



Children's Church

It's church...just for kids!



 **SPRING**

Leader Guide

Spring • CHILDREN'S CHURCH



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Group resources really work!

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



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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.



KidsOwn Worship®: Children's Church, Leader Guide, Spring

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Printed in the United States of America.

We know you care about kids...

We do, too!

That's why we attempt to ensure that all crafts, toys, and gizmos meet or exceed national safety standards—and are produced by manufacturers that don't use child labor or abuse their labor force. You can order Group resources knowing that in addition to caring for *your* kids, you're also caring for children elsewhere.

Let's keep kids safe!

We strive to provide products that are mechanically reliable and hold together during normal, intended usage. Items are also checked for flammability, and both paint and surface coatings are checked for heavy metals—including lead.

You can help your children stay safe by seeing that toys and gizmos are used as designed, for the purposes designed, and that any broken pieces are disposed of promptly and properly. We value your feedback. If you become aware of a problem affecting the safety of any of our products, please inform us immediately.

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

Don't just teach about the Bible. Change lives!

KidsOwn Worship® is a resource God will use to change the lives of the children in your church.

KidsOwn Worship sessions encourage people to focus on the one most important thing in life: *a growing relationship with Jesus*. In Luke 10:41-42 (the Martha and Mary story), Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed." Every session in

KidsOwn Worship helps students focus on this one thing, a growing relationship with Jesus. Whether they're studying Bible stories from the Old Testament or the New Testament, learners will be challenged to grow closer to Jesus every week.

You'll be thrilled at the way KidsOwn Worship encourages learners to weave faith into life. By providing meaningful activities, great discussions, and personal challenges, KidsOwn Worship takes learners past head knowledge of the Bible and into heart- and life-change.

With KidsOwn Worship, students of all ages will

- experience God's story in fresh, fun, meaningful ways;
- understand God's Word by doing surprising, fun stuff;
- discover the adventure of applying God's truth to everyday life;
- build a forever friendship with Jesus—the best friend they could ever have!

Welcome to KidsOwn Worship: Church for your kids.

Children's church is where your preschoolers and elementary children build their worship foundation. It's where they focus on God in a personal way—and experience children's worship through uplifting songs and fun, memorable Bible learning.

We know you don't want to just teach about the Bible in your children's church; you want to change lives through worship that touches minds and hearts in amazing ways! Thanks to KidsOwn Worship, your preschool and elementary children will experience worship through memorable songs and impactful Bible learning. It's flexible, easy-to-plan and—most importantly—effective in helping your kids grow a personal relationship with Jesus.

While KidsOwn Worship can be used in conjunction with any Sunday School curriculum. It works particularly well with FaithWeaver NOW and FaithWeaver Friends. Together, your families will learn about the same important Bible passages together—allowing them to grow in faith as a family.

We're so glad you've decided to touch the heart of God and change the hearts of your kids with KidsOwn Worship. We know you'll help kids grow closer to God!

**Weave faith
into life!**

Thom Schultz
Joani Schultz

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



KidsOwn Worship also works hand in hand with FaithWeaver NOW and FaithWeaver Friends. All three of these great programs follow the same Scope & Sequence, to help reinforce the Bible message throughout the week. FaithWeaver NOW is available for infants-adult.

Staffing Your Children's Church

To help make your children's church experience strong, it is important that you have at least one adult helper no matter how many children attend your children's church. In addition, we recommend that you recruit at least one helper for every 15 children.

Song Leader

You may want to recruit a song leader who can lead your children in a powerful worship experience. Give the DVD to the song leader, and let him or her know which songs will be sung each week and what discussion he or she is responsible for.

Preschool Leader

You may decide to keep all the children together during the entire worship time or to separate the preschoolers and elementary students during "Let's Learn the Point!" If you decide to separate preschoolers for this section, recruit a preschool leader, and make sure there's a room where the preschoolers can meet.

Staffing for Your Children's Church Size

If your children's church is made up of 30 or fewer children, you'll be able to run an effective children's church program with two leaders—one to present material or lead worship songs, the other to gather supplies and help children with their individual needs.

If you have more than 30 children in your children's group, we suggest that you use a small-group format, which we call Praise Crews, for discussions. Using Praise Crews will change both the number of volunteers and the kind of volunteers you'll need (see margin box). Each Praise Crew will need a responsible teenager or an adult helper to build relationships and help with individual needs.

