

Lessons for the Leader

Think about how you learned to pray. Do you recall the first time God answered your prayers? How did you feel? Do you pray with an expectation of God hearing and responding? Why or why not?

- Read Matthew 5:1-2; 6:5-8. What examples of prayer had the people witnessed? Why do you think Jesus warned them not to pray as "the hypocrites"? Have you ever known people who pray to impress others? What did Jesus say about this type of praying?
- Read aloud Matthew 6:9-13 with feeling. Think of these words as Jesus prayed them. How do you see Jesus' life in these verses? What do your prayers say about your life?
- Read Luke 18:9-14. Notice the contrast in the prayers. Why do you think Jesus instructed people not to pray like the Pharisee? How do you think this made the Pharisees feel upon hearing Jesus' words? What do Jesus' words say to you about your attitude during prayers?
- Reflect on your prayer life. How much time do you spend talking to God versus listening to Him? Do you feel honored to communicate with God, or is prayer something you take for granted?
- Think about the children in your ministry. If all they knew about prayer was based on the prayers they heard people vocalize at church, what would they believe about prayer? How can you help children understand they can pray to God? Do the children know they can pray about anything, anywhere, and at any time?
- Practice what you teach! Take time to pray for each child in your ministry this week. Ask God to help each child understand how she can communicate with God.

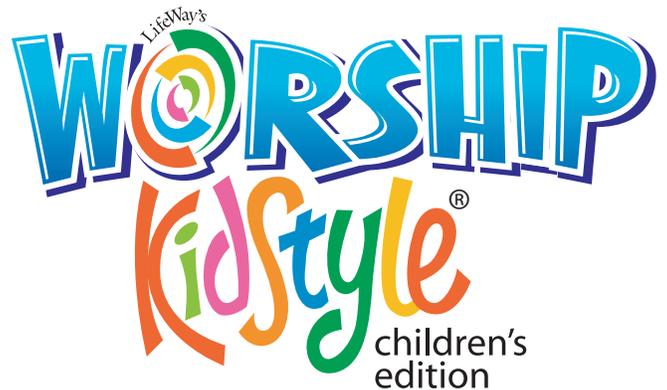
What do these symbols mean?

Application Activities Format:

1→ Follow the numbers with arrows for a 30-minute, large group plus 20-minute Application Activities format.

Large Group Format:

1 Follow all the numbers for a 45- to 60-minute large group only format.



Pray About It

Focus Passages: Matthew 5:1-2; 6:5-13;
Luke 18:9-14

Key Bible Verse: Psalm 54:2

Life Application

I can pray to God.

Session at a Glance

Introduction to Worship (8 minutes)

Greet the Children

Play "Who Are You? Where Are You?"

Worship (30 minutes/45 minutes)

Sing "Lean on Me"

Sing "Here, There, and Everywhere"

Pray

Show "I Witness News" Video #2

Introduce the Life Application

Introduce the Bible Story

Dramatize the Bible Story

Review the Bible Story/Make Life

Application

Learn the Key Bible Verse

Sing "You Lead"/Receive Offering

Pray

Application Activities (20 minutes)

Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

Introduction to Worship

1 → Greet the Children

2 → Play "Who Are You? Where Are You?"

Pull It Together

3 colors of construction paper (1 sheet per color), blindfolds, scissors

- Place the papers on the floor approximately 10 feet apart.
- Print and cut apart "Who Are You? Statements" (CD).
- Call attention to the paper.
- Say: "While blindfolded, one person will stand on the opposite end of the room. Three people will stand on the construction papers, one person on each sheet. In a funny tone of voice, each person will state his name. Then one person will read aloud a statement in the same funny voice. The blindfolded person will repeat the statement and tell us who read it."
- Select a child to blindfold.
- Choose three children to stand on the papers.
- Distribute a statement and play the first round.
- Select new volunteers and play as time allows.
- Ask: "Have you ever had a difficult time telling who was talking to you? Today we will learn how we can talk with God."

Worship

3 → Sing "Lean on Me" (DVD, 3 minutes)

4 Sing "Here, There, and Everywhere" (DVD, 3 minutes)

5 → Pray (1 minute)

6 → Show "I Witness News" Video #2 (DVD, 7 minutes)

- Ask: "What is *prayer*?"
- Show the video.
- Ask: "What did you learn from the video about prayer?"

7 Introduce the Life Application (3 minutes)

Pull It Together

"Who Are You? Statements" from Introduction to Worship

- Print "Prayer" Teaching Picture (CD).
- Ask: "What is *prayer*? Why do people pray? What can we pray about when we talk to God?"
- Discuss the children's responses.
- Continue: "A few minutes ago, we read statements about prayer. Let's talk about each one."
- Select volunteers to read aloud the statements.
- Summarize each statement.
- Display the teaching picture.
- Say: "We can pray to God. Jesus taught people to pray. What is happening in our picture?"

