



## LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

*We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...*

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray

**SCRIPTURE:** [Matthew 6](#)

**WORD OF WONDER:** [From Psalm 66:19–20](#)

Take a moment to read [Matthew 6:5–13](#).

It's clear that the disciples knew about prayer. As Jewish men, they prayed often. Prayer was woven into their daily lives. But Jesus taught them to pray differently. He prayed with intimacy and confidence.

Jesus' prayers went way beyond rote repetition of familiar phrases. It was as though Jesus was talking with God, not at Him, and the disciples sensed the love that fueled Jesus' prayers.

That is what they wanted in their prayers. Not duty, but devotion. Not performance, but passion.

We still need Jesus to teach us to pray. If you're unsure that's true, ask yourself this: If someone was eavesdropping while you pray, how would they describe your relationship with whoever's on the other end of your words? Do you sound as though you're speaking with someone you know? Someone you love? Are you reciting or communicating?

I ask not to shame you (or myself—we're in this together!) but because in this lesson you have a choice: You can present the Lord's Prayer as a formula for prayer or as an invitation to intimacy with God.

Doing the first gives kids useful, straight-from-Jesus information—and that's great. But also doing the second gives them permission to open their hearts to God.

And that's when prayer really begins.

—**Mikal Keefer**

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#### DID YOU KNOW?

#### FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

##### WHO?

Matthew is the first of the Gospels in the New Testament. While Mark emphasizes Jesus' miracles and Luke highlights Jesus' care for the poor and oppressed, Matthew focuses most on Jesus' practical teaching ministry

##### WHAT?

[Matthew 6](#) is part of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5–7](#)), one of the five major speeches that Jesus gives in this Gospel. In this speech, Jesus helps His disciples understand what true fulfillment of God's law looks like.

##### WHERE?

Matthew's Gospel does not tell us exactly what "mountain" Jesus gave the sermon on. An elevated location was ideal for giving speeches to large crowds, as it allowed everyone to see Jesus and hear Him speak.

##### WHEN?

The Gospel of Matthew places the Sermon on the Mount immediately after describing Jesus' miraculous ministry in Galilee ([Matthew 4:23–25](#)).

##### CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Matthew's Gospel portrays Jesus as the prophet like Moses who was promised in Deuteronomy: "He will be one of their own people. I will put my words in his mouth" ([18:18](#)). Like Moses, Jesus instructs God's people on how to obey God and communicate with Him ([Matthew 5–7](#)).



## Curiosity

### LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.*

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#### Activity: Whisper

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church. Encourage the kids to whisper something to you— this can be anything!

**Welcome! You can come tell me something in my ear.** Invite each kid to tell you something. **Now I will tell you something too! Are you ready to listen?** Whisper in each child's ear: ***Prayer* is talking to God.** **Were you listening to what I said? Did you know that prayer is talking to God?** Allow the kids to respond. Let the kids take turns saying "Prayer is talking to God" quietly and loudly.

**Did you know we can talk with God any time? Jesus teaches us to pray, which means talking to God and listening to Him! We'll learn more about that in our story today!**

9:00 Service



## Belief

### LESSON 1 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.*

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### Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God’s big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, we are so glad we can talk to You! Thank You for being there to listen to us. Help us learn how to talk to You. We invite Your Holy Spirit to be with us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

### God’s Big Story

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God’s word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

#### TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read from the Big Picture Bible p 323

The Lord's Prayer

## 9:00 Service

### Word of Wonder

#### WORD OF WONDER

**But God has surely listened. He has heard  
my prayer. Give praise to God.**

— Psalm 66:19–20a

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What does our Word of Wonder say God does?** (*He listens and hears our prayers.*)
- **How does it make you feel to know that God listens to you and hears your prayers?**



## Identity

### LESSON 1 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.*

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## Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them and thank God for always listening to us.

**God, thank You for teaching us how to pray. Help us remember that you always listen to us, and we can come to you. Help us remember to praise you and ask for what we need. We love you. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** May God help you love the things He loves. May He provide for your needs each day. May you forgive others and be forgiven. May He always remind you how Jesus teaches us to pray.

## Closing Activity: Freeze Prayers

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** music from the [Power of Prayer Early Childhood Music flashdrive](#)

Play upbeat music from the [Power of Prayer Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to dance. Tell the kids that when the music stops, you will shout out a phrase from the list below. If Jesus teaches us to pray for that, they should raise both hands; if not, they should stay frozen until the music starts again.

## 9:00 Service

**We are going to play a fun version of freeze tag! I will call out a phrase and if it describes something Jesus teaches us to pray for, raise both hands. If it is not something Jesus teaches us to pray for, stay frozen!**

Use the following phrases:

Praise and thank God

- Ask for your favorite toy
- Pray for your friend who got hurt
- Pray that you don't have to clean your room
- Pray that Jesus forgives you for saying something mean
- Pray for chocolate ice cream
- Pray that you will be kind to people
- Pray that God will give you food to eat

**That was so fun! All of you are great dancers! Jesus teaches us how to pray, and we can always go to God and talk to Him.**

## 9:00 Service