Involving Older Children

If you have older elementary children or preteens who want to be involved in children's church, consider forming a children's worship team. It's a great way to help children learn to serve, and you'll find that many children are eager to participate on a worship team. Hold regular rehearsals to help the worship-team children learn the song lyrics and motions. Be sure to rotate children into the worship team often so that many children get a chance to learn how to serve.

Important Legal Information

When you purchase a *KidsOwn Worship DVD* or kit, you also buy the right to use the songs and lyrics as often as you like within your church.

What Do Praise Crew Leaders Do?

- Arrive early and be ready to welcome the kids in your Praise Crews.
- Worship enthusiastically! If you put your heart into worshipping God, kids will, too!
- Listen carefully to directions and help each child participate in the worship activities and the discussion that follows.
- Gently redirect kids who get off track or start misbehaving. It's your job to help kids have an awesome experience at KidsOwn Worship.

Session 1

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray

Matthew 6:5-13



Worship Theme:



We can talk to God.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will learn that God wants to listen to us, and they'll look at the Lord's Prayer.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
1 Let's Praise God! (up to 25 minutes)	Sing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "No Matter What I'm Facing" • "My Hope Is in the Lord" • "Power Shuffle" • "Because of His Mercy" (Titus 3:5a) • "Are You Going to Praise the Lord?" 	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, cell phone

Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! (up to 25 minutes)	* God Is Always There Learn that God will always listen.	Classroom Supplies: Construction paper, scissors, glue
	Our Father Do motions to help them remember Jesus' model for prayer.	Classroom Supplies: Bible
	Circle of Prayer Experience prayer as a privilege.	Classroom Supplies: Stuffed animal

Elementary

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	The Lord's Prayer Learn that we can talk to God.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Bibles, video equipment, newsprint, markers
	* "Can You Hear Me?" Watch a video clip about prayer.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment
	* Coin Drop Contrast God's capacity to listen with the human capacity to listen.	Classroom Supplies: Paper cups, pennies, knife

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
3 Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	The Offering Offer their gifts to God.	Classroom Supplies: Offering bowls
	Even When Thank God for listening even when they feel unworthy.	
	Talk From Your Heart Tell God what's in their hearts.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Paper, offering bowls, video equipment

* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Let's Learn the Point!

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray

Matthew 6:5-13

This passage begins with Jesus reminding 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. Jesus knew that their prayers were not sincere appeals to God but rather were attempts to build themselves up in the eyes of the people. Instead, Jesus says, prayer is to be between the individual and God—sincere communication that is a direct result of one's relationship with him.

Notice also that in Matthew 6:9, Jesus says this is "*how* you should pray," not "*what* you should pray." Jesus gives this prayer as a pattern or a form—an outline around which all believers can build their prayers. This pattern may be broken down in different ways, but one way is to break 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 very first word of the prayer reveals the relationship to God of the person praying. The word we translate as "father" is an intimate word that might just as easily 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. When we ask for God's kingdom to come and for his will to be done, we're asking for God's purposes to be fulfilled in this world and in our lives.

After we seek God's will, we then turn our prayer to asking God to fulfill personal, daily needs for food, forgiveness, and freedom from temptation. Not only do such requests seek the fulfillment of our needs, but they also acknowledge our dependence on God. 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—just think of the story of Job.

As we learn to pray the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray, keep in mind 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.

Devotion for Leaders

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.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: 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 that God would be the center of your life—and your prayers.

Why We Worship for Leaders

Today we worship God because we can talk to him. God's availability is not dependent on how worthy we are or how articulate we are. God listens even when we are confused, wrong, or petty. God does not require that we pass entrance exams to enter his presence; he requires only that we talk to him.

We worship God today because God is willing to listen to each of the billions of people in the world. We can go before God with confidence, knowing that he will respond to the cries of our hearts.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let's Praise God!

- Make sure your video equipment is ready.
- Have a cell phone handy to use as a prop.

"Can You Hear Me?"—Watch "Can You Hear Me?" at least once before the worship session so you'll be familiar with it.

Coin Drop—Prepare a 3-ounce paper cup for each child by cutting a slot in the bottom. The slot should be just large enough for one penny to fit through it. Obtain several rolls of pennies.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

1 Let's Praise God!

Play KidsOwn Worship music videos as children arrive. Greet children by name, and say to each one, "Think of as many words as you can that mean 'talk.'"

When everyone has arrived,

Say **Hello, everyone! Today we praise God because we can talk to him. As you came in, I asked you to think of other words that we could use instead of talk. Let's substitute some of the words you thought of to see how we can communicate with God.** Let the kids share their thoughts.

