learning activities.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Action Verse

Children love to sing and recite with motions. Use this Bible verse with your class as a break from sit-down instruction.

Say: **Jesus gave us these instructions just before he told the parable we are studying this week: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you”** (Matthew 7:7).

Ask, and it will be given to you; (Have the children fold their hands in prayer, and then lift their hands to worship our God who answers our prayers.)

Seek, and you will find; (Have the children hold their hands above their eyes like they are searching on a sunny day, then jump up and down because they have found what they are looking for.)

Knock, and it will be opened to you. (Have the children pretend they are knocking on a door, and then it opens and they walk through.)

Explain to the children that each of these descriptions is a picture of us praying and God answering our prayers. He is the one that answers when we ask, helps us find what we need, and opens the door when we ask.

2. Song

Every lesson has a suggested song. Don't worry about trying to teach a new song every week. Pick as many as you wish to teach your class during this twelve-week curriculum.

“Our Good Father” (based on Luke 11:1–13)

VERSE 1

Lil' Johnny came home from school
Hungry, tired, needin' some fuel
Went to find some fish sticks in the fridge
Johnny's dad was standing there, said
“Sit on down, son, and I'll prepare”
You'll never guess what that dad did!
Whoa, whoa, what's the deal?
He served up the weirdest meal—
Sliding on his dinner plate
Johnny saw a rattlesnake!

CHORUS

No good father's gonna give us something like that
Uh-uh, no way
Our good Father always does us good
When we ask, but you gotta pray

Song
of the
Week

Our
Good
Father

VERSE 2

Lil' Suzy woke up one day
Hungerin', hankerin' for some eggs
When in the room her dad appeared
Then he gave her something strange
It didn't help her hunger pangs
In fact, her brown eyes filled with tears
Hey hey, my oh my, what'd she see? Why'd she cry?
Breakfast made her want to run—It was a scorpion!

OUTRO

Keep askin', keep hopin'
Keep knockin', it'll open
Keep prayin', keep seekin'
God knows just what we're needin'

Music and words by Dave Fournier, Doug Plank, and McKenzie Fuller © 2017 Sovereign Grace Praise (BMI)/Sovereign Grace Worship (ASCAP).

3. Object Lesson: Prayer Stations

(Original idea from <https://www.futureflyingsaucers.com/using-prayer-stations-children>)

Supplies

- Building blocks
- 2 poster boards or 1 roll of butcher paper
- crayons or markers
- Bowl of red foam stickers

Three adults are needed, one for each station, to supervise this activity.

Ask the children: **What is prayer?** (Prayer is simply talking to God.)

Divide the children into three groups, and explain that they will be practicing prayer by taking turns stopping at different “prayer stations.” Remind them that when they pray, they can talk to God about all kinds of things; so, at each station, they will be talking to God about something different.

Have children stop at each of the following stations station for approximately three to five minutes:

Thankfulness wall – Have a large poster board or butcher paper, along with a supply of crayons or markers. Have the children take a few moments to write or illustrate something they are thankful for. Offer to pray together as a group to thank God for his many blessings.

Needs/concerns station – Have a pile of building blocks on the table and explain that each child will take one or two blocks. When it is their turn, they will share one or two things they need or are concerned about, and stack their

blocks on top of the last person's tower. Once each child in the group has done this, have their leader offer a prayer about these needs on everyone's behalf.

Cross station – Have a large poster board on the wall, with the shape of a cross drawn on it. Have a bowl full of red foam stickers on a table nearby. Have each child pick up a sticker and think of a sin they need to confess to the Lord. They can talk to the Lord about it silently or aloud. Afterward, have them place their stickers on the cross to remind them that Jesus paid for their sin on the cross and offers them forgiveness.

4. Art Activity

Praying Hands

Supplies

- One “Praying Hands” activity sheet for each student copied on yellow card stock.
- Scissors for the children (you could also help the children cut these out.)
- Crayons or markers

Cut out along the outline of the praying hands to form their praying hands card (keep pinkie fingers attached so they can fold together). Then instruct the children to color and decorate the inside and outside of the praying hands.

While the children are coloring, you can tell them that their memory verse is on the left and a simple definition of prayer is on the right. The children can take their praying hands home and place them on their dresser, to remind them to take some time every night before they go to bed to talk to God in prayer.