8 → Introduce the Bible Story (4 minutes)

Pull It Together

5 sand buckets, scissors, paper, pencils

- Print and cut apart "Bible Story References" (CD). Place 1 in each bucket with paper and pencils.
- Form five groups.
- Distribute a sand bucket to each group.
- Say: "Locate the reference card in your bucket. Find the verse in your Bible and choose someone to read aloud the verse. Then as a group, write the verse in your own words."
- Assist as needed.
- Say: "I will call on your group to read your verse during the Bible story."

9 → Dramatize the Bible Story (8 minutes)

Pull It Together

Adult Bible times costumes

- Enlist adults to dramatize Jesus and the disciples.
- Copy the Bible story for actors.
- Open your Bible to Matthew 5.
- Say: "Jesus traveled all around the area of Galilee, teaching about God. He also healed people. As a result, many people began to follow Him. Let's see what happened next."
- Direct actors to take their positions.

Jesus Taught About Prayer

Based on Matthew 5:1-2; 6:5-13; Luke 18:9-14

Narrator: When Jesus saw the people following Him, He went up on a mountain and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them.

Jesus: When you pray, do not pray like *hypocrites* ("people who say they love God, but whose words do not match their actions"). These people pray standing in the synagogues and on street corners so others will see them. I tell you, they have already received their reward. When you pray, go into a private area, shut the door, and pray to God. Do not just say words over and over—God knows what you need even before you ask Him. God will see you, and He will answer your prayers.

Narrator: [Actors freeze in place.] Then Jesus taught the disciples to pray like this:

- Read aloud Matthew 6:9-13.
- Invite groups to read aloud their verses.
- Continue the drama.

Narrator: At another time, Jesus [moves to opposite side of room] told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves more than God. These people thought they were better than others and looked down on people.

Jesus: Two men went to the temple to pray. One of the men was a Pharisee. The other man was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood alone and prayed, "God, thank You that I'm not like other people—greedy, unrighteous, or even like a tax collector. Two times a week I fast and I even give tithes of everything I receive."

Narrator: Then Jesus told about the tax collector.

Jesus: The tax collector stood off to the side. He would not look up to heaven, but rather beat his chest saying, "God, be kind to me. I am a sinner."

Narrator: Jesus summarized what He wanted the people to learn.

Jesus: I tell you, the tax collector is more justified than the Pharisee. The Pharisee *exalted himself* ("built himself up"). One day, he will be *humble* ("submit to God") and show gentleness toward other people. The tax collector humbled himself and will be exalted.

10→ Review the Bible Story/Make Life Application (6 minutes)

Pull It Together

Worship Guides, pencils, crayons

- Distribute Worship Guides, pencils, and crayons.

- Guide the children to complete "A Not-So-Hidden Message" and "With What Attitude?"
- Ask: "What type of attitude should we have when we pray? What do you think the people learned from Jesus?"
- Say: "We hear the words, 'We can pray to God.' What is *prayer*?"
- Read the definition of prayer.
- State: "We can pray about anything, anywhere, and at any time."

11 Learn the Key Bible Verse (5 minutes)

Pull It Together

Sand buckets from step 8 (1 per team), note cards, marker, masking tape

- Write the words and reference of Psalm 54:2 on individual note cards (1 word per card, 1 set per team).
- Make a starting line with tape.
- Place the cards on the opposite side of the room from the starting line.
- Form teams.
- Guide each team to line up single file behind the starting line. Give the buckets to the first players on each team.
- Say: "The object of this game is to gather all the words of our Bible verse. The first person on your team will run to the cards. She will place one card in the bucket and race back to her team. Each team member must pass the bucket to the person behind her until it reaches the last person on your team. When he receives the bucket, he will place the card on the floor and race back to the cards. Continue the process until each card is gathered. When you have all the cards, place them in order. If you need help, you can read Psalm 54:2 in your Bible."
- Play the game.
- Read aloud and talk about the verse.

12→ Sing "You Lead" (DVD, 3 minutes)/Receive Offering

13→ Pray (3 minutes)

- Guide the children to complete "My Prayer" on their Worship Guides.
- Close the prayer by thanking God for listening to prayers.

14→ Transition to Application Activities or Wrap-Up

Wrap-Up

(Large Group Only Format)

15 Develop Bible Skills (7 minutes)

Pull It Together

Scissors

- Print and cut apart "Prayers" (CD).

