



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- Who taught you how to pray? What were you taught about prayer?
- Have any of the things you believed about prayer changed over time?
- What is prayer?

Session 2

- Why is praying important?
- How does prayer help us commune with God?
- How does prayer help us see God in the world around us?
- What does it mean to offer ourselves fully to God? How might this set us free from worry and anxiety?

Session 3

- When have you felt like your prayers were answered? When have you felt like your prayers were not answered?
- Do you see prayer more as a time to ask God for help? Or, do you see prayer more as a contemplation exercise? Why?
- Does God answer prayer? Why or why not?

Session 4

- What kinds of things keep us from hearing what others are trying to say to us?
- What kinds of things keep us from listening to God?
- Why does God answer our prayers in ways that are hard to understand?

Session 5

- What is a prayer of confession?
- What does it mean to ask for a clean heart?
- How can we help one another try to have a right spirit?

Session 6

- In what position were you first taught to pray? (*Bow your head? Fold your hands?*)
- Why do you think you were taught to pray like this?
- Do you still pray this way? Why or why not?
- Do you think the way we pray is important? Why or why not?



ACTS

Scripture Passages:

Ephesians 6:8

1 Timothy 2:1

Colossians 1:9-12

Philippians 4:6-7



Adoration

We give God praise and credit for all God has done and will do.
What does this passage say about praising God?



Confession

We admit the mistakes we have made and ask God to forgive us.
What does this passage say about confessing our sins to God?



Thanksgiving

We thank God for all God has done.
What does this passage say about giving thanks to God?



Supplication

We ask God for help for others in need and also for ourselves.
What does this passage say about asking God for help?



PRAYER CALENDAR



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FAITH STATEMENT

Question 121. What is the purpose of prayer?

Prayer brings us into communion with God. The more our lives are rooted in prayer, the more we sense how wonderful God is in grace, purity, majesty, and love. Prayer means offering our lives completely to God, submitting ourselves to God's will, and waiting faithfully for God's grace. Through prayer God frees us from anxiety, equips us for service, and deepens our faith.

—*Study Catechism: Full Version*





WE ARE WHAT WE PRAY

Pray then in this way:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.
—Matthew 6:9–13

What does this prayer tell us about God?

Who is God?

What does God do?

What do we do in response to God?



BREATH PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following to the participants:



Focus on the candle's flame. Visualize Jesus standing before you, asking: "How can I support you?" Let your answer come from deep within. If more than one thing comes to mind, try to find the common root.



Think of how you normally address God in prayer: Almighty God, Lord, Jesus, Father, Mother? Find your name for God.



Combine your desire with your name for God in a single short sentence that flows easily with your breathing. You may need to try this in a few different ways before you find the best one.



Sit quietly and repeat the phrase in your mind. As you repeat the phrase, breathe in during the first half of the phrase and breathe out during the second half of the phrase.



JOHN 14:12-14

From the New Revised Standard Version

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

From the New International Version

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

From The Message

Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see—these works. The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing. You can count on it. From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it. Whatever you request in this way, I'll do.



Abbreviation

2
411
ASAP
b/c
BBIAB
BBL
Bf
BFF
BFN
BRB
CTN
Cya
Gb
Gf
gr8
GTG
HOAS
Hw
IC
IDK
IMO
J/K
L8R
LMK
MMB
Msg
NP
PIR
Pls
POS
Qt
ROFL
SOS
Sup
TC
Thx
TISNF
TMI
TTFN
TTYL
Ur
w/e
WB
YW
ZZZ

Answer

To
Information
As soon as possible
Because
Be back in a bit
Be back later
Boyfriend
Best friends forever
Bye for now
Be right back
Can't talk now
See ya
Goodbye
Girlfriend
Great
Got to go
Hold on a second
Homework
I see
I don't know
In my opinion
Just kidding
Later
Let me know
Message me back
Message
No problem
People in room
Please
Parent over shoulder
Cutie
Rolling on the floor laughing
Someone over shoulder
What's up
Take care
Thanks
That is so not fair
Too much information
Ta-ta for now
Talk to you later
Your
Whatever
Write back
You're welcome
Sleeping



CHANGE THE TOPIC

Talk with your partner about the ocean, but replace *ocean* with *sofa*.

Talk with your partner about peaches, but replace *peaches* with *shoes*.

Talk with your partner about a book, but replace *book* with *chickens*.

Talk with your partner about the color blue, but replace *blue* with *movie*.

Talk with your partner about fish, but replace *fish* with *car*.