PUPPET SKIT (optional)

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Use the Smart Alex Puppet Show lesson 7: “Pray.”

CLOSING PRAYER & WRAP-UP

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Review Questions

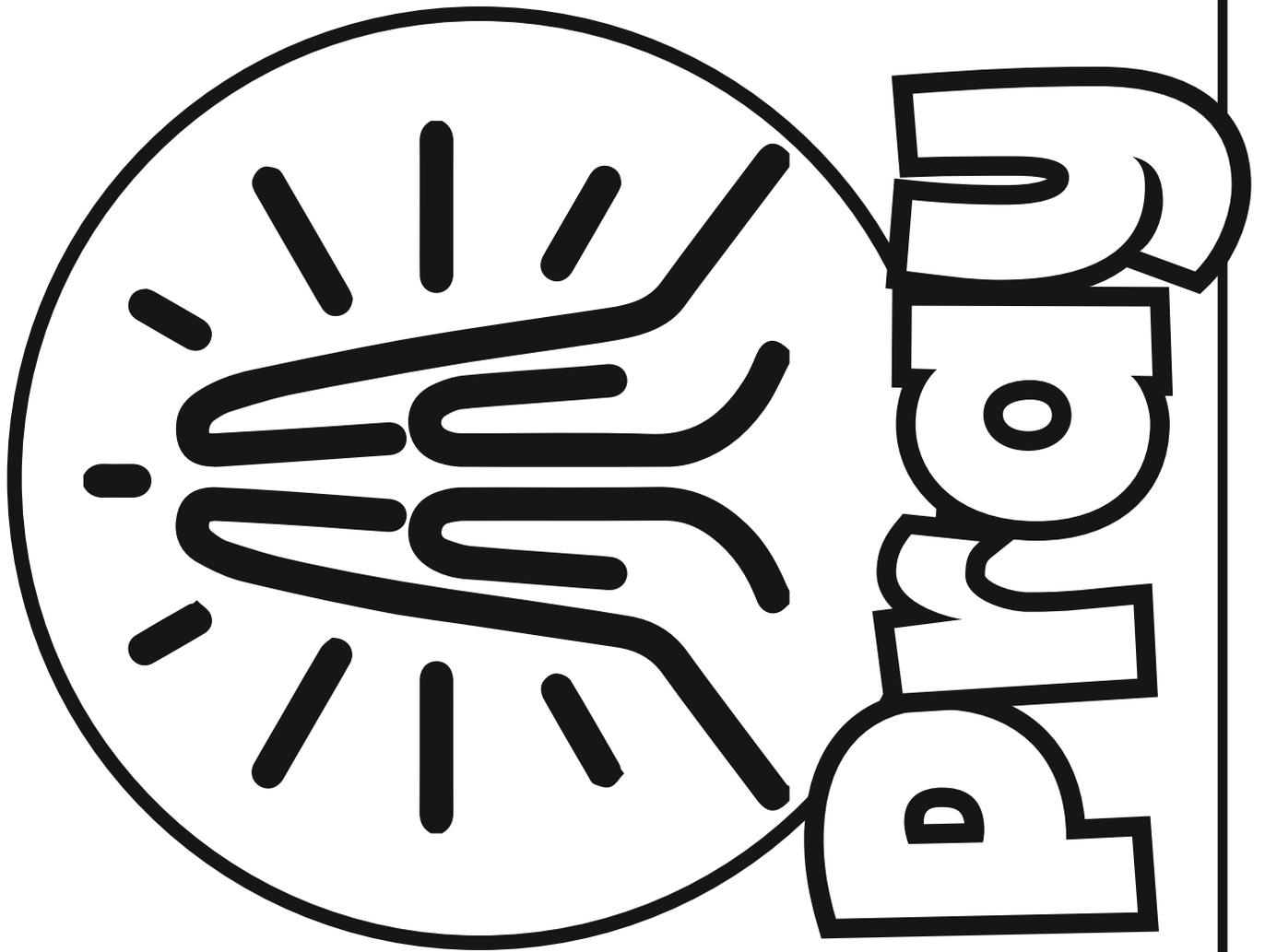
- ▶ **Can anyone tell me what our Bible action word of the week is?** (Pray)
- ▶ **What does the word “pray” mean?** (“Pray” means talking to God.)
- ▶ **Is praying just for adults or can children talk to God too?** (Praying is for children, too. Children can talk to God.)
- ▶ **When is the best time to pray?** (Draw out the kids here, concluding that prayer is something we can do anytime.)

