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Weaving faith into today's families

SPRING SUNDAY SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADER GUIDE

Group

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MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADER GUIDE

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This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's

Relational
Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential
What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable
The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based
Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

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FaithWeaver NOW® Bible Curriculum, Middle School Bible Studies, Spring
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* Due to the way Easter falls, we recommend rearranging the studies as needed so Study 7 lines up with Palm Sunday and Study 8 lines up with Easter.

The future of Sunday school + family ministry is NOW.

No doubt about it, the world is changing. Families used to go to church every week. Kids used to have longer attention spans. Teachers used to have more time to prepare. And didn't our budgets used to be bigger?

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Sure, you've seen Sunday school aimed at families. But FaithWeaver NOW actually hits the target by having everyone in the family learning about the same Scripture each week.

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- Kids don't just hear the Word. They experience it.
- Simple and easy lessons fit even the busiest lives.
- Kids see God in their everyday world.
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- You can customize it however you like, with both print and digital versions.

Create a vibrant family ministry that's new…that's wow…that's NOW. FaithWeaver NOW gives you a fresh strategy for being more successful than ever in bringing families closer to Jesus.

Thom and Joani Schultz
Chairman and Chief Creative Officer
Group Publishing, Inc.

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray Matthew 6:5-13

Many young teenagers aren't sure they really believe in prayer, even if they really want to believe. They may believe that God really only listens to the prayers of adults or little children. They may have been disappointed in their lives when something they passionately prayed for did not turn out as they had hoped. Help your students to see that Jesus' example for prayer is intended for them as much as it was for his disciples.

STUDY	WHAT STUDENTS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Faith Connection	**Hear My Prayer** *(about 10 min.)* Play a game to think about typical prayers people might say.	1 card per student from the "Prayer Cards" handout at the end of this study, scissors	Cut apart the Prayer Cards.
2 Bible Exploration	**The Pattern for Prayer** *(about 15 min.)* Talk about the Lord's Prayer and the different aspects of prayer it involves.	Bibles, Bible Trek, pens	Tear out the Study 1 pages from each Bible Trek student book.

▶Bible Point

We pray to God.

Key Verse

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one' " (Matthew 6:9-13).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Students will consider the prayer Jesus taught his disciples and grow in their own prayer lives.

STUDY	WHAT STUDENTS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
2 Bible Exploration *(continued)*	**Choose Your Own Adventure** *(about 15 min.)* **Adventure 1: Amazing Creations** Make symbols depicting the Lord's Prayer. **Adventure 2: Teach Us to Pray** Present the Scripture in a current setting.	Bible Trek, construction paper, markers, glue or tape, old magazines, other craft supplies, scissors Bible Trek	Set out the supplies for each adventure at different stations
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Prayer Pies** *(about 10 min.)* Think about their own prayer lives and what they could do to better follow Jesus' example for prayer.	paper, markers	
	Media Connection (Option) *(about 10 min.)* Watch a clip from *Meet the Parents*, and discuss how it relates to the Bible passage.	video player, movie *Meet the Parents*	Cue the movie *Meet the Parents* to 00:24:02 as the cat comes down the stairs to the song "Danke Schoen."
	The Lord's Prayer *(about 10 min.)* Pray using the Lord's Prayer as a model.	Bibles, Bible Trek	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Trek	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.	Bible Trek	Tear out the letter to parents from the back of each Bible Trek student book.

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray

Matthew 6:5-13

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

How *Not* to Pray

This passage begins with Jesus instructing his followers how *not* to pray. The religious leaders of that time were accustomed to praying loudly on the street corners so that the people would see them as holy and religious. Instead, Jesus says, prayer is to be between the individual and God—sincere communication that is a direct result of one's relationship with God.

Two Basic Parts

Jesus gives this prayer as a pattern or a form—an outline for prayer. One way to understand it better is to break his prayer into two basic parts: adoration and petition.

