

Praying from the Heart • Lesson 2

Scripture: Judges 16:29-30; I Kings 18:36-39;
Job 35:13; Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 1:28; 15:8; Isaiah 59:2;
Jeremiah 11:11; Luke 18:11-12; Acts 7:59-60; 9:6, 8

Objective: Each child will learn that real prayer comes from the heart and is not just a little rhyme to say at mealtime.

Bible Memory Verse: Matthew 6:7

Supplies

OPENING

- Prayer Poster from Lesson 1 (or *Visual 2A*)

BIBLE LESSON

- Bibles
- Visual 2B*
- Activity Sheet 2A (NIV or KJV)*
- Prepared yo-yo and electric fan (optional)
- Pencils

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

- Balloons, prepared strips of paper
- Two wastebaskets or laundry baskets

BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITY

- Activity Sheet 2B*
- Yellow highlighters or yellow crayons; black crayons or markers

CRAFT

- Activity Sheet 2C*
- White letter-size envelope and three-inch length of $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide red ribbon for each child
- Glue, scissors

Planning Tips

Use the Prayer Poster that was introduced during Lesson 1 (or print the poster from *Visual 2A*.) Print the word PRAYER on a slip of paper and tape it to the side of a yo-yo. To an electric fan blade, tape a strip of paper with PRAYER printed on it. For the memory verse activity, print the memory verse on small strips of paper, a few words per strip. You will need to make two sets of memory verse words. Roll up each of the word strips and place them inside balloons, one strip per balloon. (Make sure to keep the two sets of memory verse words separate.) Blow up the balloons and tie the ends. Place each set of balloons in a separate container, such as a wastebasket or laundry basket. Read through this lesson for additional preparation instructions.

Opening (10-20 minutes)

GATHERING

Follow your regular opening ceremonies: attendance, offering, announcements, and prayer. Look each child in the eye and welcome him as he arrives. Take this time to get to know your students on a personal basis.

Hint

To help your students find the books of the Bible ask, **Which book do you think you will find if you open your Bible in half? (*Psalms*)** Try it. **What if you open the back half of your Bible in half? (*Matthew*)** Now open the front half of your Bible in half. (*I Samuel*)

SONG TIME

Sing BLESS HIS HOLY NAME; FATHER, I ADORE YOU; and COME INTO HIS PRESENCE; or a favorite praise song about prayer.

THEME INTRODUCTION

Begin by calling attention to the Prayer Poster that was introduced during Lesson 1 (or print *Visual 2A* and show the Prayer Poster to your students). If most of your students were present for Lesson 1, ask for volunteers to share comments regarding their experience using the Prayer Journal they began last week. Ask them if they found it hard to remember to pray. Ask them if they found it hard to find the right words to pray.

Many parents teach their children prayer rhymes to say at the dinner table and before going to bed at night. Ask the children to recall some of the prayer rhymes they were taught as little children. After several students have responded, say, **These prayer rhymes were good for you to learn when you were little children. They taught you that you should thank God for your food before eating it and that you should not be afraid at nighttime because God is always watching over you. But now that you are older, you have outgrown the need for these prayer rhymes alone. You are ready to learn that prayer is more than just saying a little poem. Real prayer comes from the heart. Real prayer is sharing your thoughts and feelings with God. Our Bible lesson for today will be about people who prayed from their hearts.**

Bible Lesson (10-15 minutes)**STUDY THE LESSON**

Before the lesson, print *Visual 2B* and have a child color it. Print one for each child, if you wish. Play a game called Who Am I? to learn about some very dramatic prayers in the Bible. Divide the students into three or more teams. Each team will need several Bibles. The object of the game is for the teams to identify the person described in a one-sentence statement. The children will be given a statement about the person and three Scripture verses as clues. Warn the students that only one of the three verses correctly identifies the person — the other two verses are wild-goose chases. The first team to identify the person correctly earns 200 points for their team. Incorrect answers earn a minus 100 points for the team. A team can guess as many times as members wish.

**Bible Background**

The hypocritical practice of Israel's religious leaders forms the backdrop of Jesus' comments regarding prayer (Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-4). They prayed out loud in such conspicuous places as the synagogues and busy street corners. As in their almsgiving, in their praying they wanted as many people as possible to admire their apparent religious devotion. God, however, knew it was all a sham. So Jesus instructed His followers not to pray like that. He did not mean to completely condemn praying in public, for even He did so (see John 11:41-42); instead, Jesus censured the practice of praying merely for self-serving reasons, to gain attention. That attention would be all the reward the hypocrites would receive.

