

Word Aflame Sr. High

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Unit 1: Prayer

Unit Aim: We may rely on the prayers of others without realizing the importance of prayer in our own lives. This series explores the power of prayer as one of the most basic building blocks of who we are as Christians and gives students the tools to cultivate a secret place of prayer.

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Sr. High Teacher's Manual

Manufactured in U.S.A., March 2019, 1631911

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36 Research Park Court, Weldon Spring, MO 63304

Theme Development

Unit 1: Prayer

- This unit conveys to students the importance of prayer, ways in which students can incorporate prayer into various areas of their lives, and how it will affect their spiritual walk.
- The unit will focus on imagery surrounding communication: radio towers, telephones, electricity, light bulbs; all related elements should be incorporated.
- Consider the use of hanging light bulbs, unshaded lamps, and old rotary telephones as props.
- Consider the use of pallet wood as a backdrop to complement the rustic and antique feel of the other decoration.

Unit 2: Resurrection

- This unit explores the story of Jesus' death, focusing on the importance of the Resurrection and the victory that act brought to the people of God.
- This unit should feature the familiar imagery of Easter with a cross, a tomb, nails, a crown of thorns, and a purple bolt of cloth.
- Consider changing these items as the unit progresses, starting with the cross, nails, and crown; moving to the tomb; and finally displaying the same cross with the cloth hanging from it, signifying his resurrection.

Unit 3: I Love My Church

- This unit will explore community, evangelism, and the necessity of the body of Christ as well as finding our own place within this body and how we can better ourselves through discipleship and relationship.
- This unit offers a practical look at the church community and as such, no special decor is required to emphasize the lessons.
- Consider the use of the TRP posters as well as historical images of your church and/or past church leaders and congregations to emphasize church history and understand our past as the church.

Embark: This opening section is meant to elicit discussion and promote activity to encourage the learning process of students while creating a fun and engaging atmosphere.

Explore: This section is the basis for the lesson with various biblical references, key points, as well as personal examples to effectively convey the big idea in a logical and practical manner.


Expand: This section is intended to provide a consolidated yet effective means of closure perpetuated by closing discussions, activities, or prayers.

LESSON 1


WHAT IS PRAYER?

WEEK OF MARCH 3, 2019

BIBLICAL PASSAGE

Matthew 6:6–13 

BIBLE POINT

We must recognize that we exist because of God, and we must discover the new life and purpose He has given to us. 

SUPPLIES

Bibles

Legend:



PowerPoint Slide



Student Handbook



Activity

Unit Aim: We may rely on the prayers of others without realizing the importance of prayer in our own lives. This series explores the power of prayer as one of the most basic building blocks of who we are as Christians and gives students the tools to cultivate a secret place of prayer.

EMBARK

A. Option 1—Opening Discussion

1. *Instruct students to use their student handbooks for this exercise.*
2. How would you define prayer and what does prayer mean to you?
3. Why do we pray? Can we live without it?
4. Can we be Christians without prayer in our lives?
5. Why is prayer important to you personally and what has prayer done for you?


B. Option 2—Accuracy in Our Communication


1. *Play the traditional game of Telephone with the class. For a larger group, use seven to ten volunteers.*
2. *Whisper in the ear of the first student, “Red seahorses glow in the dark if you feed them chicken nuggets.”*
3. *When it reaches the final student, have that student say the statement out loud to the class.*
4. *Contrast the final statement with the original.*
 - a. In our world of text messaging, accuracy in communication is changing. However, communication has never been an exact science. Calls drop, signals are bad, and a lot of the time, we simply misunderstand what the other person is trying to say because we miss context and nuance in a world where communication never stops.
 - b. In contrast, we have the assurance that through prayer, God hears and knows our requests. We can pray directly to Him without a convoluted process involving others, and He will answer.

EXPLORE

A. The Truth about Prayer


1. Prayer is a **universal need** for Christians, yet it looks very different among believers. Simply put, prayer is communication with God.  


- a. Let's look at Matthew 6:6–13 for teaching on prayer. This passage reflects the importance of giving God our full attention.
 - b. *Read Matthew 6:6–13.*
 - c. Why is it important to remove all distractions from our lives when we approach God in prayer?
 - d. What messages are we sending to God when we allow distractions and interruptions to replace our time with Him?
2. **When we come to God in prayer, He wants to share an intimate conversation and quality time with us.** 
- a. The time we spend in prayer is important to God.
 - b. What thoughts or feelings do you wrestle with when you attempt to pray?

- Do we understand how we are supposed to pray?
- Why is it hard for us to pray?
- What is the hardest part of praying? Why? 

3. Scripture explicitly says for us to pray in secret. We are not to be public announcement systems notifying everyone of what we are doing and entertaining them with our words.
 - a. Instead, we are to entertain God with our prayers and seek His attention.
 - b. Why do we get hung up on what others think about us when we pray?