The first verse of the Lord's Prayer expresses praise for God's majesty and acknowledges God's love for us. The single word we translate as "our father" is an intimate word that can be translated as "daddy" or "dearest father." Jesus lets his followers know that they can share in his close relationship with God.

The first petition in the prayer is not related to personal needs. Rather, it addresses seeking what God wants.

After we seek God's will, we turn to asking God to fulfill personal, daily needs for food, forgiveness, and freedom from temptation. Without God working in our lives and our world, there would be no food or forgiveness. And if Satan were not restricted from tempting us, our lives would be nearly unbearable.

Putting God First

Remember that Jesus insisted on putting God first. If God isn't first in our lives, as well as in our prayers, God will not be honored, no matter how eloquently we pray.

The Jesus Connection

Jesus showed us how to pray, but more importantly, he also set the example of putting God first. Everything Jesus did was for God, so it was only natural for his prayer to be focused on praising God and seeking God's will.

Think of the last prayer you prayed. Maybe it was a quick "God, help me impress my boss" or "Lord, give me patience with my child." There's nothing wrong with quick prayers seeking God's help. But these quick prayers can reveal our real view of God. Consider the motivations behind your last prayer. Did you want to impress your boss or have patience with your child so the other person could see Jesus living in you? Stop and pray now for God to be the center of your life—and your prayers. You can write your prayer here.

Hear My Prayer
Supplies

1 card per student from the "Prayer Cards" handout at the end of this study
scissors

Hear My Prayer
Easy Prep

Cut apart the Prayer Cards.

The Pattern for Prayer
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Trek
pens

The Pattern for Prayer
Easy Prep

Tear out the Study 1 pages from each Bible Trek student book.

1 FAITH CONNECTION

Hear My Prayer

What You'll Do

Begin by distributing prayer cards. Give cards from the left-hand, bold side of the handout to half of the students, and give cards from the right-hand side to the other half. Explain that half of the students have cards that describe a person and half have cards listing prayers those people might say. Students will try to find the person whose card works with theirs. Although there are obvious matches, allow students to have fun pairing up different people and prayers. Then have students share with the others who their people/prayer connections are.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Which of the prayers on your cards sounded like prayers you've prayed? Explain.**
- **When you're facing a hard time, how do you know how to pray?**
- **What kinds of things remind you to pray?**

Say: **Some of these prayers might be obvious for the people named, such as a farmer asking God to send rain, but a missionary might also ask for rain if he or she is working in an area of severe drought. A bride might ask for a sunny day, or she might ask God to help her love her new husband. When we need wisdom, direction, and provision, ▶ WE PRAY TO GOD. God loves us deeply and wants us to freely approach him in prayer, no matter what's on our hearts.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

The Pattern for Prayer

What You'll Do

Have students stay in their pairs from the first activity, and make sure each pair has at least one Bible.

Say: **Jesus taught his disciples many things about trusting God, loving each other, and telling others the good news of why he came to earth. Luke 11 tells us that one day after hearing Jesus pray, a disciple asked Jesus to teach the disciples how to**

pray. We'll study Jesus' prayer example in Matthew 6. But first, let's discuss this question.

Ask:

- **Jesus' disciples had been raised in religious families and in religious communities. Why do you think a religious person would need to ask how to pray?**

Have one person read Matthew 6:5-8 for your entire group. Have pairs discuss these questions, and then let students share their thoughts with everyone.

Ask:

- **What's surprising about how Jesus said not to pray?**
- **Do you think Jesus was saying we should never pray out loud in front of others? Why or why not?**

Have one person read the first sentence of Matthew 6:9 for your entire group.

Say: **Jesus says he's going to tell them *how* to pray. Notice he didn't say he would tell them *what* to pray.**

Have pairs discuss these questions, and then let students share their thoughts with everyone.

Ask:

- **What are the differences between discovering *how* to pray and discovering *what* to pray?**
- **Why is it more helpful to discover *how* to pray than *what* to pray?**

Say: **In this passage, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray. He gives them a pattern for prayer that we can still use today. Let's take a look.** Have someone read aloud the rest of Matthew 6:9.

