

Our Father in Heaven

(Matthew 6:9a)

Introduction

[Teacher, display a variety of baking ingredients and a recipe for bread. Include ingredients that would not go into a bread recipe. Discuss what would happen if we didn't use a recipe as beginning bakers. Then have the students decide which of the ingredients belong in the recipe. Explain that Jesus gave us an example of a prayer to use as our guide when we pray. If time permits, students could make the bread. Otherwise, the leader could make the bread at home and bring it back when the "daily bread" portion of the prayer is discussed.]

How many of you do any cooking? Do you use a recipe?

[Teacher, allow the children to make some quick setting pudding by following the recipe on the box. Dish it into individual Dixie cups and allow it to set until snack time at the end of class.]

Recipes teach us a good way to create a particular dish. But usually a recipe is just a starting point. Once you understand the basic recipe, you can get creative and add your own ideas. For example, we could have added some chocolate chips or Oreo Cookie chunks to our pudding just to make it taste better.

The Lord Jesus gave us a recipe for prayer, which we will begin to learn about today. And once you understand the basics of prayer, we will learn that God loves it when we get creative.

Opening Prayer

Before we open in prayer, I want you to think of a person who loves you very much. What has that person done that lets you know he or she loves you?

God loves you even more than the person you just shared about. Let's thank God for putting that person into our lives... [Teacher, allow each child to express their thanks.]

Our Father, we're so thankful that You love us and hear us when we pray to You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Our Father in heaven. (Matthew 6:9)

Lesson

Do you guys talk to God? Does He hear you? Does He answer?

What sorts of answers to prayer have you had? (Helps us find things, controls the weather, helps us remember things, etc.)

Last week we learned some things about prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. Let's review; open your Bibles to Matthew 6:5...

- God doesn't want us to be hypocrites when we pray. What's a *hypocrite*? (A pretender, a deceiver, or a phony) God doesn't want us to pray just to show off to others; He wants us to pray sincerely from our hearts directly to Him.
- God wants us to pray privately where it's just the two of us. He said to pray in your secret place where you can't be distracted.
- God wants us to have simple, honest prayers. It's not necessary to repeat the same words over and over. He knows our need before we even ask Him, anyway.
- God wants us to be persistent in our prayers. He said to keep on asking, keep on seeking, and to keep on knocking at the door.

Don't ever give up on God, even when He doesn't answer right away. Trust that if you're praying according to His will, He hears and will answer.

God wants to give us the very best. He is a loving Father who understands, cares, and comforts. He's not stingy; we don't have to beg.

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying and when he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “*Lord, teach us to pray.*”

So, Jesus told them “*This is how you should pray...*”

Matthew 6:9

Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.

[Teacher, give each child a copy of the Lord’s Prayer card.]

Jesus gave his disciples this sample prayer to help them learn how to pray on their own. It’s like a recipe for prayer.

It’s important first of all to realize that when we pray, we aren’t just praying to some unknown power or being, we’re talking to a real live person and He wants us to refer to Him as our father. So, in this prayer, Jesus began by addressing God, as “*Our Father*”.

Only someone who is God’s child has the right to call Him “Father.”

Are you God’s child? Not every person is.

John 1:12

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

Only those who believe that Jesus is God and that when He died on the cross, He satisfied the Father’s requirement that all sin be punished are sons and daughters in God’s family. God wants to be your loving Heavenly Father. Do you believe that when Jesus’ was brutally nailed to the cross He took the punishment for your sins that you deserved? If you really believe that, when you pray you can start by calling for your heavenly “*Father*.”

Your Honor?

[This activity helps kids consider the honor it is to call God “Father.”]

Preparation: Boldly print the following titles of people in authority on flash cards: King, President, Principal, Police Officer, Judge, Coach, and God. (Talk about God last.)

Discuss the following:

Say you were a roving, reporter...

- What’s something you might talk to this person about?
- If you needed to talk to this person in real life, would you feel nervous? Why or why not?
- Would this person care enough about you to listen to you and answer you? Why or why not?
- How would you address this person? (Your Honor, Mister or Madam President, Sir, Ma’am, and so on.)
- If this person was your close friend or your parent, would you address them differently?

Some people in authority don’t have time to listen to us. Even if we give them a lot of respect and address them with respectful names, they don’t always listen or answer our concerns. But God does! Even though God is the most powerful person of all, we can call him our Father. And like most dads, God our Father listens to us. In fact God listens better than any other father in the whole world! God is our heavenly Father who hears our prayers.

Isaiah 65:24

I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still taking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!

- What does this verse tell us about God?
- How do you feel knowing God hears us before we even finish talking?

- Is there anyone else who knows exactly what you're going to ask before you even ask it?

It's an honor to be able to call God our Father and to know that He hears us when we pray!

There are many people who don't have fathers here on earth to take care of them. Maybe their fathers have died, maybe their parents have divorced and their father has gone away. For whatever reason, not everyone has a father.

Psalm 68:3-5

But let the godly rejoice. Let them be glad in God's presence. Let them be filled with joy. (4) Sing praises to God and to his name! Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds. His name is the Lord—rejoice in his presence! (5) Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy.

This verse says that God is a father to those who don't have one.

- Have you ever thought of trusting God to take care of you like a father would?
- How is God the same and yet different from the fathers we know here on earth?

Job Description for The Perfect Father

When people want to hire someone for a job, they usually write a "Job Description" so that they can advertise the position and people will know what they're applying for. We're going to write a Job Description for the Perfect Father.

What would the perfect dad be like? Give me some descriptions of the job of being the father in a home. [Write them on the board.]

- Do you think anyone could actually be like the father we have described? Why or why not?

- Which of the things you listed describe God?

God is the perfect Father. He not only cares about us, but he has the power to take care of us.

Matthew 6:25-26

That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? (26) Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?

- What kinds of things do you worry about?
- Can your dad take care of these things? Why or why not?
- Do you think God can take care of them? Why or why not?
- Does knowing God is your heavenly Father make it easier to pray to him?

God Cares

- What are your plans for the future?
- Do you know what you want to be when you grow up?
- Do you think God cares what we choose to do?

God, our heavenly Father, has plans for us.

Jeremiah 29:11-12

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (12) In those days when you pray, I will listen."

- How can we know His plans?

If we read His word and pray to Him and try to listen and obey, He will reveal His special plans for your life. He's a good God and has good plans for your life.

Closing Prayer

[Teacher, have children look at the Job Description for the Perfect Father and ask them to choose words or phrases that describe God. Then thank Him for those qualities.]

Our Father in heaven, thank You for listening to us when we pray. Thank you for taking care of us and answering our prayers. You are the perfect Father. We love You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Happy Father's Day!

Whether or not we have fathers here on earth, God is our heavenly Father who hears our prayers. Let's make a Father's Day card for God and use them as a way to write our prayers to God.

Game Center

Use the questions contained in this lesson in a game of your choice.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptation.

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory
for ever.

Amen.

(Matthew 6:9-13)

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