

LESSON 11: GOD HEARS ZECHARIAH'S PRAYER

Leader Guide for Grades 1 & 2

Classroom: Greenhouse Kids

 Luke 1:5-25, 57-66

12/22/2019

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Luke 1:5-25, 57-66
- In This Passage: Throughout his life, Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, have prayed for a son. Now that they're old, God tells Zechariah he will answer their prayers. Zechariah has a hard time believing God, but God gives them a son in just the right time for his plan.
- Bible Point: God hears our prayers...
- Application: ...so we trust his timing.
- Summary Verse: "Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy" (Psalm 100:2).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God hears our prayers.* Younger kids often pray in earnest faith, never doubting God will answer. But at some point in their childhood, doubt can creep in. Prayer is no longer a first response, but a last resort. Kids see that God doesn't always answer their prayers the way they *want*, so they think he's not listening at all. Help kids see that God's answers to prayer may look very different than we expect, but he's never too late and he's never wrong.
- Think About: What's something you prayed about for a really long time? How can you see God at work—even if he didn't answer in the way you expected?

Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that kids would trust God to answer their prayers in the best way possible.

Quick Tip

- You may expect a lesson on prayer to be primarily reflective and quiet. But it doesn't have to be that way! In this lesson, you'll find time for quiet, reflective prayer...but you'll also see a lot of meaningful action and motion. This enables kids to learn an important lesson without losing focus, as they have frequent opportunity to get some energy out in a productive way.

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids act out the Bible story, play a game while they sing a song, and talk about the Bible point.

Supplies

- Bible
- earthy-smelling body spray, essential oil, or flame-free candle



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids play Charades.

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Kids make calendars to record their prayers and celebrate when God answers them.

Supplies

- poster board (12x18-inch piece for each child)
- rulers
- pencils
- construction paper (various colors)
- permanent markers
- clear contact paper
- dry-erase markers (1 for each child to keep) (check your local dollar discount store for a 4-pack)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a version of Tag.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids talk to God about anything they want.



OBJECT LESSON

Kids hear sounds from spoons.

Supplies

- 3-foot lengths of string (1 per child)
- metal teaspoons (1 for every 2 kids)
- metal soup spoons (1 for every 2 kids)

Easy Prep

- Tie a loop in the middle of each string by wrapping one end of the string over the other, then pulling the loop so it's in the middle of the string.

- Slip the handle of a teaspoon or soup spoon through the loop and then tighten it so the spoon won't fall out.

**Marked supplies are also used in Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Welcome

Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids give a side hug to two friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids hop on one foot while they sing “Happy Birthday.”
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we'll find out that God hears our prayers. God is always listening when we talk to him, and we can trust him to answer us. He might answer right away, and other times we might wait for an answer. Let's start today by talking about some things we wait for.**

Share

- Share things *you* wait for. You wait at a street light, and you wait for a train when it's crossing a road. You might wait for your kids to get home after school, or you might wait in a line at the store.
- In small groups, have kids share some things *they* wait for. They might share how they have to wait until after dinner to have dessert or they have to wait to play with a video game.
- After small groups have discussed, have a few kids share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **There are lots of things we wait for. Sometimes it's easy to wait, and other times it's not so easy. But when we talk to God, we can be sure that he'll answer us. God hears our prayers, and we can trust that he'll always take care of us, even if we do have to wait. God is a great friend who loves to listen and be with us.**

Pray, thanking God for hearing your prayers.



Supplies

- Bible
- earthy-smelling body spray, essential oil, or flame-free candle

Act It Out

Say: **Today we'll find out what it means that God hears our prayers. And we'll learn to trust that God will answer us, too.**

Show the Bible. Say: **The Bible says there was a man named Zechariah who was God's special friend. He was a very old man, and his wife, Elizabeth, was a very old woman. When you're very, very old, your body doesn't work as well as it did when you were younger. It might be hard to walk, so you have to take smaller steps, and sometimes you might have a sore back.** Hold your back as if it hurts. **Let's see if it's harder for us to walk with little steps and sore backs.** Lead kids around the room, having them hunch over and walk with small steps.

