

Learning to pray.

Prayer is not about finding the perfect words. It is learning to live honestly in the presence of God.

60 minutes / Prayer + Presence / Matthew 6:5-13

Bring a printed Bible (NKJV), paper, and pens. Use your Bible for full Scripture readings.

LEADER PREP • 5 MINUTES

Remove the pressure.

Some students hear other people pray and assume they are bad at it. They hear polished words, biblical phrases, or long prayers and think, "I don't know how to do that."

Tonight should remove that pressure.

Prayer is not a performance. Students are not trying to impress the room or convince God that they are spiritual.

They are learning to speak honestly with a Father who already knows them.

THE WIN

Success tonight is not a student praying a long prayer. Success may simply be a student who has never prayed aloud saying one honest sentence to God.

TONIGHT'S FLOW

Less talking about prayer. More praying.

Keep the teaching simple enough that students have time to actually practice what they are learning.

15 MIN / Table Ask students what comes to mind when they hear the word "prayer." Let them be honest about whether prayer feels easy, awkward, boring, confusing, or meaningful.

15 MIN / Word Read Matthew 6:5-13 and walk through the three teaching truths below.

20 MIN / Practice Walk through the four-part prayer framework together. Give students room to write, think, and pray.

10 MIN / Prayer Invite each student who is comfortable to pray one sentence aloud. Do not pressure anyone or turn this into a performance.

THE BIG IDEA

Prayer is a conversation with a Father who already knows what you need.

Jesus did not teach His followers to perform for God. He taught them to come honestly, simply, and confidently before their Father.

SCRIPTURE

"Our Father..."

MATTHEW 6:5-13

Jesus warns His disciples not to pray simply so other people will notice them.

He then says something important: **"Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."**

Jesus still tells them to pray. Why? Because prayer is about more than informing God. Prayer is relationship.

When Jesus begins His model prayer with **"Our Father in heaven,"** He teaches us how to approach God: reverently, but relationally.

TEACHING GUIDE • 15 MINUTES

Three simple truths.

Your goal is to make prayer feel accessible without making it shallow.

01 Prayer is relationship, not performance.

Jesus warns against praying simply to be noticed. Prayer is not about sounding spiritual. You can speak to God honestly and simply.

02 God already knows, but He still wants you to come.

God does not need an update about your life. He already knows what you need. Prayer is the invitation to bring your life into His presence and learn to trust Him with it.

03 Prayer includes more than asking for things.

Jesus' model prayer includes worship, surrender, daily needs, forgiveness, protection, and dependence. Mature prayer becomes bigger than a list of requests.

A SIMPLE PRAYER FRAMEWORK

Start with four movements.

01 · THANK

Thank God.

Name something true about God or something He has done. Gratitude helps shift our attention from ourselves toward Him.

02 · TELL

Tell Him the truth.

Tell God what you are feeling, fearing, thinking, struggling with, or celebrating. He already knows. Honesty is welcome.

03 · ASK

Ask for help.

Bring real needs to God—for yourself and for others. Ask for wisdom, strength, provision, healing, forgiveness, courage, and direction.

04 · LISTEN

Be still.

Leave some quiet space. Return your attention to Scripture. Ask the Holy Spirit to shape your heart and help you recognize what God is saying.

OPTIONAL WRITING SPACE

Thank:

Tell:

Ask:

Listen:

TALK

Let them be honest about prayer.

- 01** What makes prayer feel awkward or difficult sometimes?
- 02** Have you ever thought you were "bad at praying"? Why?
- 03** Why do you think Jesus tells us to pray if God already knows what we need?
- 04** Which part is easiest for you: thanking, telling, asking, or listening?
- 05** What is one thing you want to become more comfortable talking to God about?

OPTIONAL / KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

- What does calling God Father change about the way you approach Him?
- How could you pray honestly when you feel disappointed or confused?
- What might surrender sound like in a prayer about something you really want?
- How can we keep praying for one another after tonight?

Choose what helps your group. You do not need to ask every question.

PRACTICE + PRAY

STUDENT PRACTICE**Four sentences.**

Give students a few quiet minutes to write four short prayers: one sentence thanking God, one telling Him something honestly, one asking for help, and one sentence inviting Him to speak or lead.

GROUP PRAYER**One sentence each.**

Invite students to pray around the group with one sentence each. Tell them beforehand that "Jesus, help me trust You this week" is a completely valid prayer.

LEADER COACHING

Notice this.

- Which students immediately become uncomfortable when prayer begins?
- Who seems comfortable praying only when they have memorized words?
- Is anyone beginning to pray more personally and honestly?
- Which students have significant prayer needs that require follow-up?
- Are you modeling prayer in a way students can realistically imitate?

BEFORE WEEK FIVE

Make prayer normal.

- 01** Send students the four words: Thank · Tell · Ask · Listen.
- 02** Encourage them to use the framework at least three times this week.
- 03** Follow up on the prayer requests students shared. Ask whether anything has changed.
- 04** If God answers something specifically, celebrate it with the group. Help students learn to recognize God's faithfulness.
- 05** Keep modeling short, sincere prayer rather than making every closing prayer a sermon.

PARENT TABLE TALK

Let them hear you pray.

One of the most powerful ways to teach prayer is to let students experience honest prayer at home.

ASK What part of prayer feels easiest or hardest for you?

SHARE Tell your student about a prayer God answered, or a season when you had to keep praying without seeing an answer.

PRACTICE Pray together for one specific family need this week. Keep the prayer natural and short.

PRAY "Father, teach us to trust You, talk honestly with You, and recognize Your presence in our home."

NEXT

Week 05 - How to Read the Bible.

Students are learning to talk with God. Next, we help them learn how to open Scripture for themselves, understand what they are reading, and respond to it.