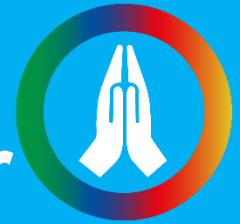




Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

Matthew 6:9-13 The Lord's Prayer

Theme: A recipe for our prayers

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

This week's passage (Matthew 6:9-13) is one that will be familiar for most of us, as it contains the well known words of the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus was speaking to a large crowd and this passage is just part of a longer teaching session that Jesus was delivering, which is now commonly known as the sermon on the mount. (The full sermon on the mount is covered across Matthew Chapters 5-7.) Jesus would have been aware that those gathered were faithful people, who were used to praying regularly as at the time there was an expectation for them to do so. However, Jesus tells them that they should not pray just so that others would see them doing this but should offer their own prayers to the Lord. Jesus provides the Lord's Prayer as a demonstration of how they should pray.

The Lord's Prayer is regularly shared as part of our worship today. It is likely that many of the children in your groups may already know the Lord's Prayer, but we need to be careful not to assume this.

As the prayer is so familiar, perhaps sometimes we might recite the Lord's Prayer from memory, without really focusing or thinking about what we are saying. Maybe, if we're honest, we might even be at risk of just ritualistically performing the prayer so that others see us doing this.

The Lord's Prayer is a framework that can be used to help guide our prayers. It helps remind us how we should pray, however this does not mean that we must necessarily use those exact words when praying. When exploring the Lord's Prayer with our groups, we should encourage participants to really engage in the meaning of the prayer. Using different versions can help people to think about the words and can help avoid things becoming ritualistic or dry.



Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,

Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.

Amen

In-person game

Spoons & Sponges

Equipment – chairs, 2 teaspoons, 2 sponges.

- Divide into 2 teams and sit in 2 separate lines facing the other team. Each player should sit directly opposite a player from the other team so that they form a pair.
- Go down the lines and give each pair a number.
- Place 2 chairs at each end of the lines. Place the teaspoons on one set of chairs and the sponges on the chairs at the opposite end.



- The leader calls out a number, followed by the word “Spoons” or “Sponges”.
- When their number is called, players race to be the first to switch the locations of the items and return to their seat.
- For example, if the leader shouts “Number One, Spoons” then that pair will stand up and run towards the chairs with the spoons. They will pick up the spoon and run towards the sponges at the opposite end, placing the spoon on the chair. They will then pick up the sponge and run back to the opposite end to place the sponge on the chair. Finally, they then run back to their own seat and sit down. The first player to return to their seat, scores 1 point for their team.

(If you have an odd number of players, ask the smaller team to select one person to run twice. This player is then allocated an extra number.)

Online game

Version 1: Players are required (individually) to devise an action that relates to either ‘Thank you’, ‘Sorry’ or ‘Please’.

One person is chosen to act out the word and the others in the group must try and decide which it is, thank you, sorry or please. A point is awarded for each correct answer. Another participant is chosen for the next round until everyone has had a turn.

Version 2: Players need to agree (as a group) relevant actions to signify “Thank you”, “Sorry” and “Please”.

On the count of three, each participant chooses an action to ‘freeze frame’. All those who chose the least popular action miss the next turn. If there are equal numbers, nobody misses a turn and they all carry on.



Experience

For this story we recommend using the Children's International Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A9-13&version=ICB>

Where can I find the story online?

Under 5s story from Nicola <https://youtu.be/L70unT8rpX4>

Five to elevens: David Suchet reads How to Pray from the Jesus Storybook Bible

<https://youtu.be/dwWHs4ccYps>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: The Lord's Prayer by AllStar Kids <https://youtu.be/9btVsBJarWY>

Five to elevens: The Lord's Prayer by Hillsong https://youtu.be/u8D_s5TXBpc

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

This activity uses spoons to explore the Lord's Prayer that Jesus gave us and also begins to think about what it would look like now.

You will need a collection of spoons, different shapes and sizes, and possibly some paper versions for writing on.

Begin by revisiting the Lord's Prayer in Matthew. Explain that when Jesus gave his disciples this prayer, he didn't mean for it to be used by us word for word, it was a template, a recipe, a framework for an example of what we pray about.

Introduce the analogy of the SPOON. Some of your group might already be familiar with Teaspoon prayers (Tsp) which are Thanks, Sorry and Please. This is a similar version that might also be useful.

Each letter of SPOON represents a different part of the prayer that Jesus taught us,

S = Sorry

P = Praise

O = Others

O = Ourselves

N = Needs of us and the world

(You might like to have a different spoon for each one)

Once the group are familiar with the idea of SPOON prayers, encourage them to find the different elements of the spoon prayer within the Lord's Prayer.