Begin by saying, The rules are simple: A statement and three Scripture verses will be read aloud two times. At the end of the second reading I will say, “Who am I?” You are to identify the person in the statement. You cannot begin looking up the Scripture verses until I say, “Who am I?” Teams will be awarded 200 points for every correct answer and minus 100 points for every incorrect answer. You may guess as many times as you wish. At the end of the game the team with the most points wins.

WHO AM I? STATEMENTS AND ANSWERS:

- A. My famous prayer was made while it was raining rocks (Romans 8:26-27; Acts 7:59-60; I Samuel 7:9-10). Who am I? (*Stephen, Acts 7:59-60*)
- B. I prayed in the dark while the sun was still shining (I Kings 9:3; Ezra 8:23; Acts 9:6, 8). Who am I? (*Saul, Acts 9:6, 8*)
- C. I am known for my fast prayer (Luke 18:11-12; Matthew 6:6-7; Daniel 6:10-11). Who am I? (*Pharisee, Luke 18:11-12*)
- D. My prayer was so dramatic it brought down the house (Acts 12:5; Judges 16:29-30; Ecclesiastes 5:2). Who am I? (*Samson, Judges 16:29-30*)
- E. I prayed during an outdoor barbecue (Luke 1:13 Judges 6:39; I Kings 18:36). Who am I? (*Elijah, I Kings 18:36*)

Say, The last “Who am I?” answer focuses on a short but powerful prayer. Let’s investigate this prayer. Have the children find I Kings 18:36-39. Tell the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal in your own words up to the point of Elijah’s prayer or read the first three paragraphs of the story from *Visual 2B*. Then, read Elijah’s prayer from the Bible as the students follow along in their Bibles. Emphasize that Elijah’s prayer was short (two sentences) but powerful. Point out that the prayer was powerful because it came from Elijah’s heart. He wanted the people to turn away from false idols and worship God again.

Say, God is interested in prayer from our hearts. He has no interest at all in prayers that we say from our lips, but not from our hearts. You may want to give each child a copy of *Visual 2B* as a coloring sheet or Take-Home Paper.

REVIEW THE LESSON

Hand out pencils and *Activity Sheet 2A-KJV* to each child. (Or *Activity Sheet 2A-NIV* if you use the New International Version.) This is an acrostic puzzle. For the puzzle the children will need Bibles. If you have a limited supply in your group, use the Bibles you have

Key Verse:

Matthew 6:7

“When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their speaking.” (KJV)

“When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” (NIV)

and encourage the students to work together. The children are to look up the Bible verse and find the word(s) in the verse that begins with the letter indicated and that fits the number of squares available. (*KJV answers: 1-vanity, 2-not answer, 3-abomination, 4-not hear, 5-iniquity, 6-not hearken; NIV answers: 1-no attention, 2-not answer, 3-condemns, 4-not hear, 5-sin, 6-not listen.*) After all the words are filled in, tell the students to read the words in the bold boxes to find out how God feels about prayers that do not come from the heart of the one praying. (*Answers: NO, NO, NO*)

AVOID MEANINGLESS PRAYER

For this activity you will need a yo-yo and an electric fan. Before the lesson, read through this part of the lesson and prepare the objects as needed.

During the lesson say, **When it comes to praying, some people have the idea that God will reward them according to the number of prayers they say. Some people even print their prayers on prayer wheels, thinking that by spinning the wheel the prayer is repeated over and over.**

To illustrate what a prayer wheel is like, print the word PRAYER on a slip of paper and tape it to the side of a yo-yo. Then, make the yo-yo go up and down on the string so the prayer turns around and around. Say, **People who worship Buddha think that a prayer like this would be heard by their idol hundreds of times as it turned around and around.**

Tell the children that if God were to hear us based on the number of times we turned a prayer wheel, then we ought to figure out some way to turn it thousands of times a day! (Display the electric fan.) Show where you've taped a strip of paper with PRAYER printed on it to the fan blade. Turn on the fan. (Let it spin for a moment, then turn it off.)

