

Make this Year a Year of Prayer!

Older and Younger Kids

Mandatory Items Please do not omit these first four items, although you can change them to suit your taste/style, etc., as long as you read from God's Word during your lesson.

Lesson from God's Word:

Material: Paper with the P.R.A.Y. acronym on it.

Say: It is almost a brand New Year! It is a time to start over, to see what may need changing in your life and change it. A time to take on new challenges in your life. Let's challenge ourselves to make 2019 a year of prayer. What would happen if our lives focused on talking with the everlasting, all-powerful, all-loving Father? Think of it: When we're happy, we can pray, when we're sad, we can pray, when we're scared, we can pray, when we're stressed out and anxious we can pray. It is a wonderful gift!

Think about having your own personal direct phone line to the President and any time you had a comment or request, you could pick up that phone and call him and he would be available to you and listen to you and be able to let you know that all would be well because he is in control of this country. Well, we have something even better: a direct line to God. We can talk to Him anytime and the Bible says, we're supposed to talk to Him how much? The answer is our memory verse from 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Let's read it together.

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

(Ask kids with different Bible translations to read theirs and discuss that they all mean the same thing, we should always be praying! You can also share the translations of these common Bible versions: **New International Version**: pray continually; **New Living Translation**: Never stop praying; **King James Bible**: Pray without ceasing; **Holman Christian Standard Bible**: Pray constantly.)

God never wants us to stop talking to us. He wants us to be close to Him and He wants to be able to tell us that all will be well, because He is in control.

Prayer is important, we know that. Jesus prayed all the time. He took time to go off by himself to pray.

Read together: Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46 (point out this was after the feeding of the 5,000). Obviously, if Jesus took the time to pray so often, even when He was tired from serving so people, we should make it a priority too.

So, how should we pray? Jesus showed us that too! Read Matthew 6:5-13

We can simplify that by using an acronym, which is a word in which every letter stands for another word or words. The acronym is P.R.A.Y. All of these letters stand for words. Let's go over what the letters stand for. (Show the kids the paper with the acronym on it.)

P stands for Praise. It is always good to spend time thinking about how amazing God is and telling Him so while we talk to Him. This part of our prayer is called "Praise." It can include things we love about Him, things we love that He created and things we thank Him for. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus begins with "Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name." Hallowed means "Holy," so Jesus is praising His Heavenly Father for being Holy and this is how Jesus starts His prayer—and how He told us to start ours.

Ask: Why do you think it is important to start off your prayer time thinking of how amazing God is?

R-Stands for repent. It is good for us to repent and say sorry for the things we have done. If we are Christians, we are forgiven of all of our sins already and we have a relationship with God, but if we sin, we will not be as close to God and we need to confess it and turn away from our sin. That's what it means to repent and it is modeled for us in the Lord's prayer. (v.12) When Jesus says, "forgive us our debts," "debts" are "sins." Jesus had no sin, but He knew we did, so He taught us how to pray like this.

A-stands for Ask. We can, and should, ask our Heavenly Father for what we need. He already knows what we need, of course, but it helps us by helping us remember that it is God who supplies all of our needs. Jesus' model prayer has this part too. (v.11 and v.13) "Give us this day, our daily bread," and "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" are things that are requested of God in the Lord's Prayer.

Ask: What do you notice about Jesus' example requests? How are they the same or different from what you usually ask for?

Y-Stands for Yield. To yield to God means that you accept that He is in control and He is in charge. We can trust Him with our requests and prayers, because He is good and He knows what is best for us and for the whole world. Jesus' model prayer has this element too. Jesus said, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven." Jesus wants what His Heavenly Father wants and we should too.

Ask: How does it make you feel that you can completely trust God with everything that happens in the world? Is it easy or hard for you to trust Him? Why or why not?

Connection to Christ/Gospel Presentation:

This is a very simple method to use when we pray, but the most important prayer we can ever pray is the one when we make Jesus our Lord and Savior. We just got done celebrating Christmas and we know that Jesus came as a baby, but He didn't stay a baby. He grew up and taught people many things about Himself and how we should live to please Him. Then, because He loved us so much, He willingly gave His life on a cross to pay the price for our sin. He conquered the power of sin and death when He rose again from the dead three days later and now we can have a relationship with God, because of the sacrifice Jesus made. All we have to do is make Him our Savior by admitting we have sinned and we are sorry for it, believing that Jesus is the Son of God and that He paid the price for our sin and make Him our Lord, or our boss, by committing our lives to Him. We do that by praying and talking to Him. If you're ready to do that today, you can pray with me now.

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You so much that You sent Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to pay the price for my sin. I am so sorry for that sin. I ask You to forgive it now. Thank You, Lord, for rising again from the dead and destroying the power of sin and death forever. I want to follow You always. Today, I thank You for saving me and I give You complete control of my life. Amen.

Memory Verse:

Materials: Papers with copies of the memory verse variations on it.

Kids' choice: Have the kids choose with version of the verse they would like to memorize. Once they've chosen, they can take turns saying it to each other.

Memory Verse Reference: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

New International Version: pray continually; ***New Living Translation:*** Never stop praying; ***King James Bible:*** Pray without ceasing; ***Holman Christian Standard Bible:*** Pray constantly.

Optional/Extra Ideas:

Game:

Say: One of the elements of a prayer is to repent. We are going to play a game to help us remember what that means.

Materials: an index card that says “sin” on one side and “repent” on the other. Choose a student leader or have an adult be the leader. Have the students all line up along one wall of your classroom, then flip the card to show them one side. If the leader flips the “repent” side, the kids must walk forward toward it, but if it says “sin,” they must turn and walk in the opposite direction. This is just a fun game to demonstrate how we are to turn from our sins and go in the complete opposite direction. That is what “repent” means to “turn away”. Play a few rounds, if the kids maintain interest.

Make a Prayer Board for Your Classroom:

Materials: Poster board or bulletin board, paper, markers, paper border, index cards or post it notes.

Make a prayer wall in your classroom. Divide a bulletin or poster board into two sections: prayer request and answered prayer. Provide post-it notes or index cards for the kids to write prayer requests on and have them put their prayer requests on the “prayer request” side of the board. As the weeks go by, check in with the kids and move the requests to “answered prayer” side as God answers the prayer, whether yes, no or wait.

Craft:

Materials: the Lord’s prayer print out, construction paper, glue, tape, scissors, hole punchers, string.

Kids can make a prayer reminder to hang in their room to remember to spend time in prayer. Have them cut the Lord’s Prayer out so it is smaller than the construction paper (so the construction paper will frame the Lord’s prayer), have them decorate it however they choose and then punch two holes at the top and tie a string through them to hang it up. They can also write today’s memory verse on it as a finishing touch!

Paper Activities: M.R.B.C. Children’s Department News