You could do this as individuals with a personal version of the Bible passage or as a whole group round a large printout on the table.

Encourage the group to find the elements and highlight them to show the spoons in the Lord's Prayer.

So, if these were just suggestions for what to include in our prayers, a template or recipe for what a prayer might look like, the group could now have a go at writing their own version of the Lord's Prayer using the SPOON analogy. Playing some reflective music can help some children to be creative.

Each child could pray their own prayer to close the session, perhaps in small groups.

Perhaps they could choose their favourite lines from each prayer and combine them into a group prayer. They could create actions to accompany their prayer, or symbols, or pictures.

How about sharing their prayer with the church, and asking that it be incorporated into the worship pattern of the church.

Now they have the SPOON method, they can use it in their personal prayers.



Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.



'Loved' by Sally Lloyd Jones
<https://youtu.be/jrdfGOWuDlo>

Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- I wonder why the disciples didn't already know how to pray?
- Do you think we pray in church as Jesus taught us to or not?
- If God knows what we're going to say already, why do we need to pray?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder when you like to pray?
- I wonder which you use most – thank you, sorry or please?

What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing "What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- A heart (talk to the children about prayers coming from our heart to God)
- An image of praying hands (talk about ways to pray: sometimes we put our hands together but sometimes we do something different) or two rubber gloves inflated to make hands you can put together
- A play phone (God always listens to our prayers however we say them)
- Talk about the Lord's Prayer using these objects:
- a crown or a small globe (God is like the king or queen of the whole world and wants our life on earth to be as amazing as it is in heaven)
- play food (God gives us everything we need. What food do you like? God made our food and drink and we can say thank you)
- a cross (the cross reminds us of Jesus who lived and died because he loves us. God wants us to love and forgive other people)
- a cycle helmet or a hi-vis jacket (talk about things which help us to keep safe; we can ask God for help to keep us safe too)
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc)



Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Spoon prayer activity

This creative prayer idea uses the spoon idea from the story section where each letter for the word spoon represents a different type of prayer.

You will need:

- Spoons any size or disposable spoons
- Sticky labels
- Marker pen

Write the initial letter on a label on the spoon or, if using disposable spoons, write directly onto the spoon with marker pen. Place all the spoons into a mug or a cup and place it in the centre of your group. Ask each person to draw out a spoon and say a prayer, using the letter on the spoon for the type of prayer. The prayers can be a quiet prayer or spoken out loud. Return the spoon to the pot and then the next person takes a spoon and prays. You can do this as many times as you like.

S = Sorry

P = Praise & Thanks

O = Others

O = Ourselves

N = Needs of the world and our needs

Here are some simple ideas to get you started:-

Dear God, I am sorry for....

Dear God please help....

Dear God thank you for....

Dear God please help me to....



Spoken prayer

Echo Prayers

Try writing your own version of the Lord's Prayer, you could do this with each person creating their own line. Or you can use a familiar version of the Lord's Prayer.

Stand in a circle and ask one person at a time to read out a line of the prayer and then everyone in the circle echoes back the line. The group can take it in turns to read a line or one person can read.

As an alternative echo when someone reads a line they could do an action or sign and everyone echoes back the action.



Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

Prayer beads

You will need:

Some coloured beads

Wool

What you do:

Talk about how we pray and maybe some colours which could represent different prayers (purple for God being in control like an emperor; green for the world; yellow or brown for provision for our needs; grey for the things we need to say sorry for and white for forgiveness.

Create a friendship bracelet by simply plaiting the different colours of wool together - you could create these into bookmarks if the children prefer. Or what about threading beads onto a piece of wool? Or you could create pompom bunting for your room as a prayer spot. Maybe you even have a different idea of what to make to help you when you pray.



Prayer catapults

You will need:

A foil or plastic film inner core, or similar hard cylinder

A rubber band or hair bobble

A wooden spoon

A cardboard picture frame

Something to use as a (non-dangerous) projectile

What you do:

Loop the hair bobble or elastic band over the cardboard tube twice. Find the spot where the hair elastic crossed over and makes an X.



With the wooden spoon at right angles to the cardboard tube, insert the handle of the wooden spoon under the X, and slide through until approximately halfway.

A scrunched-up piece of recycled paper can be used as a projectile, you could get the group to write prayers on the paper before you scrunch them up.

A cardboard picture frame makes a great target. Write on them Thank you, Sorry and Please. See if your group can get their prayers through the right target.

Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- If you made prayer beads, a bracelet or a bookmark as the activity, put this somewhere you will see it every day and use it to help you remember some of the things to include in your prayers. Talk to God as though you're talking to a member of your family that loves you most.
 - Jesus's prayer reminds us to forgive other people in the same way as we'd like God to forgive us when we get things wrong. Is there someone you could put things right with this week? Maybe a friend you fell out with at school, or a sibling who broke one of your toys.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the Lord's Prayer with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Psalm 27**

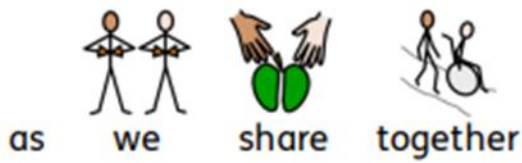




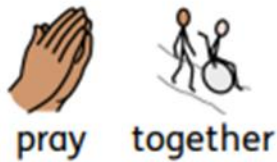
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



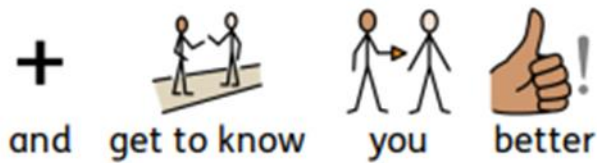
as we share together



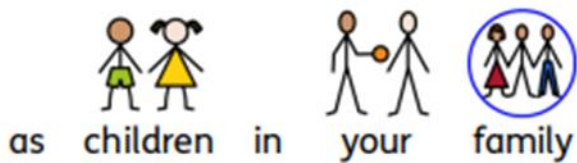
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



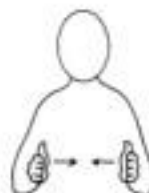
Amen



Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth



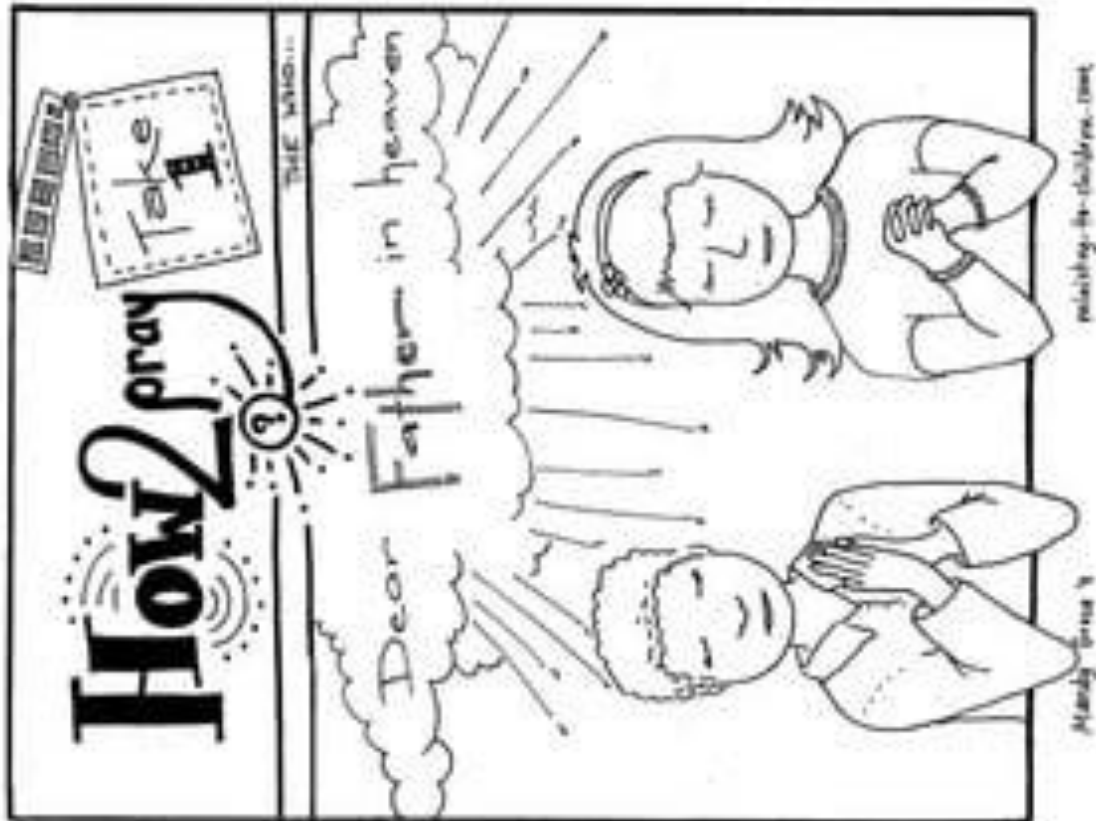


Illustration by Mandy Grace via ministry-to-children.com