Ask, **Do you think this is the kind of praying God desires?** Allow time for responses. Say, **Yet some people in our own country repeat the Lord's Prayer over and over again as many as fifty times in a row, thinking that's what God wants from us when it comes to prayer. Real prayer, however, is prayer that comes from the heart. God wants us to share our hurts and our joys. He wants us to share the things in our hearts.**

Bible Memory Verse (5 minutes)

Matthew 6:7 — *“When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”* (KJV)

“When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” (NIV)

Before the lesson, print the memory verse on small strips of paper, a few words per strip. You will need to make two sets of memory verse words. Roll up each of the word strips and place them inside balloons, one strip per balloon. (Make sure to keep the two sets of memory verse words separate.) Blow up the balloons and tie the ends. Place each set of balloons in a separate container, such as a wastebasket or laundry basket. Divide the students into two teams and have them stand on the opposite side of the room from the containers.

At the starting sound, each team is to send a member to their container. That person will get a balloon, come back across the starting line, and pop the balloon (or have a teammate pop it). He must find the strip of paper and read the words that are written on it aloud before the next person on his team can run to get another balloon. The first team to get all the words of the memory verse and put them in correct order is the winner.

Bible Learning Activities (20-25 minutes)

BIBLE ACTIVITY

Have the children turn to *Activity Sheet 2B*. Provide pencils and yellow highlighters or yellow crayons, plus black crayons or markers for this activity. Have the students use the code at the top of the page to fill in the missing word in each space around the heart. Instruct the children to shade with yellow highlighter or outline with a yellow crayon the spaces that tell the best way to pray. Have them outline with a black crayon or marker the spaces that do not describe the way to pray. (*Yellow answers: Talk in a normal voice, Use everyday words, Any place and at any time, Speak as you would to a friend; Black answers: Talk loud, Use big words, Must be on your knees, Repeat every word three times.*)

BIBLE CRAFT

Have the children turn to *Activity Sheet 2C*. To make the Bible Bookmarks you will need white letter-size envelopes and $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide red ribbon. Have the students color and cut out Bible pattern A and glue the pattern to the corner of an envelope. Then, have them cut off the corner of the envelope using the bottom of the Bible pattern as a guide. Give each child a three-inch length of ribbon to glue on top of the Bible to make it look like a bookmark. To use the bookmark, slip the “pocket” of the bookmark over the corner of any page in the Bible.

Have the students color and cut out bookmark pattern B. Encourage the children to use both bookmarks to mark favorite passages of Scripture in their Bibles. Make sure they put their names on the bookmarks before they are collected. Compliment the children as they clean up their work tables.

BIBLE GAME

Play Crocodile's Tail. This game works best with ten to twelve players and needs to be played outside. If you have more than twelve students, form a second crocodile.

To begin the game, have the children form a line. The player at the front of the line is the head of the crocodile and the player at the end is the tail. All but the head player clasp hands around the waist of the player in front of them. One extra player for each team is It.

The person who is It tries to tag the tail of the crocodile, while the head tries to keep him from doing so by turning to face him and taking the rest of the players (the crocodile's body) with him. If It manages to tag the tail, he now becomes the tail, the tail becomes the head, and the head becomes the new It. Play this game as long as time permits.

Explain that just as the crocodile tried to chase his tail, we can feel like we're running in circles, with no direction, when we don't take time to talk to God in prayer each day. We just can't get as much done for God when we don't talk to Him. When do spend time talking with God, He can help us get through tough times and He can help us know how to handle problems that may come up. When we stay in touch with God through prayer, He will guide us through each day.

Closing Prayer (5-10 minutes)

Close the lesson in prayer, giving the children an opportunity to pray, if they desire. Encourage the children to pray from the heart this week, being careful not to be boastful or proud. Explain that God loves us and wants us to talk to Him with respect and honor. Hand out the bookmark crafts and Activity Sheets to the children as they leave.





Elijah Chose God

Elijah was a prophet, He told the people the words of God. He said, “Let the people decide who is the real God. I will prepare a sacrifice to my God on one altar. The evil men will prepare a sacrifice to their idol god on another altar. I will pray to the God of heaven. The evil men may pray to their idol god. The god who answers by sending fire is the real God.”

