

JESUS PRAYED FOR HIMSELF

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

GLORY DAILY BREAD PETITIONS PRIESTLY PRAYER GLORIFY

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

John 17:1-5

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the preadolescents know that Jesus gave us an example to help us evaluate if our petitions give glory to God or not

MEMORY VERSE

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”
(Philippians 4:6-7, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Many times, the preadolescent’s prayer list is composed only of personal requests. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught us to ask for “daily bread.” However, the emphasis of that prayer was to glorify God, that his will would be done. And Jesus continues with the same theme in his priestly prayer.

It is possible that the preadolescents do not understand the meaning of Jesus’ prayer well if they do not recognise that Jesus was asking to be glorified because of the ministry he developed and his obedience to the cross.

They may believe that his request to the Father to glorify him was selfish. But if they understand that Jesus relates glory to obedience to suffering and death, they’ll see that it was not a selfish prayer. The prayers where Jesus asks for himself contrast with selfish prayers. In his priestly prayer, by praying for himself, Jesus provides us with a model of how we should pray to the Father, and what to ask from him. After studying this example, your group will be able to evaluate their personal requests and see if they honor God with them.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Since Jesus knew that he would soon die on the cross, he prayed the prayer known as “the priestly prayer.” We observe that it is composed of three parts. In verses 1-5, Jesus prays for himself. In verses 6-19 he prays for his disciples. And in verses 20-26, he prays for those who were to believe later, a category in which we’re included.

In the first five verses of the prayer, Jesus asks God to glorify him so that, in turn, he could glorify God. Jesus reminds the Father that this glory has been revealed: “I have finished the work you gave me to do” (v. 4).

Jesus Christ is the perfect revelation of the glory of God. He showed the world what God is like. Those who come to the Father through Jesus Christ share his glory. That means he changes them and transforms them so that they’re increasingly like Christ.

The cross was the glory of Jesus, because it was the fulfillment of his task. If it had not ended on the cross, Jesus’ ministry would have been incomplete. He came to earth to show God’s love to all people through his life, his teachings, his sufferings, and his death. If Jesus had not gone to the cross to die for our sins, God’s message would have been a contradiction. He would have put a limit on his love, a price that his love would not be able to pay. There is only one way to glorify God: obedience.

Jesus brought glory to God through his perfect obedience to the Father. Jesus’ request for himself must always be considered in the context of his obedience to death, so that God would be glorified.

The crucifixion was the instrument used by the Roman Empire to show tremendous shame and humiliation. What irony! Jesus used this means to show his infinite love and the glory of God. Even though many refused to see the glory of God on the cross, some did, including the ruthless Roman soldiers who witnessed Jesus’ death and the one who exclaimed: “Truly this was the Son of God” (Matthew 27:54).

Jesus recognized the power and authority that the Father had given him. However, he did not use that power for his own glory, but instead he used it in obedience to bring people closer to God.

It is an interesting cycle. God glorified the Son by giving him power and authority. Jesus glorified the Father by obediently using that power for others to know God. When people know God, they also give glory to the Father and the Son.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

It is hard to be humble

Before the session, get a trophy, a large one if possible. If you cannot get one, make one of cardboard or other materials and paint it silver or gold.

In the group, hand out Student Activity Sheet #389-A (It is hard to be humble) and ask the students to imagine that they participated in a contest or competition and won an important prize. And now they should write a short thank-you speech that they’ll deliver at the awards ceremony. After giving them a few minutes, allow some volunteers to come to the front, accept their “trophy,” and say their speech.

Say: “Have you ever met people who want to receive all the glory and honor for themselves? It is difficult to be humble. Today we’ll learn what it means to be humble like the example of Jesus.”

TEACH THE LESSON

In my own words

Say: “Today we’re talking about prayers that are selfish and those that are not. Let’s think about the prayer Jesus prayed.”

Read or have the group read the passage from John 17:1-5.

Ask: “Do you think this prayer was selfish?” (Allow them to answer.)

You will now have the honor of paraphrasing or explaining in your own words this passage. Allow enough time for them to write on the bottom of the sheet. Then, let each one read what he or she wrote.

Ask the following questions to help the students better understand the Scripture:

At the beginning of his prayer, what did Jesus ask God to do? (That he glorify him.)

What did that mean? (Some preadolescents may think that Jesus asked God to magnify or raise people’s opinions of him. Help them understand that his greatest desire was to glorify the Father.)

Jesus knew that Judas would betray him. However, before praying he said: "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him." Why do you think Jesus said that he and the Father would be glorified if Judas had gone to betray him? (This could be a mystery for the group, as it was for the disciples as well. Tell them that Jesus knew that the cross was going to be very painful and that he was going to die there. His enemies wanted that humiliation for him. However, he knew that his death would bring salvation and, in that way, he would glorify God.)

If the cross means pain, humiliation, and death, why is it seen in churches and the jewelry we wear? (The cross was the deepest show of God's love. Jesus glorified God because he obeyed him both in his life and in his death on the cross. God glorified Jesus by raising him from the dead and taking him to heaven to be with him.)

CONNECT THE LESSON

Direct line to heaven

Pass out Student Activity Sheet #389-B (Direct Line to Heaven). Help them think about the different types of prayers: those that please God, those that sadden him, those that he answers with a "yes," those that he answers with a "no," and those that he answers with "wait." Help the group think about if they cannot talk they can still pray to God. Ask: Does God always listen when we pray?"

Ask them to write their answers below each question, and then discuss them with the rest of the group.

Finally, add: "God always hears our prayers, and he is attentive to our prayers. We can speak with him at any time, place, time, and circumstances. He always listens to us. Sometimes he does not answer all our prayers the way we want him to, but he answers them in accordance with his plans, instead of the way that's most convenient for us. Therefore, we have to trust and wait on God, knowing that he always watches us, hears us, and fulfills his will in our lives because of his great love for us."

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Use this activity to present and help your group learn the memory verse. Being the second lesson of the unit, explain once again the words: "anxious," "transcends," and others that may be difficult for the preadolescents.

Use the cards with the puzzle text from the previous lesson.

In the group say: "Now we'll continue to learn the verses that tell us how to pray."

Read the verses and have the students repeat them several times.

Place the 12 cards with the written phrases on a table and mix them up. Tell students that after repeating the verse, they should put the cards in the correct order.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #389-C and #389-D and help the group connect them with the memory verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Say: "Asking is just one of several ways to pray. Other ways are to confess, ask forgiveness, thank God for all he does and gives us, and praise the Lord for how wonderful he is. We'll practice some of these prayers.

Confess - God, I apologize for...

Thanks - God, thank you for...

Ask God, please...

Praise God, you're amazing because...

End by praying for the students and thanking God for having "prayer" as the most effective means of communicating with the him.

Encourage

Encourage the group to continue praying in this way at home.

Invite

Tell the group something interesting about the next session to encourage attendance. Remind them to invite friends.