We can whisper to God, we can chat with God, and we can communicate with God in many different ways. Pick up the cell phone.

- Ask**
- **When you call a friend, do you always get to talk to your friend? Why not?** (No, sometimes they don't answer; not if the phone battery is dead or they're talking to someone else.)
 - **How is it different when we call God?** (He is never too busy for us; he always answers.)

Say **God is always available. He'll always answer when we call. Now that's a sweet promise from God!**

Skits and Puppets

In the KidsOwn Worship Kit, you'll find a collection of skits titled "KidsOwn Worship Preschool Skits." The skits are designed to be used with Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet during the preschool activities. You can purchase a Theo puppet by visiting group.com.



Sing "No Matter What I'm Facing."



When I count to three, tell me what you had for breakfast this morning. Everyone call out on the count of three.

After kids tell their answers, ask a child on one side of the room to report what a child on the other side of the room had for breakfast. Ask several other children what children on the other side of the room had for breakfast.



It's hard to tell whether there was a problem with the listener or the talker. Let's try it again. This time, listen really hard. And let's try speaking a little louder, too. This time, shout out your answer! One, two, three...

Ask for several reports.



• If you can't hear when many people are speaking at the same time, how do you think God can? (Because he is not limited as a human being would be; he created everyone, so he can hear everyone.)



God isn't limited by the things we're limited by. Even when we have something much more important to tell than what we had for breakfast, people are sometimes distracted. They can't really hear us because other things are going on. But God doesn't have that problem. He's never too distracted or too overloaded to hear everybody call on him at once. Can you imagine that?



Sing "My Hope Is in the Lord."



God can hear his children anytime, anywhere, no matter how many people are talking to him at the same time. No one else can do that! And that's just one way God shows his mighty power. Our God can do anything! Let's sing "Power Shuffle."




Sing "Power Shuffle."




• Are there ever times in your life you almost wish God *couldn't* hear you? When might you feel that way? (Answers will vary.)



I have good news for you! God wants to hear about those times, too. God wants us to come to him when we fail. We can talk to God about things we'd be embarrassed to share with anyone else. He wants us to talk to him about stuff we think no one in the world could understand. We can go to God whenever we need a friend or whenever we need help. God will always understand us. Because of his mercy, God sent his Son so we could have love and forgiveness. Let's sing about how merciful God is.

 Sing "Because of His Mercy" (Titus 3:5a).

Say ➤ **Because God loves you, he wants to hear from you anytime, anywhere. Let's praise God today because we can always talk to him.**

 Sing "Are You Going to Praise the Lord?"

Say ➤ **Let's thank God because we can always talk to him.**

Pray ➤ **God, we thank you and praise you because you are able to hear our prayers. We don't understand how you do it, but we are grateful that you care about us enough to listen to us. Thank you for always hearing us so we can talk to you anytime, anywhere, about anything. In Jesus' name, amen.**

2 *Let's Learn the Point!*


Preschool Activities, pages 13-14

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

Elementary Activities

The Lord's Prayer

Say ➤ **We're going to sing our Bible story today! We have a song that comes right from our Bible passage.**

 Sing "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

Have children form groups of four. Assign a number (1 through 4) to each group member, and give each group newsprint and markers.

Say ➤ **You can find the words of Jesus' prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. Have the number One person in your group look those verses up now, and have the number Two person read them. Then, as a group, decide how this prayer could be divided into four parts. The Ones will take the first section, the Twos will take the second section, the Threes will take the third section, and**

the Fours will take the fourth section. You should then work independently to decide what your section is saying to God or asking God for. For example, a section of the prayer might be about forgiveness or about honoring God. When we get back together, you'll each read or say your part of the prayer and the topic you've decided it's about. You'll have about eight minutes to work. Make notes on your newsprint to help you remember.

Circulate among the children as they work, and make sure each group understands how to categorize parts of the prayer. For example, children could decide that verses 9 and 10 are the first part of the prayer and that they are about honoring God, greeting God, or recognizing who God is. Encourage the kids to consider more than one possibility. After eight minutes, ask the Ones to share the verses their group chose and the category they decided on.

Ask • **What are some other things you might say to God that would be in the same category?** (Answers will vary.)

