Welcome to talk with God

Grades 1–5 • 60 minutes • Matthew 6:5–13

What children are learning

Children will learn to pray to God as their Father. They will use one part of the prayer Jesus taught to honor God, ask for what someone needs, or ask for forgiveness and help.

Before class

For you. Find Matthew 6:5–13 in your Bible before class. Keep a bookmark there for the reading. You'll also use Matthew 6:9 for the memory verse.

Print before class. Print pages 5 and 7 for each child. Keep an extra copy of page 7 to demonstrate. Print one family page (page 6) per household.

For the table. A Bible, pencils and crayons. Give each child four scraps of paper for the prayer pictures.

Words children may ask about. To pray is to talk with God and listen to him. When we ask that God's name be hallowed, we are asking that people honor him as holy. Daily bread is the food we need today.

Teach with care. Family experiences differ. Explaining God's faithful care on its own terms leaves room for children whose relationship with a father has been difficult.

A note for the teacher. This outline is here to help you prepare and teach. As you teach, feel free to adjust the pace, change an activity, or spend more time on a child's question as the Holy Spirit leads you.

When the children arrive, begin on page 2. Teach pages 2–4 in order.

Welcome to talk with God

0–5 min · Welcome the children

Begin. Ask, “When you talk to someone who already knows you well, how do you usually begin?” Give children room for a quiet hello as well as a big greeting.

5–10 min · Worship and opening prayer

Worship together. Sing a familiar song of praise. If you are leading without music, invite each child to finish “God, thank you for…” aloud or quietly.

Pray. God, thank you for bringing us together. Help us hear what you want to teach us today. Amen.

10–23 min · Open the Bible together

Lead into the reading. “Jesus’ friends heard lots of different prayers. Listen to how Jesus teaches us to begin talking with God and what he says we can bring to him.” Read Matthew 6:5–13.

Read aloud. Read Matthew 6:5–13 aloud from your Bible. Pause briefly before you ask the first question.

Background for you. Jesus knew that some people liked others to hear them praying. He told his friends they could go somewhere quiet to speak with their Father. Their Father knew what they needed before they asked.

Jesus taught them to begin by honoring God’s name. He taught them to ask for God’s good will to be done and for the food they needed that day. He also taught them to ask for forgiveness and help when tempted to do wrong.

Hear the little word “us” when Jesus asks for daily bread. A child might remember someone else who needs food. They can pray for that person with the words Jesus taught or in words of their own.

Welcome to talk with God

23–31 min · Talk about what you heard

Ask. What everyday need did Jesus teach people to ask their Father about?

Listen for. Today’s bread, the food they needed that day. He also taught them to honor God, ask for his ways to be done, and ask for forgiveness and help.

Keep talking. Which part of Jesus’ prayer might you think of if you have hurt someone you love?

Connect to Jesus. Jesus invites us to talk to his Father. Our Father welcomes the short prayers a child can say in their own words.

31–47 min · Four ways to begin a prayer

Give out the materials. Give each child page 7. Read the boxes aloud together. Start with the one labeled “Honor God.”

Try it together. Set the prayer-pattern sheet beside each child. Give everyone four scraps of paper. Draw one simple symbol per scrap: a crown, a path, a loaf and a heart. Place them over “Honor God,” “God’s way,” “Our needs” and “Forgiveness and help” in that order. Lift one, hear the heading and try praying one sentence in your own words. A partner can read the heading.

For younger children. Show a child where it says “Honor God.” Read it aloud and try that part together. They can point, say a few words, or ask you to write for them.

For older children. What difference does it make that Jesus taught his followers to say ‘our’ and ‘us’?

Tidy up. Keep the pencils or crayons out for page 5. Ask children to set their finished work beside them.

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47–51 min · Give children a moment to respond

Offer the student page. Hand out page 5 and read the choices aloud. Each child can answer one. Take a spoken answer, or give them a quiet minute to draw or write.

51–55 min · Remember a verse

Read and echo. Read Matthew 6:9 in your Bible. Invite everyone to echo one short phrase at a time. Ask which word or phrase they would like to remember.

55–60 min · Take it into the week

Ask. Which part of Jesus’ prayer would you like to use in your own words before your next meal?

Pray together. Lead the children in a prayer about what they learned today.

Example prayer. Father, we honor you. Help us follow your way, receive what we need, and forgive as we are forgiven.

At the door. Send home each child’s work. Give one Family Connection page to each household.