

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE

HOW TO...

BIG IDEA

Jesus taught us
how to pray.

BIBLE

The Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:5-15;
Psalm 32

LARGE GROUP TIME

Hey, everybody! Welcome to our final week of *How To...*! I'm so excited we've been learning about how to do so many things and today we get to add one more piece of knowledge to the pile! Let's kick things off with a fun how-to video!

[Before beginning the program each week, share a fun "How-To" video with the kids. [Here's a video](#) we like, but feel free to show something fun you've come across recently! It can be anything from a crafting or building project to a cool "life hack" using ordinary things.]

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Light of the World" (Hillsong Kids)
 - "Blueprint" (Lifeway Kids Worship)
 - "Love Everybody" (North Point Kids)
 - "Freedom is Here" (Covenant Kids)

ACTIVITY | How to Make a Story

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids circle up to play this game. Split them into smaller groups if needed. Ask a volunteer to be the first person to start the game by saying one word that will be the start of a sentence to a story. Then, going clockwise, have the next person say one word to continue the sentence. Odds are it will get pretty silly pretty fast! Feel free to do a couple of rounds if that's the case!
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Remind preteens to keep the story appropriate — nothing rude, mean, or vulgar. Give them a theme to keep them on track.

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Allow kids to contribute to the story by coming up with gestures rather than supplying words, as it might be easier to act out things than to think of words for some friends. You can have a buddy or a leader interpret their actions and incorporate them into the storyline.

- That was some intense fun! **Was it easy or hard for you to think of what to say next?**
- In today's Bible story we'll see how Jesus gives us some words we can say to God.

ACTIVITY | How to Talk to People

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** On small slips of paper or index cards, write a few different ways people communicate poorly (only asks questions, daydreams (doesn't listen), only gives one-word answers, keeps interrupting, distracted by everything, or stares at phone). Ask kid or adult volunteers to come up one at a time, pick out a slip of paper from a container, and start a conversation with you (you might want to present a topic like a movie they recently watched or what they did during the week). The volunteer has to do the action on their paper. After each person, ask the group how you think that conversation went and why they think it went poorly.
- Talking with people can be tricky, especially if you're shy or you're just not a talkative person. It doesn't help if the person you're talking to doesn't seem to care about you enough to fully listen to you or enjoy talking with you.
- Today's Bible story tells us there's someone who is very interested in the things we have to say . . . God! God always listens to us when we strike up a conversation.

QUESTION | Who do you enjoy talking to the most?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give kids time to think about who they enjoy talking to the most. Ask a volunteer to be the first to share and have them choose a kid to share their answers next.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** For preteens, ask, "What are some of the things you talk about with your friends? Siblings? Parents?" Then, make a list of the different topics that students offered.
- **Who do you enjoy talking to the most?**
 - **What kinds of things make them someone you enjoy talking to?**
- **Do you enjoy talking with people?**
 - **Who do you find the easiest to talk to? Why?**
 - **Who do you find the most difficult to talk to? Why?**
- **What are some of your favorite topics to talk about?**
- Talking to our favorite people can feel like the best feeling in the world! Let's hear about Jesus' favorite person to talk to in our Bible story today!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 6:5-15 (The Lord's Prayer)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week for the Bible story, set up your space with a table, tablecloth, and stools. Revamp a used rectangular box to look like a [subscribe button](#), and place it in your teaching area. For this week's story from Matthew 6:5-15, ask a volunteer to play Lindsey. Wear the "Howie" and "Lindsey" name tags if using them.
- **Howie:** Hello and welcome to my video channel, *How To!* I'm your host, Howie Doothings! In case you're new to my channel, here's a quick recap of what we've been talking about. We've learned quite a few how-tos by looking at Jesus' teachings from the Bible, like . . . how to make a difference, how to love our enemies, and how to share. I want to share one more how-to from Jesus and to help me do that, please welcome our special guest, Lindsey!

