***Sunday school materials 05/07/2020***

***Prayer! (yes again!) HOW TO GET ON WITH IT!***

***Footsteps and Pawprints***

Prayer is vital if you are a Christian. It is prayer that keeps communication going between you and God. It should be a two-way activity – God talking to you and you talking to God and so the relationship grows. In any relationship, conversation can be stilted at the beginning and it is hard to know what to say. It is much the same when you start up a prayer relationship with God. What do you say to someone so great? What does He want to hear? Is He, in fact, interested at all? Adults do not always find prayer easy and children do not, either.

Teaching our children how to pray is such a privilege and a responsibility, but one that can ultimately bring our children into a closer relationship with God.

If we persist with prayer and find a way of praying that works for us and that gets us closer to God so we can have that close relationship with him, then we can know that we are never alone and never without help - even if we feel we are!

***Bible verse - 1 Thessalonians 5*** - you can either read the whole chapter with older kids, or just verses 16-18 with younger kids.

***16*** *Rejoice always,* ***17*** *pray continually,* ***18*** *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*

If you can stand in a pair or pairs. One of the pair should talk to the other, asking questions. The other should refuse to answer at all. Swap over so that both children have a chance to be silent.

how did it feel to be talking to someone who doesn’t want to talk back? Was it easy to keep asking questions when there was no response? How did you feel when you weren’t answered?

Say that it is very difficult to talk to someone who doesn’t respond. We feel upset when people won’t talk to us.

Say that God also wants us to talk to him – he loves us, he even sent Jesus to die so that he could have a friendship with us and so he really wants us to talk to him – he wants us to have a relationship with us.

***IS PRAYER A SHOPPING LIST? VID and discussion.***

When (if) we pray what are we saying - are we just asking for help? For things we need or changes in our lives? Watch this clip of Bruce Almighty. Bruce gets given God’s powers to do anything he wants and he has to deal with people’s prayers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHBQC0XYvYg>

What would happen if we got everything we thought we wanted… and so did everyone else!? So how do you think God deals with prayers? Should praying just be asking for things?

***WOULD YOU PRAY…***

Read out this list of situations below. In each case they have to vote if they would pray or not in each situation.

* If hanging on to a window ledge over a 50 foot drop
* If their brother or sister had a broken leg
* If their brother or sister had a terminal illness
* Before buying a new pair of jeans
* When getting their pocket money or allowance
* If there was a well-publicised famine overseas
* If there was a general election
* If there was a vacancy for a minister at the church
* If they had an exam tomorrow
* If a boy/girl asked them out

Briefly discuss what it was that made some situations more likely to attract prayer and how the young people feel about the results of the vote.

The Point: To establish that we all tend to be more likely to pray in the more extreme and personal situations.

#### ***ACTIVITY - CONTINUAL PRAYER***

#### ***Equipment***

Some pieces of old A4 or A3 paper

Challenge the young people to tear the longest continuous strip of paper that they can make out of one of your A4 or A3 pieces of paper. Whilst they are doing this, try and distract them. Discuss how it felt to try and concentrate whilst being distracted.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Now write the phrase “Pray Continually” on one of the large strips of paper that your children have created. Talk about the fact that Paul wrote these words to encourage the church in Thessalonica to pray all the time.:

* What does it mean to pray continually? Do you think Paul means we should be praying every waking minute of the day?
* What kind of things can distract us from praying?
* How can we overcome some of those distractions?

The Point: To encourage the young people to see prayer as an activity which requires effort and concentration.

***BIBLE STUDY:***

What do we HAVE to do when we pray?

What might be HELPFUL when we pray?

What should we NOT do when we pray?

What would work for you?

Let's look at how Jesus prayed.

#### ***Equipment***

Bibles, paper and pens, scissors, glue, lining paper.

Have a look at some of these references. Each reference shows us Jesus at prayer. You should read the verses; see where Jesus was, how he was praying and why he was praying, and also who else was around. Then they could make a picture showing the situation. Put all the pictures together in a collage.

Things that they could draw out are:

* Jesus often went alone to pray
* He prayed late at night and early in the morning
* He prayed when he did miracles
* He prayed before major events, like the crucifixion
* He prayed when making decisions, like choosing the disciples
* The disciples could see that his prayer life was different to those of other people

Say that we should base our prayer life on that of Jesus – like him we should spend time with God, especially when we have decisions to make.

References:

* Mark 1:35-38 (Jesus prays early in the morning)
* Luke 9:28-31 (transfiguration)
* Luke 6:12-16 (choosing disciples)
* Matthew 14:22-23 (after feeding 5,000)
* Luke 3:21-22 (baptism)
* Luke 5:16 (prays alone)
* Mark 14:35-36 (Gethsemane)
* John 11:41-42 (Lazarus raised)

***Crafts to help you pray.***

***PRAYER STONES.***

#### ***Equipment***

Reflective, quiet, worship CD, preferably one the children are familiar with, but not essential. Means to play it. Large pebbles, Large sticky labels, coloured gem stickers, felt tip pens.

Ask each child to choose a pebble and stick a label on it.

When they have done that, challenge the children to think of one word to describe the types of prayers we pray. You may need to help them to think this through. Here are some ideas:

Sorry

Thank you

Please

Help

Forgive

Praise

Worship

The children may come up with their own ideas so encourage them if they do.

Start the music and begin to hand out the stickers and pens/paint.

Allow the children time to listen to the music, to write their type of prayer and to decorate the pebble. Adults should be on hand to help and support those who need help.

At the end, give the children the opportunity to share what they have done.

The point: To encourage our children to be reflective in praying and to experience being quiet and still.

***PRAYER BOXES OR JARS:***

#### ***Equipment***

A small cardboard craft box or a jar or similar for each child, bright coloured stickers and gems, pens, scissors, glue and coloured paper shapes.

Encourage every child to write their name on their box/jar and then if they can, write, ‘My Prayers.’

The children can then decorate the boxes or jars.

The coloured paper shapes can be used to write or draw their prayers and place them in the box.

Explain to them that they can use the boxes to put their prayers in.

Share with them that God hears our prayers and sometimes it is good to look back and see just how God answers them.

The point: To encourage the children to keep track of their prayers to see how God responds to them.

***FOR OLDER KIDS: PRAYER IN MUSIC.***

For older kids: Prayer in pop music through the years - what do young people think about songs such as “Prayer in C" by Lilly Wood & The Prick and Robin Schulz. Lyric video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wuVCKzZYA4>

As you listen to it, and display the lyrics, see if anyone has the faintest idea what the song is about and what, if anything, it says about prayer.

Following this ask the young people the following introductory questions on prayer

* What other contemporary songs speak of prayer?
* Are they positive or negative?
* What do you think about prayer?
* When, and why, do you pray?

Aretha Frankin - “I say a little prayer” The QUEEN of soul (every kid should watch this - just for education!!) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ifw8JhDBvs>

Sam Smith - radio version. Pray: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yifaO5B8mqg>

Stomzy - blinded by your Grace - is this a prayer? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuTuGS3hXtM>

Kesha - Praying: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78kjMk4Og08>

***WORSHIP:***

Take a few minutes to practise prayer, being quiet and concentrate on prayer and on listening to God.

I will pray : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZmpWgzlZtY>

The Kids blessing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiWZXLsdE9w> (this one just because my niece is in it!!) It’s just beautiful. Might help you to pray!