

Pray.!? unit used as devotions (15 minutes per session)

#1

Watch <https://access.togethersmallgroups.org/pray/presentations-all/presentation-09a-bible-study-god-father/> and answer questions as a group.

Read to the group:

God places a royal crown on each of us and invites us to talk with him. We talk, God listens. God talks, we listen.

Sometimes, however, we may forget what prayer is all about. Watch this [Lord's Prayer Drama](#) video through 1:30; then pause it to have the group react to what they just experienced.

Set up a special chair in your meeting area. The chair is a reminder that when we pray, God is right there, ready to listen to us. Consider draping the chair with a purple cloth or something that will remind the group who God is. Say something like this to the group:

Let's remember as we pray that God is always ready to listen to us, his children. With your discussion partner, come up with something you want to say to God—maybe some words of praise. Also, think of a word that describes who God is. Together complete the sentence: God is _____. Maybe you will choose the word *holy, king, powerful, loving, Father, or even WOW!*

Sing/sign with <https://access.togethersmallgroups.org/pray/presentations-all/presentation-3-holy-lord/>

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#2

Read to the group:

On Earth as It Is in Heaven

God cares about the small things of our daily lives, but God also cares about really big things—like fixing everything that is broken in the world so that no one will be hurt, everyone will have enough, and all people will live together in peace. We call God’s plan to fix everything “the kingdom of God.” That’s why Jesus teaches us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

When we pray those words, we are sharing God’s hopes and dreams for the world, just as Hannah did. After her son, Samuel, was born, she prayed again to celebrate that God’s dream was becoming real, saying, “The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumble are armed with strength” (1 Sam. 2:4). Our prayers will not make God’s dream come true (only God can do that). However, we grow closer to God every time we pray, and as we do, God’s hopes and dreams become our hopes and dreams too so that we can really mean it when we pray, “Your kingdom come! *Please!*”

—Barry Chance

- **brainstorm some of those daily, earthly needs for which we can ask God, “Help, please!”—either for ourselves or for someone else.**
- Then view the next section of the [Lord’s Prayer Drama](#) video you started last time. This time, watch from 1:30-3:40.
- How did watching this segment make you feel? When we say “God, help, please!” are we ready to hear God’s response?
- Whoever is taking the lead in your group today should prepare the [Part of the Picture](#) cards before the session and set them out now around the room with the A side showing.
Caution to group members: **DO NOT PICK THEM UP OR TURN THEM OVER!**
- Talk together about what they might be parts of. What might the whole picture be? After everyone has had a chance to look at all the pieces, talk about your guesses.
- Together turn over the cards and assemble the picture. Did anyone guess correctly? It was a challenge because we were looking only at a **small part** of a big design.
- This exercise is a picture of what it’s like when we say, “God, help, please!” We only know a very small part of what God knows and sees. We see one small part, but God sees the whole picture. God *does* hear us and love us, but God’s answer to “help” might be different from what we expect. We might pray, “God, help. Our friend is sick”—and sometimes our friend does not get better. Remember that God sees something in a much bigger way. Keep praying. Keep asking for help. But always understand what a big God we have.
- Pray.

#3

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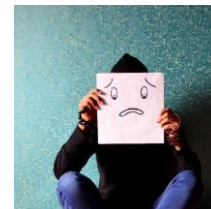
Sing: [Lord, I Need You](#)

Play "Positions": A game -demonstrate or choose a picture that shows...

1. what position does someone get into in order to propose marriage?
2. What position do you get into if you're ready to dive into a pool?
3. What position do you get into to watch TV on your couch?
4. Your favorite sports team has 5 seconds to score a final point that would turn them from losing the game to winning it. What position might you get into?
5. You're going to ask a king of a rich country for a donation to your favorite charity. What position might you get into?
6. You just broke your neighbor's window on accident. What position will you get into to tell them?
7. What position can we all take to applaud our performances?

[\[play the video at 4:05\]](#)

(Use pictures like these, printed out, or displayed on a large screen)



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Watch and discuss: <https://access.togethersmallgroups.org/pray/presentations-all/presentation-25a-bible-study-prayer-postures/>

Then think about this:

Pharisees and tax collectors frequently appear in the gospel accounts. In Jesus' day the two groups were seen virtually as opposites of each other. Pharisees were religious teachers who gave of their income to help people, while tax collectors were seen as traitors who worked with the Romans and their army to oppress people and steal their money.

The people who were listening when Jesus told the story in Luke 18:9-14 probably expected him to praise the Pharisee and judge the tax collector. Instead, he turned their expectations upside down to teach a lesson about the importance of saying, *"I'm sorry!"*

The Pharisees taught that everyone—not just the priests in the temple—should follow God's way. As a result, they built synagogues (which they used for worship and for teaching school) in each community to help the residents learn about and worship God every day. While Jesus and the Pharisees actually agreed more often than they disagreed, Jesus did sometimes criticize them for hypocrisy (teaching one thing and doing the opposite).

In this story Jesus teaches us that being close to God is not about how good we are but about how good God is. Everyone makes mistakes. The good news is that God is ready to forgive anyone who honestly says, *"I'm sorry!"*

Jesus told this story because he knew that there were people in the crowd who thought they were better than others. We must be careful that we don't make the same mistake by praying, "God, thank you that I am not like that Pharisee!"

God's grace makes it possible for us to be gracious. That is good news—because at one point or another in our lives someone will hurt us and we will hurt someone else. There will be lots of chances for us to live God's way by saying, *"I'm sorry!"*

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#4 (skipped Pray.!? session 4, going on to #5)

Play [Sign & Say](#) (stop at 2:37)

Read aloud to the group:

Saying Thank-You and Being Thankful

King Cyrus of Persia gave the exiles the right to return home and rebuild. He even gave them items that the Babylonians had taken from the temple when they destroyed it many years earlier. As grateful as they were to Cyrus, they understood that God was working through Cyrus (see Ezra 1:1-3), so their deepest thanks went to God.

The returning exiles also understood that being thankful involves more than words; we need to show our thankfulness with actions as well. The returned exiles chose to do that by rebuilding the temple so that worship could again be restored in Jerusalem. The temple was the center of their whole community, and by laying its foundation they invited all of the returned captives to make worship, faithfulness, and thanksgiving the cornerstone of their new lives in the land. So they laid the foundation with thankful hands while the priests blew trumpets and the people shouted out, *"Thanks!"*

-Barry Chance

Watch & discuss [Loud Thanks](#).

Pray -God we want to thank you now with our whole selves, for all you've done.

Make praise streamers.

Sing and dance to

- ["Holy Is The Lord"](#) (or, with signing, this version from [Rock Church Deaf Ministry](#))
- [I Thank God](#) (Maverick City Music) (can stop at 2:49)
- A requested song (optional)