Say: **The first words in Jesus' prayer are "Our Father." The word we translate as "Father" is an intimate word that might just as easily be translated as "daddy" or "dearest father." Jesus let his disciples know that they could share in his close relationship with God.**

Ask:

- **If we approach God with this kind of attitude, how might that affect both *how* we pray and *what* we pray?**
- **Why is it helpful and healthy to view God as our Father?**

Have someone read aloud Matthew 6:10.

Ask:

- **Look at verse 10. Why is it important to ask for God's purpose to be done in your life?**

Have someone read aloud Matthew 6:11-13.

Ask:

- **The Lord's Prayer mentions a number of specific requests—daily food, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from temptation and evil. Which do you find most meaningful, and why?**
- **What can we ask God to provide for us today?**

Have students spend a couple of minutes writing answers to the questions in the "Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray" section of their Bible Trek pages. Then have a few students share what they wrote.

Say: **Jesus' pattern for prayer is often called the Lord's Prayer. His example helps us focus on what's most important when ▶ WE PRAY TO GOD. And when we follow Jesus' example, we please God with our prayers. Let's do some adventures to think more about that.**

Choose Your Own Adventure

Choose Your Own Adventure
Supplies

Bible Trek
Adventure 1
construction paper
markers
glue or tape
old magazines
other craft supplies
scissors

Choose Your Own Adventure
Easy Prep

Set out the supplies for each adventure at different stations.

What You'll Do

Say: **In our adventures today, we have two activities you can choose from. Both will allow you to think some more about making predictions. Adventure 1 uses an artistic activity, and Adventure 2 uses a fun skit that you'll create. The directions are on your Bible Trek papers. Look them over and decide which activity you want to do. You can work with the others who choose the same activity.** Allow time for students to decide which adventure they want to do. Summaries of each of the adventures follow.

ADVENTURE 1—ART: AMAZING CREATIONS

In this adventure, students will make a symbol depicting an aspect of the Lord's Prayer using craft supplies as the medium.

ADVENTURE 2—SKIT: TEACH US TO PRAY

In this adventure, students will act out how the scene in Matthew 6 might look in our time.

Say: **After you finish your adventure, you'll present some of what you experienced, so keep that in mind. When everyone has finished, we'll talk about what we've learned. You have 10 minutes to complete your adventures.** Move between the stations, and offer assistance as needed. Let groups know when they have about five minutes left so they can wrap up their work.

After 10 minutes, have your groups take turns presenting what they experienced.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How did the challenge you selected help you think about the Lord Prayer's differently or more clearly?**
- **How might you use Jesus' model for prayer in your own regular prayer times?**
- **Which part of the Lord's Prayer do you find the most challenging or most difficult to include in your prayers? which comes most naturally? Explain.**

Say: **Here's some great news: ▶ WE PRAY TO GOD wherever and whenever we want. And Jesus taught us how to pray in the Lord's Prayer.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Prayer Pies

Prayer Pies
Supplies

paper
markers

What You'll Do

Have students work alone for this activity. Hand out a sheet of paper and a marker to each student.

Say: **We've been thinking about Jesus' words to his disciples about how to pray. We need to remember that Jesus was teaching *us* how to pray as well. Think about *your* prayer habits and patterns. We're going to make prayer pie charts. Draw a circle on your paper as big as you can, and then I'll explain what the pie pieces are.**

Have students think about these six areas of prayer as their pie pieces:
1. praising God the Father,
2. asking for God's purposes in our lives,
3. asking for provision of food and other daily needs,
4. asking for forgiveness,
5. asking for freedom from temptation, and
6. asking for what we want.

