

Talking To God

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Prayer is talking to God

Scripture: Romans 8:26-27

Memory Verse: In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. - Romans 8:26

The Children's Sermon

Today, we're going to talk about a special way we talk to God, and that's through prayer. Prayer is like a phone call to God. It's how we share our thoughts, ask for help, and listen to what God has to tell us. But have you ever wondered, is prayer just us talking to God, or can God talk back to us? Well, prayer is actually a two-way communication. That means not only do we talk to God, but God talks to us too!

Now, you might think, "How do I know when God is talking to me?" That's a great question! God talks to us in many ways. One big way is through the Bible. In the Bible, there are lots of stories and teachings from Jesus that help guide us. It's like God's special book of answers for us. When we have questions or need help deciding what to do, we can find answers in the Bible.

God also talks to us through the people around us and the good things that happen. Have you ever seen someone do something really kind for someone else? Or maybe someone has helped you when you were feeling down or needed help. Those moments

are ways God is speaking to us. It's like God is saying, "Look! This is how I want you to act. Be kind and help others."

Now, let's talk about a special part of the Bible that mentions prayer in Romans 8. In Romans 8, it talks about how the Holy Spirit helps us pray. Sometimes, we might not know what to say to God, or we might feel too sad or confused. But the Holy Spirit helps us by carrying our feelings and thoughts to God, even when we can't find the words. It's like having a best friend who knows exactly what you're feeling and helps you talk about it.

Romans 8 also tells us that God knows our hearts. That means God understands us better than anyone else, even better than we understand ourselves! So, when we pray, we can share everything with God - our happy moments, our sad moments, and even our worries. And the best part? God listens to every word.

But how do we listen to God? Well, listening to God takes practice. It's like learning to hear a whisper in a noisy room. We need to make quiet time to pray and read the Bible. That quiet time is like turning down the noise of the world so we can hear God's whisper in our hearts. Sometimes, God's answers come to us as a feeling of peace, an idea, or through the words of someone else.

Remember, prayer isn't just for asking for things. It's also for saying thank you to God for all the good things in our lives. It's like when you get a gift and you say thank you to the person who gave it to you. God loves hearing our thanks and sharing in our joy.

And don't worry if you're not sure how to start praying. You can talk to God just like you talk to a friend. You can tell God about your day, ask for help with something you're

struggling with, or even share a joke! God loves hearing from you, no matter what you have to say.

Romans 8 also reminds us that nothing can separate us from God's love. That means no matter what happens, God is always there for us, listening and ready to help. So, we can always feel safe and loved when we talk to God through prayer.

So, let's remember, prayer is a two-way communication with God. We talk to God, and God talks back to us through the Bible, the people around us, and the Holy Spirit. It's a special way to stay connected to God and feel God's love in our lives.

Let's try to make prayer a part of our everyday life. Maybe we can start or end our day with a little prayer, or find a quiet moment during the day to talk to God. And remember, there's no wrong way to pray. God is always happy to hear from us.

So, next time you pray, remember it's not just about talking to God. It's also about listening and feeling God's presence in your life. And always keep in mind the lessons from Romans 8 - that the Holy Spirit helps us pray, God understands our hearts, and nothing can separate us from God's love.

Let's pray together now. Dear God, thank you for always listening to us and talking to us. Help us to hear your voice in our lives and to follow your guidance. Thank you for the love and care you give us every day. Amen.

And that's our special talk about prayer. Remember, God is always just a prayer away, ready to listen and talk back to us. Keep talking to God every day, and keep listening for God's answers. You'll be amazed at how much closer you'll feel to God.

Bible Memory Verse

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. - Romans 8:26

You Will Need:

- Blank paper
- Colored pencils or markers
- Envelope

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials and set up a comfortable workspace for each child.
- Write the memory verse on a large piece of paper and display it where everyone can see.

Do This:

1. Ask the children to think about a time they found it hard to pray or didn't know what to say to God. Have them draw or write about that experience on one side of the paper.
2. On the other side of the paper, encourage them to draw or write what they think it means for the Spirit to intercede for them with 'wordless groans.' They can use symbols, abstract shapes, or any creative expression they feel represents this idea.
3. Once everyone is done, have them fold their paper and place it in an envelope. Lead a discussion about how the Holy Spirit helps us when we're weak and doesn't know what to pray for. Conclude by praying together, thanking God for the gift of the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Paper and pens for each child
- A "Prayer Box" or container
- Copies of Romans 8:26-27 for each child
- A recording device (optional)
- Quiet background music (optional)

Get Ready:

- Write out Romans 8:26-27 on a large poster or whiteboard for all to see.
- Set up a quiet, comfortable area for the activity with the Prayer Box in the center.
- If using, prepare the recording device and select appropriate quiet background music to play softly during the activity.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading Romans 8:26-27 aloud together. Discuss briefly what it means to have the Spirit intercede for us with wordless groans when we don't know what to pray for.
2. Invite each child to reflect silently on something they wish to pray about but find hard to put into words. They can think about situations in their lives, worries, hopes, or anything they feel they cannot express easily.
3. Ask them to write a symbol, draw a picture, or write a single word on their paper that represents their unspoken prayer concern. Explain that just like the Spirit intercedes with wordless groans, their symbol or drawing can represent their prayer to God without needing perfect words.

