



God's Plan

Week 3: Prayer

What we want students to learn: In God's Word, Jesus shows us how we can pray. He takes the uncertainty and fear out of it.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: Don't let fear or uncertainty stop you from talking to God.

Scripture Focus: Matthew 6:5-7

The Main Point

Students and adults alike struggle with praying due to fear and uncertainty. In God's Word, Jesus shows us how to pray. Today, in your group time, we'll look at the fears associated with prayer and what God's Word says about prayer as we discover the urgency and focus that Jesus places on prayer.

INTRODUCTION

- **Tell a funny story about a time you were caught in a very awkward conversation.**

Make this introduction time personal to you as well. Share about a time you've been in an awkward conversation and how you felt after.

Have you ever worried that your time in prayer will just turn into an awkward like the stories we just talked about? Maybe you have worried that you won't know what to say. The fear of prayer being "awkward" is just one fear, out of many, that people experience when it comes to prayer.

PRAY as you enter small group tonight for the courage and boldness for you and your students to pray even in the midst of fear and uncertainty.

LESSON

- **What scares you about praying out loud?**
 - *This can vary with a multitude of different answers. A couple may be feeling as though people are judging them or not knowing how to pray.*
- **What stops you from praying, even if you are by yourself?**
 - *The answers to this question may be very similar to the answers to the previous question. Except this time, the answers may gravitate towards a student's feelings about themselves instead of their feelings about others. For example, a student, when praying alone, may wonder if their words are powerful enough to even matter. In contrast, when praying aloud, they may wonder if their words are impressive enough to the people around them. Perhaps a simpler reason may*

be that they do not set aside time to pray. Regardless of what their fear is, we must recognize that these are tactics of the enemy to keep us from praying.

Remind your students that God hears our “um’s” and our awkward pauses and doesn’t turn away. God welcomes and wants our prayers.

Now, have your students read Matthew 6:5-7. In this passage, Jesus addresses our motive in prayer.

Matthew 6:5-7 - “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Context: When Scripture says that they hypocrites will receive their reward, it is talking about the praise of man. That is their “reward” which is fleeting and empty.

- **What is Jesus saying in these verses?**
 - **Are there times when you are tempted to use big words or babble to “impress” God or others? Who are you most likely to want to try to impress, God or others?**
 - **Why do you think Jesus tells us to pray when we are alone?**
 - *Jesus asks us to go into our room, close the door, and pray to Him. In this passage, Jesus isn’t saying that we never need to pray in public. Rather, He is saying that our motive should not be simply for people to see us praying. Rather, prayer helps us grow in relationship with God.*
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LIFE APPLICATION

For tonight’s life application, help your students identify practical ways they can come to God in prayer, despite the fear and uncertainty they have.

- **What tips would you share with others when it comes to prayer?**
 - *People pray in all kinds of different ways. Some write their prayers down, some say them out loud, some say them in their heart. And, the different ways people pray doesn’t stop there. Some follow a specific pattern of prayer and others pray for certain things as they feel led. Which ways do you tend to gravitate towards? While there are many ways to pray, below you will find just one example that will be easy for your students to remember.*
 - **5 Finger Prayer**
 - *Praise – Thank God for who He is*
 - *Thanksgiving – Thank God for something He’s done today*
 - *Request for someone else – Ask God for something specific for another person*
 - *Request for you – Ask God for something specific to you*
 - *Thanksgiving – Thank God for all He has done and thank Him for all He will do*
 - **How will you commit to pray this week, despite any fear or uncertainty that comes your way?**
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CLOSING ACTIVITY

To close out group for the night, give your students a chance to pray. Break them up into small groups of 2-4 people. Have them spend a minute or two in prayer, or as long as group time allows. As a group, come up with a few specific things to pray for. Consider praying for their families, Faith Promise, or the students in their schools.

After prayer, be sure to remind them of FUSION and THE WEEKEND!