Have students divide their prayer pies into the six sections named above to depict their current prayer life. Some pieces of the pie may be bigger than others.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Talk about your pie chart and what you discovered about your prayers.**

- **Based on the Lord's Prayer, how do you think Jesus wants these pie charts to look?**
- **Explain whether you think there's a wrong way to pray.**

Say: **Most of us, if we're honest, spend most of our prayer time asking God for what we want, but that wasn't even part of Jesus' prayer example! That doesn't mean God doesn't want us to pray about those things, but it's important to remember Jesus' prayer and try to follow his example of praising God first and telling God we want his will in our lives. When we get our minds in the right place, then we're ready to tell God about our needs. We know how ▶ WE PRAY TO GOD by learning from Jesus' example.**

Media Connection Supplies

video player
movie *Meet the Parents*

Media Connection Easy Prep

Cue the movie Meet the Parents to 00:24:02 as the cat comes down the stairs to the song "Danke Schoen."

Media Connection (Option)

Tips In general, federal copyright laws do not allow you to use videos or DVDs (even ones you own) for any purpose other than home viewing. Your church can obtain a license from Christian Video Licensing International for a small fee. Just visit cvli.com or call 1-888-771-2854 for more information.

Many clips are available at youtube.com. This clip is available at wingclips.com as "Saying Grace."

What You'll Do

Instead of doing the "Prayer Pies" activity, show a clip from the movie *Meet the Parents* to illustrate how we sometimes feel awkward when approaching God in prayer. Start the clip at 00:24:02 as the cat comes down the stairs to the song "Danke Schoen." In this scene, Greg is sitting down for dinner with his girlfriend and her parents—this is the first time he's met her mom and dad. They ask him to say a prayer over the meal—something he clearly hasn't done before. End the clip at 00:26:15 when Jack says, "Thank you, Greg. That was interesting, too."

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Have you ever felt this way about prayer, like you just didn't know the right words to say? Explain.**
- **How can prayer be this awkward and uncomfortable and funny?**
- **If God knows our needs before we pray, what's the point of prayer?**
- **Explain whether you think there's a wrong way to pray.**

Say: **Most of us, if we're honest, spend most of our prayer time asking God for what we want, but that wasn't even part of Jesus' prayer example! That doesn't mean God doesn't want us to pray about those things, but it's important to remember Jesus' prayer and try to follow his example of praising God first and telling God we want his will in our lives. When we get our minds in the right place,**

then we're ready to tell God about our needs. We know how ▶ WE PRAY TO GOD by learning from Jesus' example.

The Lord's Prayer

What You'll Do

Have students get into groups of five, and make sure each person has a Bible. Have groups read Matthew 6:9-13, and then give students an open time in their groups to pray their own prayer using Jesus' model. For example, they can start out with praise, then ask for God's will in specific ways, and so on. Remind them that prayers don't have to be impressive or wordy or religious—it's simply an opportunity to honor God's name, thank God for his many blessings, seek his provision, and pray for strength and forgiveness.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's happened when you've prayed the way Jesus taught?**
- **How can you use what you learned today to shape the way you pray this week?**

Say: **When Jesus prayed the Lord's Prayer, he was talking to people who had already prayed many times. But they still needed to learn how to pray with hearts that were focused on God—not themselves or what other people thought of them. When ▶ WE PRAY TO GOD, we can use Jesus' example and focus on our relationship with God.**

The Lord's Prayer
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Trek

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Direct students to the Daily Challenges in their Bible Trek pages and to choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **This week when you pray, instead of asking God what he can do for you, ask God to guide you in helping others. Then look for ways to actively be the hands and feet of Jesus to someone this week.**
- **If you haven't already, memorize Matthew 6:9-13. Say it slowly, adding in your own words between the verses to tell God how you feel about each aspect of the prayer.**
- **Thank God for your daily bread this week, and then share some with**

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Trek

someone else! Is there a family in your neighborhood that would really appreciate a word of encouragement or friendship? Write a card with a meaningful Scripture passage—maybe even the Lord's Prayer—and deliver that card this week. Be sure to tell your neighbors that you're praying for them!