Follow the same process for each of the four sections of the prayer: Ask the Twos to share, then the Threes, and finally the Fours. Not all groups will divide the prayer the same way or choose the same themes. Encourage the children to learn from each other. After kids have shared,

Ask • **Why do you think Jesus taught the disciples to pray this particular prayer?** (He knew what God wants to hear from us; he knew they needed to learn the right things to say.)

• **How important do you think the specific words of the prayer are?** (Very important if it's what Jesus told them to say; the exact words are not very important, just the ideas that they mean.)


Say **Jesus also taught the disciples how *not* to pray. In your group, look up Matthew 6:5-8. Find at least two ways Jesus said not to pray. You'll have about three minutes.**

After three minutes, have the kids share how not to pray.

Ask • **Why do you think we shouldn't pray that way?** (It is selfish; it doesn't please God to have that attitude.)

Say **God wants us to talk to him. He doesn't want to just overhear what we're saying to someone else the way he would hear the person who prays on the street corner. He wants us to talk to him about the things that are really important to us. God knows what we need, but he loves to hear us tell him how we are trusting him to provide for us.**

** "Can You Hear Me?"*

 Show the video "Can You Hear Me?" The video shows how God listens even when no one else does. After the video, ask the following questions.

(continued on page 15)

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray

Matthew 6:5-13

Worship Theme:



We can talk to God.

Easy Prep for Leaders

God Is Always There—Cut one 5-inch square each from red, yellow, and green paper. Mount the squares on a sheet of black construction paper so they resemble a traffic signal. Have a second sheet of construction paper to cover the lights on the traffic signal.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo cover the traffic lights in "God Is Always There."
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



* God Is Always There

Say We're going to play a game using a traffic signal.

- Ask**
- What does the traffic signal tell us when the green light is showing?
 - What does the yellow light mean?
 - What does the red light mean?

Say In our game, you'll have to read the traffic signals to know when to talk and when to be quiet. I'll tell you something to talk about, and you can say anything you think of while I show the green light. The yellow light means "look out." When I show the yellow light, you'll know it's almost time to stop. When I show the red light, you must stop talking right away.

Play the game several times. If a child continues talking when the red light is showing, remind him or her to stop. Have the child say, "Oops, I kept talking." Then play the game again.

You can suggest several of the following topics:

- Talk about your favorite animal.
- Talk about some things you like to eat.
- Talk about some things you don't like to eat.
- Talk about some toys you like to play with.

- Ask**
- Why was it sometimes hard to stop talking?
 - When has someone asked you to be quiet?
 - How do you feel when someone asks you to be quiet?

Say There is someone who will always let you talk. There is someone who always wants to listen to you. Do you know who that someone is? It's God. We can always talk to God. God won't ask us to wait a minute or to "shh." No matter what, we can talk to God.

Our Father

Say Jesus knew that sometimes it's hard for us to know what to say to God. So Jesus gave us some ideas about what to say. Our Bible story today is sometimes called the Lord's Prayer. Open your Bible to Matthew 6 and show the children.

Jesus told his disciples they didn't have to say long prayers. He told them, "God knows what you need before you ask him."

- Ask**
- Who else knows what you need before you ask?
 - Do you usually have to ask your mom or dad for a bath when you need one? a nap? Why not?

Say God knows what's best for us, just as our parents know what's best for us. Jesus taught special words to help us remember to talk to God about everything. We're going to use our hands to help us remember what to pray, so everyone hold up your hand and wave to say "hi." (Pause.)

Our Father (continued)

Say When we begin to pray, we greet our Holy Father, God, the way we say “hello” to each other. Jesus taught the words, “Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name.”

Now point to yourself, then point up. Model the action, and have the children repeat it. **That reminds us to tell God that we want what he wants. Jesus used the words “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** Repeat the prayer with the motions. **We pray:**

Hello, holy God. (Wave your hand.)

I want (point to yourself)

what you want. (Point up.)

Next we pray about something that God knows we need each day. Jesus used the words “Give us today our daily bread,” so let’s use our hands as though we’re eating a sandwich. Model the action. Have the children copy your motion. Then repeat the prayer to this point.

Hello, holy God. (Wave your hand.)

I want (point to yourself)

what you want. (Point up.)

Send us food. (Pretend to eat a sandwich.)

Jesus told us we also need to forgive and be forgiven.

Ask • What do we need to be forgiven for?

Say Let’s put our hands together as though we’re praying to remind us to forgive others and to ask God’s forgiveness. Place your palms together and encourage children to follow your lead. Repeat the prayer and motions:

Hello, holy God. (Wave your hand.)

