

JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE PRAYER SINNER COMMUNICATE

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Mark 14:32-42

MEMORY VERSE

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, NIV*).

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To teach children the importance of prayer and that they can communicate with God through prayer.

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

That night Jesus went to Gethsemane with his disciples. This was a garden on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem. It was not unusual for Jesus to go there to pray. So, the disciples were not surprised that Jesus went there after the Last Supper. However, this prayer time was a special observance of Exodus 12:42 “Because the Lord kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honor the Lord for the generations to come”.

Knowing what was coming that night, Jesus felt the need to pray. He left eight of his disciples at the garden entrance and went with Peter, James, and John on to Gethsemane; he wanted his friends close by while he prayed.

The impact of the cross began to preoccupy Jesus. Mark describes it with the strongest language possible: “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (Mark 14:34). The prayer of Jesus shows both his humanity and his love for God, the Father, and his desire to do the Father’s will. As a man, he wanted to escape the cross and the separation from the Father that this would bring; but as the Son of God, he must carry out God’s plan.

The time for the sacrifice of Jesus was a few hours away; the horror and agony preoccupied him; he prayed an honest prayer for what he wanted: “Take this cup from me” (Mark 14:36). But, he also prayed that the Father’s will be done. The frustration and agony of Jesus was intensified when he found Peter, James, and John sleeping. They were his closest friends on earth, and he asked them to pray and keep watch. But, they could not keep this special vigil.

Again, he went away to pray and when he returned he found them asleep again.

ADAPTATION

Your children may not be accustomed to praying with much faith. Perhaps it is rare that they express their true and profound needs to God. However, there are two aspects that they can use in prayer: (1) To tell God what they want. (2) To accept the Lord's will for them. Perhaps they are only familiar with the former and not the latter. It is good for them to begin to understand that prayer has the power to change us (character, attitudes). And through it, we can express to God our wants and needs. It is also important that they know that they can recognize what the Lord's will and direction for them is through prayer.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

It is likely that most children are not in the habit of praying except maybe at meal times and before going to sleep (and many not even at these times.) This lesson is very important to emphasize the importance of prayer in their lives.

Again, Jesus is an example to follow in this regard. Point out that during his life Jesus always depended on His Father and he was in constant communication with him. Ask, "How do you think that Jesus communicated with God? Did he do it by phone, by letter, or on the Internet?" (Let them answer.) "It was through prayer, which was vital during the most difficult moments of Jesus' life."

TEACH THE LESSON

Study Mark 14:32-42 prior to the session and be ready to tell the story in your own words. Be creative when you tell the story. Emphasize the pain and difficulty that Jesus faced in this situation. Ask your children what they do when they have pain or problems in their life. (Allow time for them to respond.) Probably most turn to their parents or friends. Explain that Jesus went to God, his Father.

Emphasize the fact that Jesus was honest with God, the Father, and did not hide his feelings. Encourage your children to do the same. When we pray we should have confidence that God not only hears us but also understands us.

During the lesson you can include a short prayer. If you do, kneel down, put your hands together and pray there publicly (children learn more by example than by words.) At the end of the lesson have them pray in the same way. When you pray, use simple words that they understand.

CONNECT THE LESSON

The prayer cube

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #116. You will also need markers or regular pencils, scissors, and glue or tape. Be sure to look over this activity before class in order to make it easier to help the children complete it.

Help your children follow the instructions and make the cube correctly. Explain the steps well as the wrong cut could spoil the end result. (If you have assistants, have them first make their own cubes and thereafter help the children with the process.)

When children have finished say, "This cube reminds us of some important things we need to remember when we pray to God."

Review each of the statements on the cube explaining in the best way possible so that each of the children understand them. Let them add comments as you discuss each of the statements. Ask questions to find out whether or not they agree with what you say.

Do not forget to put each child's name on their cube to avoid confusion at the end of the class.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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If you use the system of the hearts for competition, begin by asking who learned the memory verse (probably none of them have learned it yet).

For this lesson, write the verse on the board and have the children repeat it; then erase some words and have the children say the verse including the words that were erased. Continue until you do not have any words remaining on the board. Finally ask who learned it and if they can say it, put their hearts in the assigned location.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Ask the children for their prayer requests. Ask first a girl and then a boy to pray.

Encourage

Help your children to remember the things they should take home. Thank each one for attending today's session, and encourage them to invite friends.

Invite

Share something about the next session trying to get them excited so they do not want to miss.