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, a place, or other ideas.**

Say: **Let's remember that ▶ WE PRAY TO GOD as we follow through with our Daily Challenges and experience the power of talking with God.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Weaving Faith at Home
Supplies

Bible Trek

Weaving Faith at Home
Easy Prep

Tear out the letter to parents from the back of each Bible Trek student book.

Hand out the letter to parents from the Bible Trek student books, one to each student. Also encourage students to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about prayer. Students can also do the activities on the "Bringing It Home" section of their Bible Trek pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families! Available at group.com/digital.

End the study with the Lord's Prayer. Say: **Let's form a circle and say the words to Jesus' prayer together one more time: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Amen.**

Prayer Cards

Photocopy and cut apart enough cards for each student to have one.

BRIDE	Please give us a sunny day.
FARMER	Please send us rain.
MISSIONARY	Please let them hear what I have to say.
BANK ROBBER	Please forgive me for what I've done.
TEENAGER WITH A BIG MATH TEST TOMORROW	Please help me remember what I need to know.
BASKETBALL COACH	Please help us not embarrass ourselves.
NEW KID IN SCHOOL	Please send me a new friend.
SINGLE PARENT WITH NO MONEY	Please send me money for food.
SOMEONE WHOSE GRANDMA JUST DIED	Please comfort my heart.
TEENAGER WITH A NEW BABY BROTHER	Please help me love him.

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FAITHWEAVER NOW®
Weaving faith into today's families

SPRING SUNDAY SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADER GUIDE

FaithWeaver NOW is for today's Sunday school teachers. It's developed by real Sunday school teachers, examined by real ministry leaders, and tested and approved by thousands of churches so you get great lessons that work with today's families.

This quarter you'll explore these Bible passages:

	BIBLE CONTENT/SCRIPTURE	KEY VERSE	BIBLE POINT
WEEK 1	Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray (Matthew 6:5-13)	"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one' " (Matthew 6:9-13).	We pray to God.
WEEK 2	Jesus Feeds Thousands (John 6:1-15)	"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).	God meets our needs.
WEEK 3	Jesus Explains Eternal Life to Nicodemus (John 3:1-17)	"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).	Jesus gives us eternal life.
WEEK 4	Jesus Talks With the Samaritan Woman (John 4:5-42)	"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12).	Jesus loves everyone.
WEEK 5	Jesus Tells About the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)	"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).	Jesus says to love others as ourselves.
WEEK 6	Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead (John 11:1-45)	"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies' " (John 11:25).	Jesus gives us hope.
*WEEK 7	Crowds Welcome Jesus to Jerusalem (Psalm 118:19-29; Matthew 21:1-11)	"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:12).	We praise Jesus.
*WEEK 8	Jesus Comes Back to Life (Matthew 27:27-56; 28:1-10)	"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).	Jesus is alive.
WEEK 9	Peter Explains Belief in Jesus (1 Peter 1:3-9)	"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).	Have faith in Jesus.
WEEK 10	Jesus Returns to Heaven (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11)	"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).	Tell others about Jesus.
WEEK 11	Christians Care for One Another (Psalm 23; Acts 2:42-47)	"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).	God's family takes care of each other.
WEEK 12	Stephen Forgives His Accusers as They Stone Him (Acts 6:8–7:60)	"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).	We stand up for Jesus.
WEEK 13	Paul Teaches in Athens (Acts 17:16-31)	"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 40:28).	God created heaven and earth.

* Due to the way Easter falls, we recommend rearranging the lessons as needed so Lesson 7 lines up with Palm Sunday and Lesson 8 lines up with Easter.

PLUS...

Access all these FREE FaithWeaver NOW digital resources at group.com/digital:

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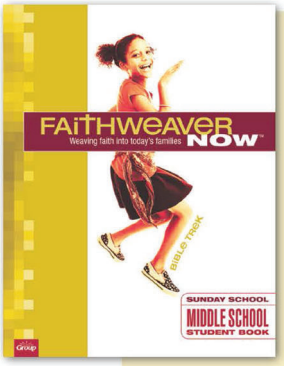

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