- **Lindsey:** Howdy Howie! Hi kids!
- **Howie:** We're so happy you're here! So you were also one of the people who heard Jesus' teachings on that mountain?
- **Lindsey:** I sure was! Jesus taught us lots of very important things but the one that I remember best is what Jesus said about prayer.
- **Howie:** And when you say prayer, you mean talking to God?
- **Lindsey:** Of course! So first, Jesus started off by explaining to people how not to pray.
- **Howie:** Interesting. I didn't know there was a wrong way to pray.
- **Lindsey:** Me neither! You can find what Jesus said about it in the Bible. *[Read Matthew 6:5, 7-8.]*
- **Howie:** WOAH! So it sounds like the hypocrites that Jesus is talking about here are people who pretend that they are super close with God and are doing something good for God, but in reality, they care more about what others think of them than what God thinks of them.
- **Lindsey:** Spot on! Jesus is calling out people who try to make themselves look like they are the best at prayer, but they aren't actually doing it for God . . . they make it all about themselves!
- **Howie:** That would be pretty annoying! I mean, imagine if someone showed up at your birthday party with a super fancy gift. Instead of letting you enjoy your gift, they unwrap it for you and start showing off all its cool features to everyone. Everyone's attention shifts to this person. They all are thinking, "WOW, that person is SO awesome because they brought this awesome gift. They must be REALLY good friends with the birthday person." When in actuality, that person rarely knows you or hangs out with you! *[Take a deep breath.]* Whew, sorry I got a bit worked up there. Anyway, let's keep things moving forward! Lindsey, now that we've seen how not to pray, can you tell us what Jesus says about how to pray?
- **Lindsey:** Yes! Let's keep reading from the Bible. *[Read Matthew 6:6.]*
- **Howie:** Does that mean I can only pray alone in my room, and I shouldn't pray in front of others?
- **Lindsey:** Not exactly! Notice that in that verse, Jesus specifically says, "pray to your Father." Jesus doesn't say to pray to yourself or pray to other people. So, I think it's all about where your heart is at. Perhaps not every person who prays in front of others or uses a lot of words in their prayers is doing it for attention from others. What seems more important to God is that our prayers are directed towards God and not just saying words so others will think how awesome we are to have prayed a fabulous prayer like that.
- **Howie:** That makes a lot of sense! Now that we've talked about our heart motive behind prayer, do you think it matters what we pray to God about?
- **Lindsey:** I would say, yes and no. You see, Jesus did give us an example of a prayer we can use. *[Read Matthew 6:9-15].* The first part of Jesus' prayer reminds us to draw our attention to God and to recognize God as the one and only God out there. The second part of Jesus' prayer shows us how we can ask for things we or others need, including forgiveness, guidance, and protection. So, yes, in a way, it matters what you talk to God about. And on the flip side, I think that there are so many different ways to pray, and if you're talking to God and not showing off while doing it, God will hear your prayers no matter what you're saying!
- **Howie:** I gotta say, I grew up thinking I had to pray a certain way each time. So, just to recap. I don't have to make my prayers really long or use big, fancy words to impress God or get God's attention?
- **Lindsey:** Nope. God really isn't concerned about people praying prayers perfectly! In fact, God already "knows what you need before you ask him." You already have God's full attention, and God just loves the fact that you are spending time talking with God.
- **Howie:** That is such good news! Lindsey, thank you so much for listening to Jesus and sharing Jesus' teaching on how to pray!
- **Lindsey:** I'm so glad I got to pass this along! Take care!
- **Howie:** There you have it, friends! A brand new How-To for you! For more, don't forget to hit the subscribe button so you never miss a new video!

BIG IDEA | Jesus taught us how to pray.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the piñata from Week 1 and hang it up in your ministry space. Write the Big Idea on a piece of paper and fold it up as usual, but this week, add it inside the piñata along with some bulk candy or other small treats. Invite kids to come up one at a time to pull on a single string. Keep going until the piñata bursts open. Have kids collect the prizes and allow whoever finds the Big Idea paper to read it aloud. (Bonus points if you wrap some or all of the candy with the Big Idea!)
- Today's Big Idea will tell us the How-To of the day! I wonder what it could be? I feel like today's reveal will be the biggest one yet!
- **Jesus taught us how to pray.**

VIDEO | How To . . . , Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

ACTIVITY | How to Pray with Five Fingers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have each kid trace their hand onto a piece of paper. Then, have kids repeat the "keyword" of each finger after you, as you hold up one finger at a time and explain it to them. Afterward, they can jot down the keyword they just learned to help them remember what you shared with them.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** For preteens, show [a video](#) about prayer.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** This can be a good time to introduce the idea of guided prayer. You can use your own guided prayer exercise if you have one (or use a video like [this one](#)) to help kids connect with God through prayer.
- **Jesus taught us how to pray** by giving us the "Lord's Prayer," but that doesn't mean he wants us only to use those words every time. By giving us this prayer, he showed us a great example of how we can talk to God.
- One way we can remember is by counting it off on our fingers. Let's try it together.
 1. **Hello!** [Hold up your thumb.] We can start our prayer by greeting God and telling God, "You're amazing!" By doing that we recognize who we're talking to
 2. **Sorry.** [Hold up thumb and index finger.] It's good to admit when we've made a mistake. Tell God we know we messed up and we don't want to do it again.
 3. **Thank you.** [Add third finger.] Say to God, "You've done so much for me," and remember all the things God has given you.
 4. **Yes?** [Add fourth finger.] Pause and hear what God has to say, too. Tell God, "I'm listening."
 5. **Please.** [Add fifth finger.] Always remember to ask God for help with whatever you need in your life. Pray for your family, friends, neighbors, the world — tell God everything!

