



LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Hears Our Prayers

SCRIPTURE: James 5; 1 Thessalonians 5

WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 66:19–20

Pause now to read [James 5:13–18](#).

When I first heard the term, divine expectation, I immediately fell in love with it.

The friend who used it was describing a tough situation. His wife was seriously ill and slowly growing weaker. And though he was juggling kids, a career, and serving as a part-time caregiver, he never left home without pausing to kiss his wife and then checking to see that her jogging shoes were by the door.

“We used to run every day,” he said. “I’m praying she recovers, and when that happens, I want to be sure her jogging shoes are where she can find them.”

That’s a guy who prayed with faith. He had faith that God is, that God was listening, and that God loved his wife. He trusted God wanted the best for his wife, and, as far as my friend was concerned, that best would include one day again lacing up those shoes.

This isn’t a miraculous healing story. His wife eventually died, and my friend eventually placed her shoes in a box he carried to a secondhand store so someone else could use them.

Praying with faith doesn’t necessarily mean God will say “yes” to your every request. But it does mean you trust He hears you and will respond. And it means you look for and praise Him in whatever response He gives you.

How will you faithfully pray with divine expectation today?

—Mikal Keefer

Children’s Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

First Thessalonians was written by Paul to the church in Thessalonica, and from early Christian history, James, the brother of Jesus, has been understood to be the author of the letter of James ([Galatians 1:19](#)). Both authors emphasize the need for faithful, consistent prayer.

WHAT?

These letters are very different in structure and purpose. First Thessalonians addresses the specific situation of believers who were concerned that Jesus would not return. James is a letter of general wisdom meant to circulate among different churches.

WHERE?

The letter of James is addressed to the “12 tribes scattered among the nations” ([James 1:1](#)), which may refer to all the Gentiles who believe in Jesus. Thessalonica, however, is located in northern Greece.

WHEN?

Some people think that [1 Thessalonians](#) is the earliest written document in the New Testament, perhaps written in the late 40s or early 50s. James died around the year 62, and many scholars think his letter was written a few years earlier.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

Jesus first taught His disciples to “always pray and not give up” ([Luke 18:1](#)). Both Paul and James thus draw upon the teachings of Jesus in their statements about prayer.



Curiosity

LESSON 4 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

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Play Stations

SUPPLIES: crayons; paper plates (4–5); marker (prep only); hole punch (prep only); pipe cleaners (20–30); pony beads (1 package)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Pray with Faith Coloring Sheet](#) (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Crazy Hair Prayers

Set-up: Before kids arrive, draw faces with different emotions on four or five paper plates. You could draw faces that are happy, sad, worried, surprised, mad, confused, or afraid. Punch holes along the top edge of each plate and thread pipe cleaners through the holes. Twist the pipe cleaners to look like crazy hair on top of each face. Set out a container of pony beads nearby.

Play: Invite the kids to choose a plate that expresses the emotion they feel that morning. They can thread beads onto the pipe cleaners of that plate to decorate the plate's crazy hair. At the end of play, you could hold up each of the plates and explain to the kids that we may have different feelings, but nobody is alone in



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their feelings. When they finish, they can take off the beads so other kids can use the plates. **It's OK to feel happy, sad, scared, or any other feeling. The best part is that we can pray to God when we are happy, sad, scared, or worried! We can pray to God anytime!**

Play Station: Pray with Faith Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the Coloring Sheet. Set out the [Coloring Sheets](#) and coloring utensils.



Belief

LESSON 4 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: **Father God, we know that You always hear our prayers. Help us hear from You today. As we worship You and hear Your Word today, help us remember that You hear us and want to spend time with us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

God’s Big Story

****Note to leaders:** This story is not in our picture Bibles. You can use the prayer strips and the script in your Belief bag to aid in telling the 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 James 5:13-18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NiRV from the text below:

¹³ Is anyone among you in trouble? Then that person should pray. Is anyone among you happy? Then that person should sing songs of praise. **¹⁴** Is anyone among you sick? Then that person should send for the elders of the church to pray over them. They should ask the elders to anoint them with olive oil in the name of the Lord. **¹⁵** The prayer offered by those who have faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will heal them. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. **¹⁶** So confess your sins

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to one another. Pray for one another so that you might be healed. The prayer of a godly person is powerful. Things happen because of it.

¹⁷ Elijah was a human being, just as we are. He prayed hard that it wouldn't rain. And it didn't rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again. That time it rained. And the earth produced its crops.

¹⁶ Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Never stop praying. ¹⁸ Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus.

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 have you prayed and asked God about?**
- **What does it mean to praise God?**



Faith

LESSON 4 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

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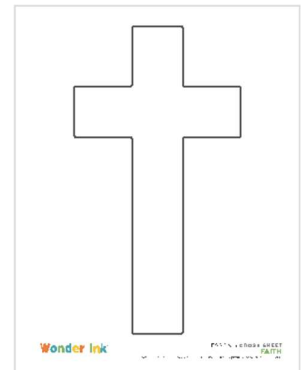
WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 66:19–20

Craft: Bandage Prayers

SUPPLIES: large adhesive bandages (1 per kid), markers

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Cross Sheet](#) (1 per kid)

Give each kid a large adhesive bandage (like you would use on a skinned knee). Help the kids remove the bandage from the outside wrapper but leave the paper on the bandage's adhesive strips. **One of the times we can pray is when people are sick or hurt. We can ask God to take care of them and help them feel better. If you know someone who is sick or hurt, you can draw a picture of that person on your bandage. If you don't know someone who is sick or hurt, that's OK—you can draw a picture of what you imagine someone would look like if sick, or a picture of something that reminds you of being hurt or sick.**



Once kids have finished drawing on their bandages, give them a [Cross Sheet](#). **When we pray, we are talking to God, and we can trust Him with our worries. Let's take our bandages and stick them to the cross to remind us that God hears our prayers.** Show kids how to remove the paper from the adhesive part of the bandages and stick the bandages to their Cross Sheets. Allow kids to share about the people they drew and say a quick prayer for each person. Kids can decorate their crosses if time allows.

Leader Tip: Some kids may know someone who is suffering from cancer or another illness. Be considerate of these situations and remind kids that praying doesn't always mean God will heal the person on earth.



Identity

LESSON 4 **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, thanking God for hearing our prayers.

God, thank You for hearing our prayers. Help us to always remember to pray and talk with 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 you always remember that you can pray anywhere, anytime. May you remember that you can pray no matter how you are feeling or what is going on. May you always remember that God hears our prayers.

Closing Activity: Running Prayers

Have kids line up along the wall on one side of the room.

God hears our prayers. It doesn't matter if we pray with our eyes open or closed, or if we pray when we are happy or sad. God hears our prayers! Let's play a game about different times when you might pray. Listen to the phrases I'll call out. If you can pray for whatever I say, run to the other side of the room after I say each phrase.

Call out different statements starting with "I can pray ..." using the list below. If the kids believe they could pray during the situation you call out, they will run to the other side of the room.

You can use the following statements:

- I can pray ... for my family.
- I can pray ... for my friends.

- I can pray ... for someone who is sick.
- I can pray ... when I'm feeling sad or worried.
- I can pray ... for my teachers.
- I can pray ... for people who are not nice to me.
- I can pray ... when I'm happy.
- I can pray ... for my church leaders.
- I can pray ... for people I don't know in other countries.

These are all times we can pray! God hears our prayers!

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