4. Once everyone is done, have them fold their papers and place them in the Prayer Box. Assure them that God understands their prayers, even when they're unspoken or unclear to us.
5. Optionally, you can record their prayers in a way that doesn't require words, such as a moment of silence on the recording device, or have them express their prayers through a creative action without speaking.
6. Close with a prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to intercede for each unspoken prayer placed in the Prayer Box, and thank God for understanding our hearts even when we can't find the words to pray.

Snack Activity: Prayer Pretzels

You'll Need:

- 1 tube of refrigerated breadstick dough
- 1/4 cup of baking soda
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Coarse salt
- Parchment paper and baking sheets

Get Ready: Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Do this:

1. Explain Romans 8:26-27, focusing on how the Holy Spirit helps us pray when we don't know what to say. Just like we're forming pretzels, sometimes our prayers can take different shapes, but God understands them all.

2. Unroll the breadstick dough and let each child shape their piece into a pretzel. Discuss how the twists can represent the times we feel tangled or unsure in our prayers.
3. Dip each pretzel in a mixture of baking soda and water (1/4 cup baking soda to 2 cups warm water), then place on the prepared baking sheet. Brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with coarse salt. This step symbolizes purifying our intentions and words as we pray.
4. Bake for about 10 minutes or until golden brown. As they bake, encourage the kids to share a moment when they found it hard to pray and how they think the Holy Spirit could help in such times.
5. Enjoy the prayer pretzels together, reflecting on the sweetness of being able to communicate with God, even without words.

Game Activity: Prayer Path Challenge

You'll Need:

- A large open space (indoors or outdoors)
- Chalk or tape (for marking paths)
- Index cards
- Pens or markers
- A timer

Get Ready: Before the activity, write out parts of Romans 8:26-27 on separate index cards. Create a 'path' with the chalk or tape, making sure there are clear starting and ending points. Place the index cards at various points along the path.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into teams of 3-4. Explain that the path represents our journey in prayer, and the index cards are reminders that the Holy Spirit helps us when we don't know what to pray for.
2. One child from each team starts at the beginning of the path. When you say 'Go', the first child races to find the first index card, reads the part of Romans 8:26-27 aloud to their team, and then performs a simple action related to prayer (e.g., kneel and whisper a prayer, raise hands in praise, etc.) before moving to the next card.
3. Once the first child returns to the start, the next child goes. This continues until all team members have completed the path. The team that finishes first, with each member correctly reading and performing the actions, wins. Encourage reflection on how the Holy Spirit helps us in prayer, just like the index cards helped guide them on the path.

Craft Activity: Whispering Prayers Wind Chimes

You'll Need:

- Colorful paper or cardstock
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- String or yarn
- A stick or dowel rod
- Hole punch

Get Ready: Read Romans 8:26-27 together and discuss how the Holy Spirit helps us pray, even when we don't have the words.

Do this:

1. Cut the paper or cardstock into various shapes, such as hearts, stars, or leaves. Each shape represents a prayer or a thought we might struggle to express.
2. On each shape, write a type of prayer or a situation where words are hard to find. Examples could include 'Thankfulness', 'Help', 'Sorry', or 'Wow'. Discuss how the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.
3. Punch a hole at the top of each shape and tie them to the stick or dowel rod with string, creating a wind chime. As you tie each one, say a silent prayer or simply spend a moment reflecting on how the Holy Spirit helps us communicate with God.
4. Hang the wind chimes in a place where the wind can catch them. Every time they chime, let it remind you that the Holy Spirit is always helping us speak to God, even in the silence of our hearts.

Prayer Activity: Whispers of the Heart

You'll Need:

- A Bible or printed copies of Romans 8:26-27
- Blankets or comfortable sitting mats
- Prayer journals and pens

Get Ready: Arrange the sitting area with blankets or mats in a quiet, comfortable space. Distribute the prayer journals and pens to each child.

Do this:

1. Start with a brief explanation of Romans 8:26-27, emphasizing how the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us with wordless groans when we don't know what to pray for.

2. Encourage the children to think of a situation where they felt too weak or unsure to pray. Ask them to reflect silently on this situation, sitting comfortably on their mats or blankets.

3. Guide them to write a letter to God in their prayer journals, expressing their thoughts or feelings about the situation. Remind them that it's okay if they can't find the right words because the Holy Spirit understands their hearts and intercedes for them.

Conclude with a group prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to help each child in their moments of weakness.