ACTIVITY | How to Do a Prayer Relay

- The cool thing about prayer is that we can pray with others and we can pray for others. Let's play a game that shows how we can build a prayer together.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Form two teams of 5 or 10 kids each and have them line up single file. Print out the ten lines of Matthew 5:9-13, cut them apart so that one line is on its own strip of paper, and tape each strip of paper to the spine of a book. Scatter each set of books randomly on the floor at the front of each team's line. Here's how to play:
 - The first person in line may use their hands freely but everyone else must put their palms together (prayer hands).
 - Once the first person finds the book with the LAST line of Jesus' Prayer, they pass it to the next person in line (who grasps it using the space between their joined index fingers and thumbs) and passes it down.

- *The last person stacks it on a chair then runs to the front of the line to search for the second-to-last line of the prayer to pass down the line.*
- *Repeat until all the books are passed. The first team to put the complete the stack so that the Lord's Prayer is in order on the spines of the books from top to bottom. Display a copy of the complete prayer as a reference for teams.*
- Great job everyone! Just like you worked together to put the prayer Jesus taught us in order, prayer can be done with other people. We can ask people how we can pray for them, and we can pray with them.
- **Turn to someone next to you and share one thing you might want them to pray for or with you about.**

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 32

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage aloud or recruit a volunteer to read.*
- The author of Psalm 32 was a man named David, who we know to have written many of the prayers and songs in the book of Psalms . . . and we also know him to be the famous King David in the Bible.
- In this psalm, David said he kept silent and didn't talk to God for a while. It was like he was hiding from God. During that time, he found living with his own mistakes to be kind of tough! But then, he decided to talk to God about it and own up to his mistakes, and God forgave him! It didn't matter how long David didn't talk with God because God was still there, ready to listen to David's prayer.
 - **Do you think God still wants to talk with you, even if you haven't prayed to God in a while? Why or why not?**
- Think of how often your favorite YouTubers talk to you through their videos. If they disappear for a whole year, or even just a week or two, you'd probably lose interest in them. Thankfully, God never loses interest in us, no matter how long it's been since we talked with God. But, we definitely learn more from and feel closer to God when we spend more time having conversations together!

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

ACTIVITY | How to Pray for Others

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pass out one card to each kid. Have kids think of someone they are close to. Encourage them to write a prayer for that person on the back of the card. Then have them fill out a card with things they might want other people to pray for them about. Have them take the first card home as a reminder to pray for them, and have them give you the second card. You can divvy up those cards among your ministry team and have them pray for each of the kids whose cards they're assigned.*
- Take a moment to think about someone you know. Then write a prayer for that person and I want you to pray for them every day this week! If you don't want to write, draw a picture that will remind you of what to pray.
- Then, write at least one thing you would like your leaders to pray for you about. When you think about this during the week, you can remember that your leaders are out there praying with you!

RESPONSE | How to Move Through Prayer

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Talk with kids about how there are different positions people can pray in. Demonstrate each position as you name them, and feel free to read the referenced verses for them if you wish. Then invite the kids into a time of prayer where they can choose the prayer posture of their choice.*
- There are so many different ways we can pray! Some of us may have grown up thinking that we always have to bow our heads, close our eyes, and clasp our hands when we pray. That's a great position to be in especially if we get easily distracted!
- The Bible actually shows us that there are many ways to pray to God.

- We can lift our eyes up as if talking to God (John 17:1).
- We can bow or kneel down (Psalm 95:6).
- We can stretch our arms out wide (1 Kings 8:22-23).
- We can even be standing, laying down, sitting, walking, singing, or leaping for joy!
- Choose a way you'd like to pray right now, and thank God for the gift of being able to communicate with God!

MEMORY VERSE | John 13:15 (NIV)

- **"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Recruit an adult volunteer or two to lead kids in learning how to memorize this month's memory verse. You can let them choose from a list such as [this](#), have them make up their own, or assign them a memorization method. Provide them time to prepare and the materials needed to carry it out.
- **(Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs – a combination of SEE and ASL – available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/John13-15.)**

PRAYER

- Dear God, help us make prayer a more important part of our life so that we never forget how great you truly are and just how wonderful it is that we get to talk to you. Help us tell you about our mistakes, ask for help, and think of others in our prayers. Amen!

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- Why did Jesus want people to go into a quiet place to pray?
- What are some things Jesus encourages us to pray for?
- What does 'forgive us our debts' mean?
- Read Psalm 32:5-6. What kinds of things is the author of this psalm praying about?
- If you could ask God any question right now what would it be?
- The Bible tells us God knows what we need before we ask. Then why do you think we still pray?
- What are some things you can pray about this week?

ACTIVITY | Prayer Holder

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Check out this [picture](#) to see how to turn a pool noodle into a card holder. Distribute one card holder and one verse card to each kid. Encourage kids to decorate their card holder with the liquid chalk markers and foam stickers. They can write the Big Idea, draw praying hands, or simply write, "Pray!" Have them insert the verse card into their card holder.
- Get creative and feel free to swap out the verse card with a person or thing you want to pray for instead!