- Form several teams or pairs.
- Say: "Many stories about people praying are found in the Bible. Let's discover some of the people who prayed and what they prayed about."
- Distribute "Prayers."
- Guide the children to locate the passages in their Bibles.
- Say: "Discover who prayed the prayer and what the person prayed for."
- Assist as needed.
- Call for the teams to share their discoveries.
- Read aloud Matthew 6:9-13.
- Say: "This week, remember what we learned about prayer. God wants us to communicate with Him through praying and reading the Bible."

16 Sing "Serve the Lord with Gladness" (DVD, 3 minutes)

17 Dismiss the Children to Their Parents

Wrap-Up

(Application Activities Format)

15→ Share Application Activities (7 minutes)

- Invite the children to share their Application Activity experiences.
 - Arts and Crafts—Prayer Journals
 - Dramatic Play—Modern-day Parable
 - Games—On Top!
 - Exploration and Discovery—Cake in a Cup

16→ Sing "Serve the Lord with Gladness" (DVD, 3 minutes)

17→ Dismiss the Children to Their Parents

Application Activities

Select from the following choices. Each choice is designed for 20 minutes of small group time.

Pull It Together

Construction paper, copy paper, markers, stickers, hole punch, yarn or ribbon

- Cut the copy paper in half (8 to 10 sheets per child).

Teacher Tips

- Encourage the children to be creative in designing their prayer journals.
- Share several of your own prayer requests.

Worship Through Arts and Crafts

Prayer Journals

- Ask: "What is *prayer*? Why should we pray? What did Jesus teach about prayer?"
- Say: "God wants us to pray about everything. Psalm 54 is a prayer of deliverance. David wrote these words while King Saul was looking for him. King Saul wanted to kill David. Let's read aloud verse 2."
- Select a volunteer to read aloud Psalm 54:2.
- Continue: "Let's make prayer journals. We can write prayer requests in our journals. When God answers our prayers, we can journal about what He did."
- Distribute supplies.
- Explain: "Fold the construction paper in half to make a cover for your journal. Fold and insert 8 to 10 pages of copy paper. Punch several holes on the folded side of the construction paper and copy paper. Insert and tie ribbon through the holes to keep the paper in place."
- Assist as needed.
- Encourage the children to decorate their journal covers.
- Say: "On the inside, write the date and any of your prayer requests. You may also ask your friends if they have prayer needs. Write these in your journal. Write down how God answers your prayer requests."
- Guide the children to complete their journals, and to pray for themselves and their friends' requests.

Teacher Tips

- Definitions:
 - *Humble*—"an attitude of submission to God and gentleness toward other people"
 - *Pride*—"too high of an opinion of one's own ability or worth"
- Role-play additional attitudes, places, and ways to pray.
- Provide props for the role play.

Worship Through Dramatic Play

Modern-day Parable

- Ask: "What does the word *parable* mean? Why did Jesus use parables to teach people?"
- Say: "A *parable* is 'a story.' Jesus told parables to help people understand things about God. Today's story is a parable. Let's review it."
- Guide the children to open their Bibles to Luke 18:9-14. Review the story.
- Ask: "What do you picture in your mind as you listen to this story? Do you think the story would be different if Jesus told it to us today? In what way?"
- Challenge the children to recreate the Bible story as it might look today.
- Guide the children to think about the location, how the people might dress, and how the people might respond.
- Play out the story.
- Ask: "Why is it important to be humble when we pray? Why do you think pride hurts someone who is praying?"
- Conclude: "Prayer is important, and Jesus gave us an example of how to pray. Let's read aloud Jesus' words as our closing prayer."
- Guide the children to read aloud Matthew 6:9-13.

Pull It Together

Plastic picnic cups,
permanent marker

- Write the words of Psalm 54:2 on individual cups (1 word per cup). Make and stack 2 sets.
- Place the cups in random order, inserting additional cups in the stack. (Keep each set of cups separate.)

Teacher Tip

Time the children to see how quickly they can arrange the verse.

Pull It Together

Ceramic coffee cups (1 per child), cake mix (any flavor), 4 ounces instant pudding (any flavor that complements the cake mix), powdered sugar, cocoa, ziplock sandwich bags, large bowl, whisk, measuring cups and spoons, heavyweight paper, glue, scissors, string or ribbon, markers, hole punch, construction paper, ruler

- Print "Cake in a Cup" (CD). Copy recipe page for each child. Copy and cut apart page 2 on heavyweight paper.
- Cut 3-by-4-inch pieces of construction paper.

Teacher Tips

- Note: You can use lemon- or orange-flavored dry drink mix in your topping. Be sure the cake and its topping complement each another.
- Provide prepared "Cake in a Cup" treats for children to taste.

Worship Through Games

On Top!