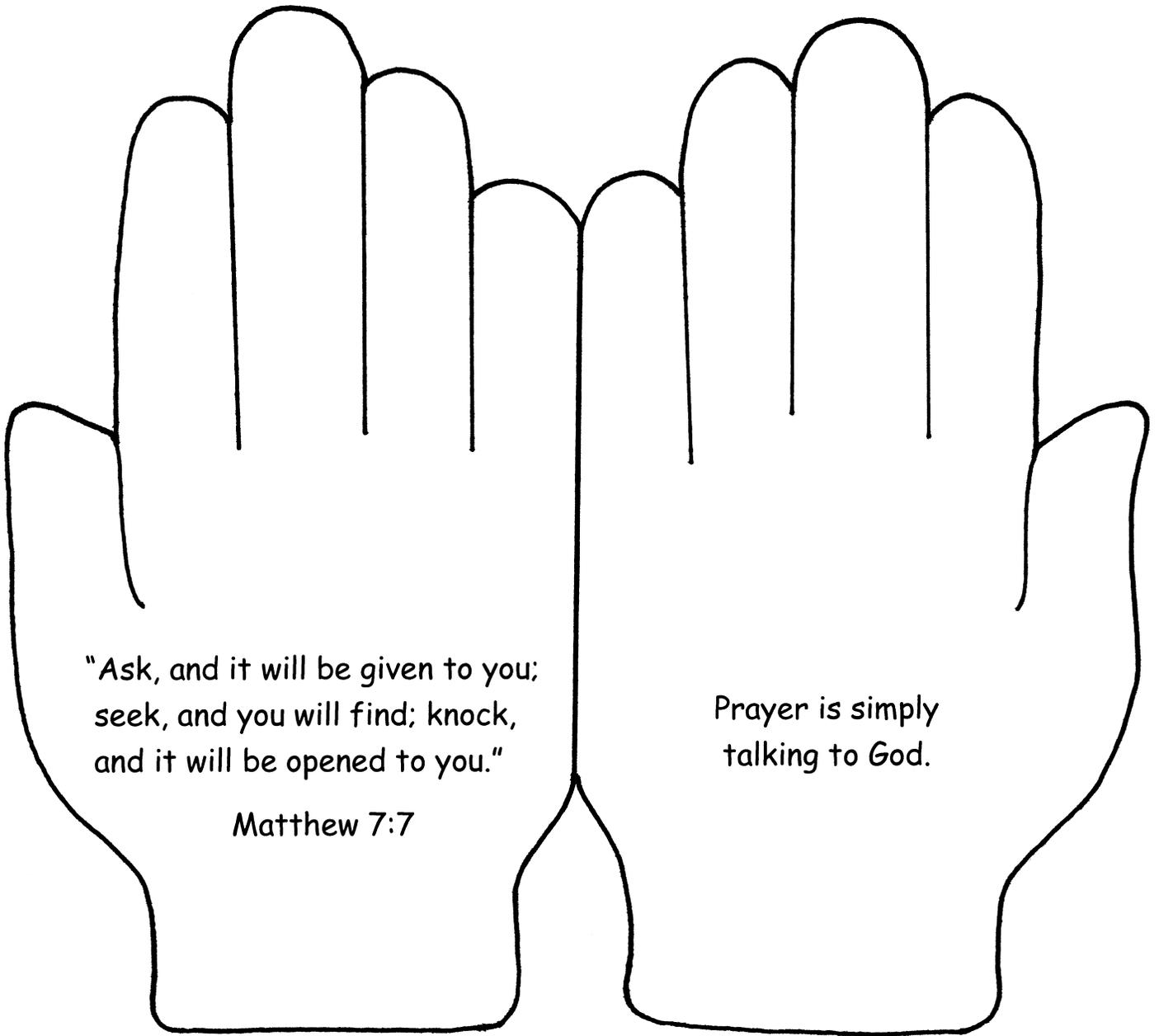
Prayer

End your time of instruction with a prayer



Proads





"Ask, and it will be given to you;
seek, and you will find; knock,
and it will be opened to you."

Matthew 7:7

Prayer is simply
talking to God.