I want (Point to yourself.)

what you want. (Point up.)

Send us food (pretend to eat a sandwich),
and forgiveness (Place your palms together.)

Next the prayer Jesus taught says, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” When we say those words, we are asking God to protect us from doing wrong. Sometimes when mommies and daddies want to protect us, they pick us up in their arms, so let’s cross our arms over our chests as if we’re holding ourselves to remind us of protection. Model the action, then repeat the prayer.

Hello, holy God. (Wave your hand.)

I want (Point to yourself.)

what you want. (Point up.)

Send us food (pretend to eat a sandwich),
and forgiveness (place your palms together)
and protection. (Cross your arms over your chest.)
Repeat the prayer several times.

Now you have prayed as Jesus taught us to pray. We thank God because we can always pray or talk to God!

Circle of Prayer

Have the children sit in a circle. Hold the stuffed animal.

Say This is my pal, [name of stuffed animal]. We’ll pass [animal’s name] around so everyone can see it. While you hold [animal’s name], you have a special privilege. You can say anything you want to it or nothing at all.

You might say, “I like your fluffy fur,” or “Where did you get those big brown eyes?” Maybe you just want to give it a big hug. When you have finished, pass it on. But here’s the catch: You have to be totally quiet when you’re not holding my pal. Ready?

Have children pass the stuffed animal around the circle.

When [animal’s name] comes to you this time, instead of saying something to it, you can pray something to God. You can thank God for something wonderful or ask him for help with something hard. You can do that aloud or silently. When you’re done, pass [animal’s name] on. Ready? Have the children pass the stuffed animal around the circle again.

Just now, we only prayed when the stuffed animal was with us. [Animal’s name] reminded us that it is a special privilege to pray, because you could only pray when it was with you.

It’s a special privilege to talk to God, but we can use this privilege anytime we choose. We don’t have to wait until we are holding something special or until we’re in a special place. God always hears us when we talk to him. Let’s all shout our thanks to God at the same time instead of taking turns! Lead the children in shouting out their thanksgiving.

(continued from page 12)

- Ask** • **When have you felt ignored like the boy in this video?** (Answers will vary.)
- **How does it help to know God always listens?** (I know he's not ignoring me; he cares how I feel; even if I can't see him, I can always talk to him.)
- **What kinds of things did you just talk to God about?** (Answers will vary.)

Say Find a partner, and share your thoughts about praying to God. Tell your partner where you like to pray, when you like to pray, or what you like to talk to God about. You have one minute.

Give the children a minute to share thoughts about prayer.

Say Now talk about these specific questions with your partner.

- Ask** • **What's the hardest thing about praying?** (Sometimes it seems like God is not listening to me; it's hard to find time to really talk to God; sometimes I just ask for stuff and I know I should do more.)
- **What's the easiest thing about praying?** (You can pray anywhere; I know God listens to me no matter what I say.)
- **What are five things you think God thinks or feels when you pray to him?** (He loves me; he wants to answer my prayers in the way that's best for me; he's happy; he forgives me when I ask him to; he's probably sad sometimes when I don't tell him I love him but just ask for things for myself.)
- **What are five reasons it's important to pray?** (God wants us to; it's how we praise him; I can ask for forgiveness; it's how I talk to God; God gives me answers to my problems when I pray.)

Give the children a minute or two to share. Then regain their attention.

Encourage volunteers to share their insights with the rest of the group.

Say The Bible tells us to pray all the time about everything. That's pretty tough to do with distractions all around us. But God is the very best friend we have. God is more powerful than anyone else in the universe. God promises to listen to our prayers and help us. God wants us to talk to him the way we talk to our best friends or to our moms and dads. Let's learn more about prayer.

* *Coin Drop*

Give each child one of the small paper cups prepared before worship. Ask the children to turn the cup bottom-side up. Give each child a penny.

Say As much as our parents, friends, or teachers love us, they are only able to take in so much of what we say. They have other things to pay attention to as well. Talking to them is somewhat

like putting a penny through this slot. The slot is only big enough to handle one penny at a time. Ask the children to put the penny through the slot.

Ask all the kids to tell you about their weekend at one time. Repeat what you were able to hear.

Say **I can't take in what you're saying if you are all talking at one time. I heard some of you, but I didn't get all the details from everyone. But God can hear everyone's prayers at the same time. He's not limited in the same way your parents and friends are or I am. Watch this.**

Turn your cup over and place it in your palm, brim-side up. Pour a handful of pennies in the cup all at once.