Talk with your partner about television, but replace *television* with *dog*.

Talk with your partner about sleeping, but replace *sleeping* with *ballroom dancing*.

Talk with your partner about Christmas trees, but replace *Christmas trees* with *garbage bags*.





LECTIO DIVINA

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David . . . For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

—Isaiah 55:2–3, 8–9

Read the above passage slowly to yourself. If you feel the need to pause between words or phrases, do so.

Think of a word or phrase that has stuck with you. Write it down.

Read the passage again slowly, keeping that word or phrase in mind.

What else jumps out at you? Write it down.

Read the passage a third time, focusing on the same word or phrase.

Ask yourself, "What is God trying to tell me with this passage?"

Finish with a silent prayer offering that word back to God.



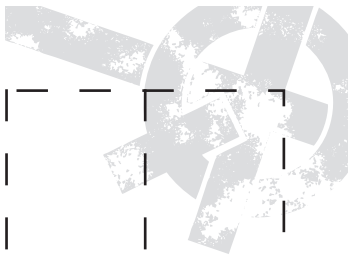
SPIRITUAL READING

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David . . . For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

—Isaiah 55:2–3, 8–9

1. Read the above passage at a slow and gentle pace.
2. Read the passage again and try to focus on connection with your own life.
3. What jumps out at you? How is God trying to speak to you?
4. Pause to reflect on those questions.
5. Allow other questions to surface.
6. Allow a prayer to surface spontaneously from your reflections.
7. Take a moment to rest in the confidence that God has heard you.





Embezzling money from a large corporation.

Stealing money from an elderly person on a fixed income.

Lying to your parents.

Lying to your friend to keep from hurting his/her feelings.

Cheating on a test.

Cheating in a game.

Accidentally hurting someone.

Getting into a fight.

Breaking a promise.

Putting down a friend to feel better about yourself.





PSALM 51

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.
Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your
deliverance.

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not
be pleased.
The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will
not despise.

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,
then you will delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt-offerings and whole burnt-offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.
—New Revised Standard Version

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are proved right when you speak
and justified when you judge.
Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will turn back to you.
Save me from bloodguilt, O God,
the God who saves me,
and my tongue will sing of your
righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.

In your good pleasure make Zion prosper;
build up the walls of Jerusalem.
Then there will be righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings to delight you;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.
—New International Version

Generous in love—God, give grace! Huge in
mercy—wipe out my bad record.
Scrub away my guilt,
soak out my sins in your laundry.
I know how bad I've been;
my sins are staring me down.

You're the One I've violated, and you've seen
it all, seen the full extent of my evil.
You have all the facts before you;
whatever you decide about me is fair.
I've been out of step with you for a long time,
in the wrong since before I was born.
What you're after is truth from the inside out.
Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.

Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,
scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.
Tune me in to foot-tapping songs,
set these once-broken bones to dancing.
Don't look too close for blemishes,
give me a clean bill of health.

God, make a fresh start in me,
shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my
life.
Don't throw me out with the trash,
or fail to breathe holiness in me.
Bring me back from gray exile,
put a fresh wind in my sails!
Give me a job teaching rebels your ways
so the lost can find their way home.
Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation
God,
and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.
Unbutton my lips, dear God;
I'll let loose with your praise.

Going through the motions doesn't please you,
a flawless performance is nothing to you.
I learned God-worship
when my pride was shattered.
Heart-shattered lives ready for love
don't for a moment escape God's notice.

Make Zion the place you delight in,
repair Jerusalem's broken-down walls.
Then you'll get real worship from us,
acts of worship small and large,
including all the bulls
they can heave onto your altar!

—The Message





Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

—Psalm 51:13

- Think of something you have asked forgiveness for.
- Think of someone who has done either the same or something similar. (The person can be alive or dead, real or fictional.)
- Write a letter to that person encouraging him or her to ask for forgiveness. Share your own experience and how forgiveness has changed your life.



OPPOSITES ATTRACT

In the empty column, write what you think each "sin" would look like transformed through God's forgiveness. For example, *lying* would be transformed into *speaking the truth in love*.

Sin	Transformed
Idolatry	
Lying	
Stealing	
Cheating	
Killing	
Violence	
Pollution	
Exploitation	
Apathy	
Laziness	



PANEL MEMBERS

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7

Three-year-old child (Think Elmo from Sesame Street!)

Psalm 123:1-2

Middle-age professor of an obscure language

John 11:41

Mister Krabs from *SpongeBob SquarePants*

John 17:1

A hip-hop artist

Acts 21:5-6

A teenage television star



KNOW YOUR TYPE

Q1. Where do you gain your energy?