Have kids sit. Ask: • **What was it like to walk like that?**

Say: **Zechariah and Elizabeth had always wanted to have a baby. They prayed and asked God for a baby, but they didn't have one when they were younger. And now that they were very old, they thought it was too late for them to have a baby.**

One day Zechariah was in God's special house. Zechariah loved to spend time with God in this special place. Spray the body spray, let kids smell the oil, or turn on the flame-free candle. **The Bible says that in God's special house, Zechariah burned incense, which is something that smells sweet, kind of like a candle. Usually Zechariah burned incense when he and God's other friends were praying. That's what he was doing this time, too. Let's gather and talk to God like the people in the Bible were.**

Ask: • **What do you want to say to God?** Lead children to gather close together, and then pray briefly, mentioning the things kids shared or having kids say them.

Take a large step away from the group of kids, and say: **While the people were outside praying, Zechariah was still inside God's special house** (quickly jump toward kids) **...when out of nowhere, an angel appeared to him! Zechariah was surprised and afraid. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! God heard your prayer." God hears our prayers, too.**

Share something *you've* prayed about that you haven't gotten an answer for yet.

Ask: • **Have you asked God for something?** Kids might say they've asked God for a new toy, a baby brother or sister, or a new friend. It's okay if kids don't have an answer. For kids who do answer, ask them if they think God's answered them yet.

Say: **God hears you when you talk to him. He might not answer you right away, but you can trust that he will answer you at some time.** Point to the Bible. Say: **The Bible says God heard Zechariah's prayers. The angel told Zechariah that his wife, Elizabeth, was going to have a baby! The angel said Zechariah should name the baby John and that John was going to have a special job helping people meet Jesus.**

But Zechariah had a hard time believing that his wife, Elizabeth, could have a baby because they were so old. Zechariah said to the angel, "How is this possible?" And the angel told Zechariah that God would be able to do it, and then he made it so Zechariah couldn't talk.

Pretend to mouth something for about 15 seconds. Say: **Zechariah wasn't able to say *anything* until his baby was born! Let's try to tell each other what we plan to do today without talking.** In leader-led small groups, have kids try to tell what they're doing today by using their hands. Have adult and teen helpers remind them they can't talk, and encourage kids to use their hands to "speak."

Say: **It can be really hard to talk about *anything* if we can't use our mouths. Probably most of us have no idea what our friends in our group were trying to say since they couldn't talk. Just think, Zechariah couldn't talk for about nine months!**

Zechariah's neighbors were amazed when Elizabeth finally had a baby. They celebrated when the baby was born. Lead kids to cheer and celebrate as the neighbors did.

Say: **The neighbors wanted them to name the baby boy Zechariah, after his dad. But Elizabeth**

said, “No! His name is John!” Zechariah agreed, and since he couldn’t talk, he wrote “His name is John” for the neighbors to read. Lead kids to pretend to write by holding out one hand, palm up, and “writing” on it with a finger.

Say: **As soon as Zechariah wrote that the baby’s name should be John, Zechariah could talk again! The neighbors were amazed, and they could tell that John was going to have a special job from God.**

Play a Singing Game

Say: **God heard Zechariah’s prayers and gave him and his wife a baby, and God hears our prayers, too. Sometimes, like Zechariah, we have to wait, but we can trust God to answer us no matter how long it takes. Let’s play a game to help us think about that. It’ll be a game like Tag, but you won’t know who is it until I tap someone.**

Have kids stand in a circle. Lead kids in singing a familiar song, and let them know that you’ll tap someone on the shoulder during the song. If they’re tapped on the shoulder, they’ll run and tag as many kids as they can while the others try not to be tagged.