B. Misconceptions of Prayer


1. Do not pray for others' entertainment; pray for God's entertainment. Scripture emphasizes, "Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:6).
 - a. God does not depend on what others think to give us blessings and to supply our needs.
 - b. When our answer comes, God wants us to know that He made it happen, not someone who overheard our prayer.
 - c. What assurance do you have that God hears your prayers?
 - d. Does this bring confidence to you?
2. *Read Matthew 6:7.*
3. Do not speak empty words; mean what you say. We cannot say prayers for the sake of saying a prayer and justifying ourselves.
4. **When we take time to pray, we should pray intentionally to God, remembering He wants to talk with us.** 
 - a. Do not be like everyone else when you pray. Feel free to be you and express yourself as only you can to God.
 - b. Scripture compares those who speak empty words and for long periods of time to the "heathen."
 - c. This verse stresses that we should be genuine and sincere when we talk to God.

- How would you describe people who act or talk differently when they pray?
- Do you feel they are wanting God's attention or trying to impress others? 

5. You can rest in the comfort that “your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him” (Matthew 6:8).
 - a. First, we should prioritize drawing close to God, following His direction, and praying in a way that is meaningful to Him as the most important purpose of prayer. However, it is also comforting and exciting to realize from Scripture that God cares about us, knows our needs, and is open to our petitions (requests) in prayer.
 - b. God does not expect us to plead our case and list every reason to justify our request.
 - c. According to Matthew 6:8, how do you think we should approach God with our needs?
 - d. Should we beg or do you feel another approach should be used?



C. Instructions for Prayer

1. As exemplified in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, we need to make sure we are focusing on God and others when we pray.
 - a. Obviously we need to be focused on God when we pray, but why should we focus on others?
 - b. What happens when we put the needs of others before our own?
 - c. When we are consumed by our pride and our needs in prayer, we diminish God's intended purpose for prayer.
 - d. How does losing focus on the purpose of prayer affect our walk with God?
 - e. How does it affect our daily lives?
2. *Read Matthew 6:14–15.*
3. We cannot expect God's blessings in our lives and our needs to be met if we continually approach Him in prayer selfishly. It is impossible to live a double prayer life—one to display before others and another before God. You must lose the facades.

- Why is it important to be sincere and honest in your prayer life?
- Who benefits most when we pray the way God has instructed us? 

D. Identifying What Prayer Is and Isn't

1. Search the Scripture.
 - a. We need to learn what prayer is for ourselves. We need to search in Scripture for its true meaning and purpose.
 - b. We need to know what it is like to pray for ourselves, to live a life built on and bolstered by the prayers we give up to God.
2. Learn from those who know how to pray.

-
- a. We should seek out elders and mentors who know how to pray.
 - b. We should not follow those who use prayer as an announcement to justify their walk with God.
 - c. We should always model our prayer life after those who genuinely love and practice prayer.
3. **Be diligent and intentional in developing your prayer life.** 
- a. We must simply choose to pray every day and stick with that plan.
 - b. Be honest with yourself when evaluating your prayer life.
 - c. Listen to the voice of wisdom and correction to improve. Ignore distractions and tactics that are used to “show off.”
4. If you find yourself confused on what prayer is, seek out wise counsel and ask God for help.
5. Create a list of points or topics to talk about with God.
- a. **Be organized when you take your needs to God. There is a time and a place for passion in prayer, but there is also a time for clearly presenting your needs and the needs of others to God.** 
 - b. We are not out to set world records on time spent in prayer or the number of people prayed for, but it is good to start a list so you won't find yourself at a loss for words or ideas to discuss with Him.
6. Set a goal of days prayed within a week. Consistency matters!
- a. Do not depend on others to establish your prayer life. If your friends are not praying, that does not mean you cannot.
 - b. Do you have a purpose when you pray?
 - c. Is that purpose made up as you go or do you have a plan when you set out to pray?
 - d. What influences your prayer life?
 - e. Do your peers or schedule determine when you make time for prayer?
7. Make sure you are not “punching a time card” or “checking a box on your to-do-list.”
8. Prayer is much more than that. Do not cheapen it or pass up a blessing in your haste.

EXPAND

A. Option 1—Discussion

1. When you know how to pray, it becomes easier and your desire to pray properly will grow. You will find yourself increasing your investment in prayer and enjoying it.
 - a. How does learning to pray correctly add value to your walk with God?
 - b. Do you think prayer is more fulfilling when you go about it the way God designed?
 - c. Have you ever tried to model your prayer after the Lord's Prayer?

- d. Why is its structure important, and how can structure help us to *not only pray longer, but prayer more effectively?*
2. Everyone prays differently. It is up to you to find what method and manner works best for you and your walk with God.

B. Option 2—Group Prayer

1. *This series is all about prayer and our willingness to talk to God, so prayer is a focal point of activity and involvement in each lesson.*
2. *Make time at the end of each session for students to have an opportunity for prayer.*
3. *Allow them time to prepare their hearts and minds to communicate with God.*
4. *Take time to address needs within the classroom and take requests as you see fit.*
5. *You could play worship music in the background, arrange for a few seasoned prayer warriors to lead the group in prayer, or arrange for an elder who can easily enter into the presence of the Lord to lead them in prayer. Encourage students to open their hearts to God.*

C. Option 3—Prayer

1. *Close in prayer with a focus on students making a genuine decision about their prayer life.*
2. *Pray they will love prayer and have the courage to remain true to their prayer life.*
3. *Ask God to help them have enough confidence to pray and build their relationship with Him.*