Extraverted Characteristics (E)

Acts first, thinks/reflects later
Feels deprived when cut off from interaction with the outside world
Usually open to and motivated by outside world of people and things
Enjoys wide variety and change in relationships

Introverted Characteristics (I)

Thinks/reflects first, then acts
Regularly requires an amount of "private time" to recharge batteries
Motivated internally; mind is sometimes so active it is "closed" to outside world
Prefers one-to-one communication and relationships

Choose which best fits: Extraversion (E) Introversion (I)

Q2. Which way of understanding is most "automatic" or natural?

Sensing Characteristics (S)

Mentally lives in the "now," attending to present opportunities
Using common sense and creating practical solutions is automatic
Memory recall is rich in detail of facts and past events
Likes clear and concrete information; dislikes guessing when facts are "fuzzy"

Intuitive Characteristics (N)

Mentally lives in the future, attending to future possibilities
Using imagination and creating/inventing new possibilities is automatic
Memory recall emphasizes patterns, contexts, and connections
Comfortable with ambiguous, fuzzy data and with guessing its meaning

Choose which best fits: Sensing (S) Intuition (N)

Q3. Which way of forming judgments and making choices is most natural?

Thinking Characteristics (T)

Instinctively searches for facts and logic to make a decision
Focuses on the tasks and work to be accomplished
Easily able to provide an objective and critical analysis
Accepts conflict as a natural, normal part of relationships with people

Feeling Characteristics (F)

Instinctively employs personal feelings and impact on people when making a decision
Sensitive to people's needs and reactions
Seeks consensus and popular opinions
Unsettled by conflict (wants everyone to just get along)

Choose which best fits: Thinking (T) Feeling (F)

Q4. How do you approach the outside world?

Judging Characteristics (J)

Plans many details in advance before moving into action
Focuses on tasks, completing one before moving on to the next
Works best and avoids stress when able to keep ahead of deadlines
Organizes life with dates, targets, events (uses a day planner!)

Perceiving Characteristics (P)

Comfortably moves into action without a plan; plans on the go
Likes to have variety; mixes work and play
Works best close to the deadlines
Instinctively avoids commitments that interfere with flexibility, freedom, and variety

Choose which best fits: Judging (J) Perceiving (P)

Write each of the initials for your type in the boxes below:

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PERSONALITY AND PRAYER

Intuitive-Thinking (NT)

You like to think and reflect on things. A good type of prayer for you would be *lectio divina* or reflective reading of Scripture and devotions.

Intuitive-Feeling (NF)

You like to reflect on how things make you feel. The NF personality really feeds on quiet reflection. Centering prayer is a good type of prayer for you.

Sensing-Judging (SJ)

You like to place yourself in the situation. A good type of prayer for you is to read a biblical story and place yourself in the story. Imagine what you would do, think, or feel, and see what prayers emerge.

Sensing-Perceiving (SP)

You like to focus on what is real and literal. A good way to pray for you is through action. Acts of loving service can be a good form of prayer for you. (Never thought of action as prayer? It can be!)



PRAYERS

Adoration

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
I bow down towards your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast
love and your faithfulness;
for you have exalted your name and your word
above everything.
On the day I called, you answered me,
you increased my strength of soul.

Prayer of Confession

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.
Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Prayer of Supplication

May our sons in their youth
be like plants full grown,
our daughters like corner pillars,
cut for the building of a palace.
May our barns be filled
with produce of every kind;
may our sheep increase by thousands,
by tens of thousands in our fields,
and may our cattle be heavy with young.
May there be no breach in the walls, no exile,
and no cry of distress in our streets.
Happy are the people to whom such blessings fall;
happy are the people whose God is the Lord.



LIFE-CENTERED PRAYER

We can pray with our lives as well as with words. Use the following exercise to learn how your life can become a prayer.



Gather the day.

Make a list of three to five major events that occurred during the day. They could be things like a major test, celebratory gathering of some kind, special meal, particular conversations, and so on.



Review the day.

Reflect on each item listed without judging yourself, making excuses, or avoiding your feelings.



Give thanks for the day.

Thank God for each part of your day and for God's presence in it.



Confess your sin.

Admit the mistakes you made in word, thought, or action toward God, your neighbor, yourself, and the world.



Seek for meaning.

Reflect on the events of the day as a whole and ask yourself: What is God saying to me? What is God calling me to do? Write down what comes to mind in a prayer journal.