The people met on the mountain. Sacrifices were set up on two altars. The evil men prayed to their idol god. The idol god did not send fire. They jumped up and down and prayed louder. But their idol god did not send fire.

“Everyone come near to me,” commanded Elijah. The people watched as Elijah had many barrels of water poured over his sacrifice. Then Elijah prayed to the God of heaven.

“Dear God,” Elijah prayed, “Let the people know that You are the real God.”

Then God sent fire from heaven. The fire burned up the animal sacrifice, the wood, the rocks, and the dust. It even caused a ditch of water around the sacrifice to be removed.

The people said, “The God of heaven is the real God.”

Name _____

What Does God Think of Boastful Prayers?

Look up the Bible verses and find the word in each verse that begins with the letter indicated and fits the number of squares available. After all the words are filled in, read the words in the dark boxes to find out how God feels about prayers that are boastful and proud.



1. Job 35:13

V					
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2. Proverbs 1:28

	N									
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3. Proverbs 15:8

A									
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4. Isaiah 59:2

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5. Psalm 66:18

I								
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6. Jeremiah 11:11

N					H				
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Name _____

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Look up the Bible verses and find the word in each verse that begins with the letter indicated and fits the number of squares available. After all the words are filled in, read the words in the dark boxes to find out how God feels about prayers that are boastful and proud.



1. Job 35:13

<i>N</i>																			
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2. Proverbs 1:28

<i>N</i>				<i>A</i>															
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3. Proverbs 12:2

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4. Isaiah 59:2

			<i>N</i>				<i>H</i>												
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5. Psalm 66:18

<i>S</i>																			
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6. Jeremiah 11:11

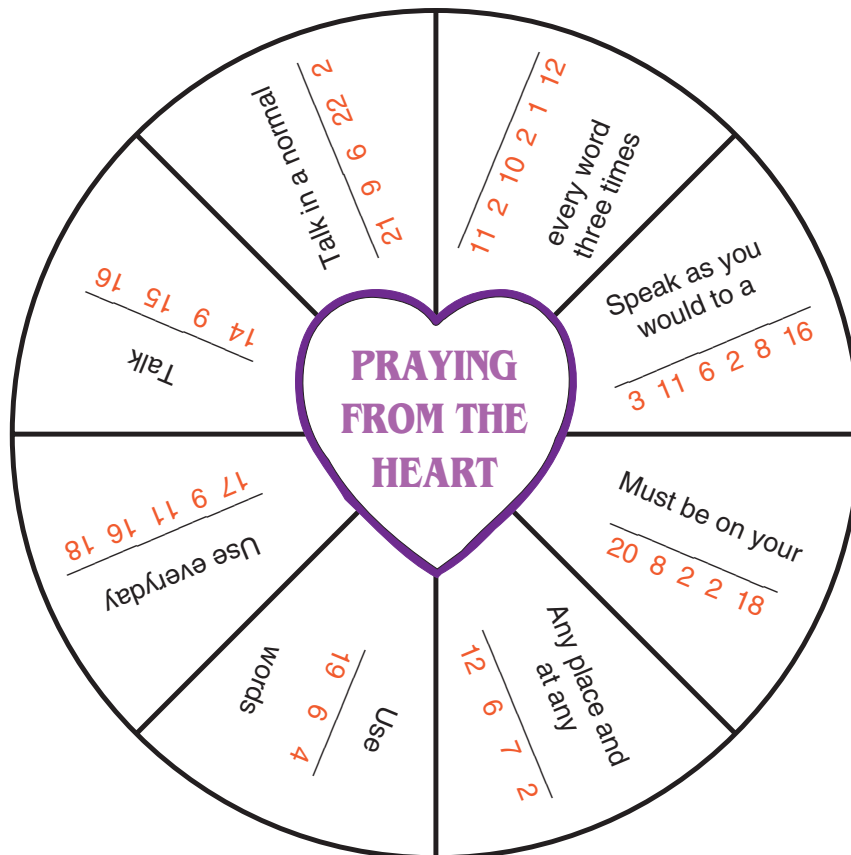
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Name _____

Pray Right

Find what it means to pray from the heart by using the code at the top of the page. Complete the statements in the circle around the heart, using the code. With a yellow crayon color the outline of the spaces or with a yellow highlight shade the spaces that tell the best way to pray. Color the outline of the spaces black that are not the way God wants you to pray.