Begin the song, encouraging everyone to sing along. After you tap a child and he or she becomes it, silently count to 30 and then bring kids back together in a standing circle. Repeat a few times.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What was it like to wait for me to tap you in this game?**

Say: **Zechariah had to wait on God’s timing. Zechariah didn’t know if God would ever give him and his wife a baby, but he trusted that God’s plan was best. In our game you had to wait, and you didn’t know if I’d ever tap you. Maybe you were sure that I’d tap you, or maybe you felt like I never would. That’s kind of how Zechariah felt, but God heard his prayers and he gave Zechariah a baby.**

Say: **God always hears us when we talk to him, and we can trust God to answer us. God might say “yes,” he might say “no,” or he might say “wait” like he told Zechariah to wait. But we can be sure that no matter what God says, he’ll always give us what’s best for us.**



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Zechariah Can't Talk

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Play Charades

Say: **In today's Bible story, we found out that Zechariah lost his voice when he heard that God was going to bring him a baby—and he couldn't use his voice for a long, long, long time! Let's play a game to see what that's like.**

- Form trios of two kids and one adult or teen helper (if possible).
- Have trios pick a person who'll be first to act out something while their partners try to guess what they're communicating.
- Have all the actors stand up facing their partners.
- Whisper to the actors, "Without making any sounds, pretend to rock a baby to sleep."
- Partners can call out guesses, and the first person in each group to guess is the new actor for the next round.
- Continue playing with different actors each round, and whisper the following into the actors' ears:
 - Without making any sounds, pretend to be a crying baby.
 - Without making any sounds, pretend to feed a baby with a bottle.
 - Without making any sounds, pretend to change a baby's diaper.
 - Without making any sounds, pretend to lay a baby down to sleep.
 - Without making any sounds, pretend to be a baby playing with toys.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music in the background during the game.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What was hard about the game?**

Say: **It's not easy to talk to each other when we can't use words! Zechariah couldn't use words for a long time while he waited for his baby to be born, and he was probably excited to tell people that God had answered his prayer! God hears our prayers like he heard Zechariah's prayer. Even though Zechariah was old, God gave him a son at just the right time. God will answer our prayers in the right time, too.**



Supplies

- poster board (12x18-inch piece for each child)
- rulers
- pencils
- construction paper (various colors)
- permanent markers
- clear contact paper
- dry-erase markers (1 for each child to keep) (check your local dollar discount store for a 4-pack)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Perpetual Calendars

Show kids the sample craft you made. Set out the supplies to share. Have kids follow these directions to make perpetual calendars.

- Choose your favorite color of construction paper.
- On the construction paper, make a grid of that's seven squares across and five squares tall. (Use a ruler to make each square 1¼ inches.)
- Once you've drawn the grid in pencil, go over it with a permanent marker.
- At the top of each column, write the days of the week. (Leave some space above that.)
- Peel a piece of clear contact paper that's just a few inches bigger than the construction paper and put it on the table, sticky-side up.
- Put the construction paper facedown on the contact paper, and press on it.
- Line up the top of a 12x18 poster board piece with the bottom of the construction paper. Fold the extra contact paper around the sides so it holds the construction paper and poster board together.
- Turn the calendar over and use a permanent marker to write "Prayer Log" on the poster board below the construction paper. Then make two columns: a wide one marked "Prayer" and a narrow one marked "Answered."
- Using a dry-erase marker, put the dates for this month on your calendar, writing directly on the contact paper.

Write a Prayer

Say: **Zechariah watched month after month, year after year go by. And God didn't answer his prayer for a long time. But God hears our prayers, so we trust his timing.**

Your calendar can remind you to trust God's timing. Each month you can erase the numbers and write the dates for the new month. But at the bottom, where you can't erase, you'll record the dates you start praying for something and then mark the date God answers. Let's start now.

Have kids write today's date and a topic they want to pray about. Have adult and teen leaders help kids write if they're unable to.

Say: **Now we wait! God *will* hear your prayer, and he'll answer in the best way, in the right time.**

Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell about the prayer request you wrote in your prayer log.** Share your own prayer request first.

• **Tell about a time it took a while for God to answer your prayer.** Share your own story first.