- Ask: "What is *prayer*? Why should we pray? What did Jesus teach about prayer?"
- Say: "God wants us to pray about everything. Psalm 54 is a prayer of deliverance. David wrote these words while King Saul was looking for him. King Saul wanted to kill David. Let's read aloud verse 2."
- Select a volunteer to read aloud Psalm 54:2.
- Say: "This is a great verse to remember and put into practice. Let's play a game using the words of this verse."
- Display the cups.
- Say: "Each word of Psalm 54:2 is written on a cup. Your task is to take the bottom cup and place it on the top. Continue taking one cup at a time from the bottom and placing it on the top until the first word of Psalm 54:2 appears on the bottom cup. Place the cup on the table and hand the remaining cups to a teammate. She will continue moving cups until she locates the second word. Continue until your team places the words in order."
- Guide the children to form two teams.
- Hand the stack of cups to the first player on each team.
- Play the game. Replay as time permits.
- Conclude: "Prayer is important, and Jesus gave us an example of how to pray. Let's read aloud Jesus' words as our closing prayer."
- Guide the children to read aloud Matthew 6:9-13.

Worship Through Exploration and Discovery

Cake in a Cup

- Ask: "What is *prayer*? Why should we pray? What did Jesus teach about prayer?"
- Say: "God wants us to pray about everything. Psalm 54 is a prayer of deliverance. David wrote these words while King Saul was looking for him. King Saul wanted to kill David. Let's read aloud verse 2."
- Select a volunteer to read aloud Psalm 54:2.
- Say: "This is a great verse to remember when we are in need. We can also pray for other people and encourage them. Let's make gifts for people. We can pray for the people and give them gifts to encourage them."
- Continue: "Think of someone you know who needs prayer. What does the person need us to pray about?"
- Place the supplies on the table.
- Assign each child a task to complete.
- Guide: "Mix the cake and pudding mixes together. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ cup into each ziplock bag. Measure $\frac{1}{3}$ cup powder sugar and $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons cocoa into additional ziplock bags. Place one of each bag inside each cup."
- Invite the children to glue a "Cake in a Cup" recipe card to the construction paper pieces and decorate.
- Hole punch each recipe card and tie to a cup.
- Guide the children to pray for the people to whom they will give their cups.



God wants us to talk with Him
through praying and reading the Bible.

I can pray to God.

I can pray about anything, anywhere, and at any time.

I can trust God to answer my prayers.

Prayer is "talking to and listening to God."

Jesus taught people how to pray.

God answers prayers with "yes," "no," or "wait."

God hears me when I pray.

The Bible says to pray to God.

Jesus prayed to God.

Matthew 6:9

Matthew 6:10

Matthew 6:11

Matthew 6:12

Matthew 6:13

Locate the verses
in your Bible.
Discover who
prayed the prayer.
What did the
person pray
about?

1 Samuel 1:11-17

Locate the verses
in your Bible.
Discover who
prayed the prayer.
What did the
person pray
about?

Acts 12:1-16

Locate the verses
in your Bible.
Discover who
prayed the prayer.
What did the
person pray
about?

Luke 22:39-44

Locate the verse
in your Bible.
Discover who
prayed the prayer.
What did the
person pray
about?

Genesis 25:21

Locate the verses
in your Bible.
Discover who
prayed the prayer.
What did the
person pray
about?

2 Kings 20:1-3

Locate the verses
in your Bible.
Discover who
prayed the prayer.
What did the
person pray
about?

Daniel 6:11-13

Locate the verses
in your Bible.
Discover who
prayed the prayer.
What did the
person pray
about?

Jonah 2

Locate the verses
in your Bible.
Discover who
prayed the prayer.
What did the
person pray
about?

Acts 16:22-36

Cake in a Cup

Ingredients:

- 1 box of cake mix
- 1- 4 ounce package of instant pudding mix (any flavor that complements the cake mix)
- Powdered sugar
- Cocoa
- Cooking spray
- Egg whites
- Cooking oil
- Water

- Mix the cake and pudding mixes together.
- Measure ½ cup of mixture into individual ziplock bags.
- Place ⅓ cup powdered sugar and 1½ teaspoons cocoa in additional bags (match the number of cake mix bags).
- Place the bags inside the ceramic coffee cups to deliver to individuals.

To Bake:

- Spray the inside of the cup with cooking spray.
- Pour the cake mix powder into the cup.
- Add 1 egg white, 1 tablespoon of oil, and 1 tablespoon of water to the mix.
- Microwave for 2 minutes.
- Mix the powdered sugar and cocoa with 1½ teaspoons of water to make a glaze. Stir well.
- Remove the cake and pour the glaze on top.
- Enjoy!

* Makes 10–12 servings.



Someone Prayed For You Today!

Here's a Cake in a Cup to Cheer You Up!

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