Ask

- **Why was my cup able to take in so many pennies at once?** (There was more room; you weren't limited by the slot.)
- **How is this similar to God's ability to hear our prayers?** (He can hear everyone; he's not limited by anything.)
- **Why can God hear everyone's prayer all at the same time?** (Because he's God; I don't understand it, I just know it's true.)

Say **Let's take some time to talk to God. Everyone talk to God at the same time. Ask God to meet one of your needs, or just praise him.**

Ask

- **Why does the almighty God who created the universe want to hear from people like you and me?** (He loves us; he made us.)

Say **Even though God is almighty, he cares enough about each of us to listen when we pray. Isn't it wonderful that God loves us enough to listen to us? God is able to listen whenever we pray, and he is willing to listen to us anytime. God is worthy of our praise because we can talk to him.**

Let's all talk to God together with a cheer. Repeat after me:

You're God! (Pause.) **You're Lord!** (Pause.) **You listen when we pray!** (Pause.) **You care.** (Pause.) **You hear** (pause) **all that we have to say!**

3

Let's Pray!

The Offering

Say **Today we learned that we can talk to God. We learned that God always listens. We can pray anytime and anywhere, and God will hear us. This is a wonderful gift to us. As we give our offering, let's give God another gift today. Let's give God our thanks for listening to us when we pray. As you pass the offering bowl, thank God for always listening.**

Even When

Say ▶ Let's thank God because we can talk to him "even when." We can talk to God even when we're angry. We can talk to God even when we're confused. I will start the prayer, and when I say "even when," you take turns filling in the rest.

Pray ▶ Thank you, God, for being a God that I can talk to even when...
Allow each child to fill in the blank. In Jesus' name, amen.

Talk From Your Heart

Set the offering bowls at the front of the worship area.

Ask ▶ • How would you feel if your mom or dad said the same three things every time he or she spoke to you? (It would annoy me; I would wonder what their problem was.)

Say ▶ Remember that Jesus said not to go on and on saying the same things over and over when we pray. That lets us know that we need to spend some time thinking about what's really in our hearts instead of just saying what we've heard others say or saying the same thing we've already said to God many times before. Give each child a piece of paper.

Let's talk to God from our hearts. Let's not just say the same thing over and over. I'm going to give each of you a piece of paper and play a music video to help you think about leaning on God in prayer. Tear your paper into a heart shape as you think of some new and different things to say to God this morning—things that come straight from your heart. Then bring the heart to the offering bowl so I'll know you have finished.

▶ Play "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

When most children have finished tearing heart shapes, begin to hold up the hearts so the children can compare the differences. Note that, even though they began as identical pieces of paper, no two hearts are alike.

Say ▶ Even if we start with the same materials—like the prayer Jesus taught the disciples to pray—God hears from each of our hearts individually. Whenever we come to God, he hears what is in our hearts, no matter what words we use. We can talk to God, and he always hears us.

Pray ▶ Thank you, God. We can always talk to you about whatever is on our hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.

Worship Leader Tip

During quiet prayer times, children are likely to become distracted. To help your quiet prayer times stay more focused, create an atmosphere of prayer. Dim the lights, play quiet music, and tone your presentation down before you go into a prayer session. Ask your helpers not to provide distractions by talking or cleaning up. Time the prayer session so that it ends before parents begin picking up their children from children's church. Preparing children for prayer time will make the time more fruitful.



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WEEK	BIBLE STORY	THEME
Week 1	Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray	We can talk to God.
Week 2	Jesus Feeds Thousands	God provides for our needs.
Week 3	Jesus Explains Eternal Life to Nicodemus	God gives us eternal life.
Week 4	Jesus Talks With the Samaritan Woman	Jesus satisfies.
Week 5	Jesus Tells About the Good Samaritan	God values companion.
Week 6	Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead	Jesus has power over death.
* Week 7	Crowds Welcome Jesus to Jerusalem	It is good to praise Jesus.
* Week 8	Jesus Comes Back to Life	Jesus is risen.
Week 9	Peter Explains Belief in Jesus	Jesus gives us new birth.
Week 10	Jesus Returns to Heaven	God helps us tell others about Jesus.
Week 11	Christians Care for One Another	God deserves our wholehearted devotion.
Week 12	Stephen Forgives His Accusers as They Stone Him	God is honored when we stand up for him
Week 13	Paul Teaches in Athens	God is alive.

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



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