Say: **No matter how he answers or how long he takes, God hears our prayers. It'll be really neat to look back and see how God answers your prayers...even if it takes a long time!**

Have kids take their calendars home and use them to record prayers for themselves, their friends, and their families. When their parents pick them up, ask parents to help kids record their prayers if their kids aren't yet able to write.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Timely Tag

Play a Version of Tag

Say: **Today's Bible story of God answering Zechariah's prayer shows us that God knows the best time and way to answer our prayers. God's timing can mean a short wait or a *long* wait, but we can trust God either way.**

Let's celebrate trusting God's timing with a game that's all about timing.

- Invite a willing person to be the Tagger.
- Have the kids help you choose a well-known kids' song that most of them know or one of your recent praise songs you've been singing.
- The Tagger will secretly choose one of the words in the song's lyrics—any word he or she likes—and when that word is sung, the Tagger will begin to chase and tag everyone. The Tagger won't share what word he or she has chosen, so no one else will know when to expect the chase to start.
- Have the Tagger stand in the middle of the room with everyone else gathered around him or her. Everyone will sing the song but can't move until the Tagger starts the chase.
- The third person tagged can be the new Tagger, and the game will start over.
- Each new Tagger must choose a new word in the song to start the chase.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What was it like not knowing when the Tagger would choose to start chasing?**

Say: **It was fun and exciting to wait for the time the game would start. Sometimes it went fast, and sometimes it took a while.**

Ask: • **Why is it exciting or frustrating to wait for God's answers to your prayers, not knowing if it's going to happen quickly or take a long time?**

Say: **When answers to prayer take a long time, we can wonder if God has heard us. The truth is God hears our prayers, and as hard as it may be, we can wait and trust that God knows the right time and way to answer us.**



Share With One Another

Say: **Today we found out that God hears our prayers, and we can trust him as we wait. God always hears us when we talk to him!**

Share some things *you* want to talk to God about today.

Ask: • **What do *you* want to talk to God about today?** Invite kids to share anything and everything they want to talk to God about. They might want to thank God, ask for help, or even tell God about their day.

Say: **You can talk to God in a regular voice, and he hears you!** Lead kids to say “I love you, God!” in a regular voice. **You don’t need to shout to God, but you *can* shout to God and he’ll hear you then, too.** Lead kids to shout “You’re awesome, God!” **You can whisper to God, and God will hear your prayers.** Lead kids to whisper “Thank you, God!” **You can even think in your head, and God hears you!** Invite kids to have a specific thought for God in their heads.

Pray

Say: **Let’s talk to God now about all the things we just shared.** Lead kids to talk to God. Encourage them to tell God the things they said earlier that they wanted to talk to God about. Close in prayer.

Say: **God heard you, and we can trust him as we wait for him to answer. God always wants what’s best for us, and he’ll always take care of us.**

Thank kids for joining you at church. Let them know you hope they’ll join you and all their friends at church next week.



OBJECT LESSON

Spoon Sounds

[10 min]

Supplies

- 3-foot lengths of string (1 per child)
- metal teaspoons (1 for every 2 kids)
- metal soup spoons (1 for every 2 kids)

Easy Prep

- Tie a loop in the middle of each string by wrapping one end of the string over the other, then pulling the loop so it's in the middle of the string.
- Slip the handle of a teaspoon or soup spoon through the loop and then tighten it so the spoon won't fall out.



Listen to the Spoons

Say: **Did you know that spoons can make surprising noises? We just have to listen carefully so we can hear them!**

- Have kids stand around a table.
- Give each child a prepared string with a spoon attached.
- Show kids how to press each end of the string to the outside of their ears. Remind them not to put the string inside their ears—only near the openings. The spoons should hang just below kids' waists.



- Have kids move their bodies so the spoons swing forward and knock against the edge of the table. They'll sound like bells. Allow time for kids to practice and listen.
- After several minutes, have kids with teaspoons trade with those who have soup spoons. Have them repeat the experiment and notice how different sizes of spoons make different sounds.

Talk About It

Say: **We listened carefully and heard surprising bell sounds! We heard the sounds like God hears our prayers! God likes listening to us and hearing us talk to him. Let's tell him we love him right now!** Invite kids to say aloud, "We love you, God. Thanks for hearing our prayers." Then have kids silently say those words to God again. **God heard us! I'm so glad that God hears our prayers.**

