



Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

(based on Matthew 6:9-15)

Jesus had some special friends called disciples. The disciples tried really hard to do the things that Jesus did. They wanted to learn more about following in God's way.

One day, Jesus talked to his friends about prayer.

"When you pray," Jesus said, "remember that God is like a loving parent and really wants to talk with you."

"But what should we say?" asked Peter.

"Keep it simple," replied Jesus. "You don't need fancy words or long prayers."

"So what words should we use?" asked John.

Jesus thought carefully. "Here are some words you could say," he said.

"Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil."*

The disciples learned the simple prayer that Jesus taught them. They passed on the prayer to their friends and family. Eventually it was written down, so it would never be forgotten. Now we can say Jesus' special prayer whenever we want to pray to God.

*Substitute the version of the Lord's Prayer your congregation uses if it differs from this.



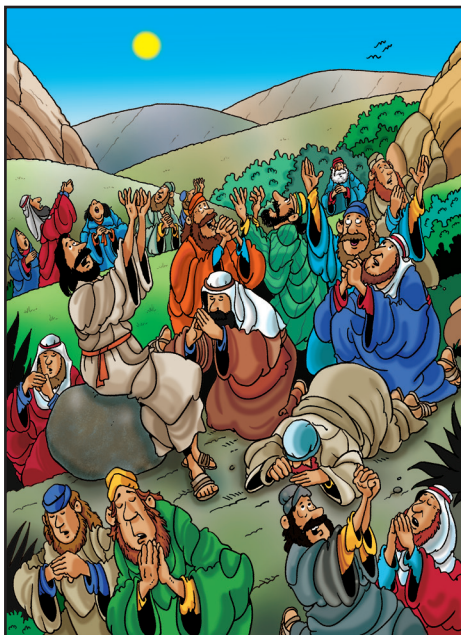
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- ▾ Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- ▾ Wonder together:
 - ▾ When have you heard or said the Lord's Prayer?
 - ▾ How do you feel when you hear or say it?
 - ▾ What does the prayer ask for?
 - ▾ Why did Jesus teach his friends to ask God about these things?
- ▾ If your family does not know the Lord's Prayer, learn it together, line by line. If you do know it, try praying it together each day. Choose the version your congregation uses in worship.



Responding to God's Grace

- ▾ Read Luke 11:1–4 and Matthew 6:9–13. Name ways the two prayers are different and the same. Look up the prayer in different translations of the Bible. Go through the prayer line by line, and name the variations you discover. Wonder how the differences help us to understand what the prayer is about. Work together to write a version of the prayer in your own words.
- ▾ Look in newspapers, news magazines, or internet news sites and note people or groups in need of prayer. Make a list of up to seven people or groups and write a prayer for them for each day of the week.
- ▾ Stand in a circle with a soft ball or object. Ask everyone to think of someone for whom they want to pray. Begin by naming a person for whom you would like to pray. (“I pray for Mom.”) Then toss the ball or object to another person, who names someone to pray for. After all have had an opportunity to name someone, say, “God, we pray for everyone in your world. Amen.”

Celebrating in Gratitude

- ▾ Sit quietly and say, “God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.” Say the prayer a few times together, accompanied by the beat of a drum or bell.
- ▾ Have family worship:
Light a white candle and read John 8:12.

Invite each family member to offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of Jesus, the Messiah.

Sing together “This Little Light of Mine”:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.