Code 1	= A	7	= M	13	= Y		
2	= E	8	= N	14	= L	19	= B
3	= F	9	= O	15	= U	20	= K
4	= G	10	= P	16	= D	21	= V
5	= H	11	= R	17	= W	22	= C
6	= I	12	= T	18	= S		



Memory Verse to Learn

Matthew 6:7 — *“When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.”* (KJV)

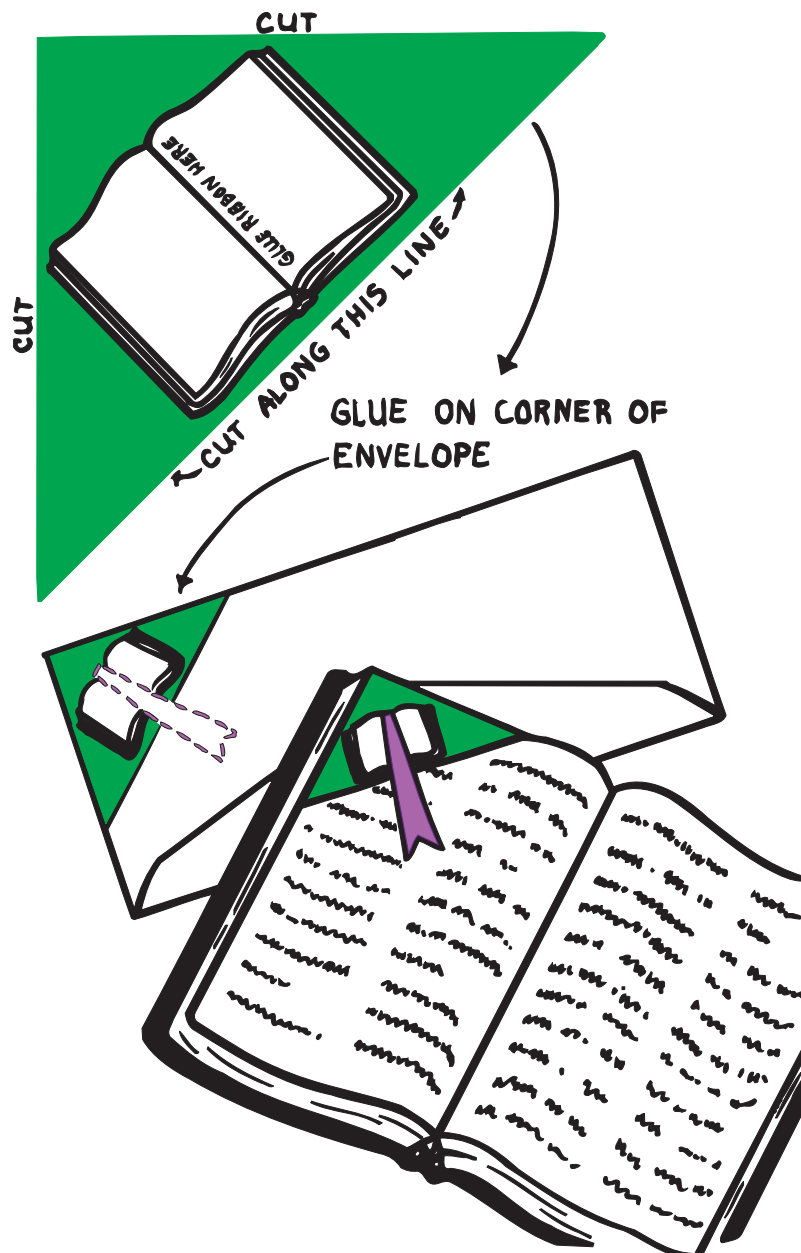
“When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” (NIV)

Name _____

Bible Bookmarks

Color and cut out Bible pattern A below and glue the pattern to the corner of an envelope. Then, cut off the corner of the envelope using the bottom of the Bible pattern as a guide. Glue a three-inch length of ribbon to the top of the Bible to make the ribbon look like a bookmark. To use the bookmark, slip the "pocket" of the bookmark over the corner of any page in the Bible. Color and cut out the Bible bookmark pattern B. Use the bookmarks to mark your favorite Bible passages.

Pattern A



Pattern B

