

JESUS PRAYED FOR ALL BELIEVERS

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

PRAYER GLORY UNITY TRIUNE FRATERNAL LOVE

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

John 17:20-26

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students feel confident, knowing that Jesus prayed specifically for them

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

One of the most significant experiences that preadolescents can have is to find an adult mentor to guide them, encourage them, and pray for them by name. The spiritual impact of a person and such a prayer is very important.

In the last lesson, the students discovered that Jesus prayed specifically for his disciples who lived and ministered with him for three years. He prayed aloud and in their presence, so that his joy would also be theirs. As Jesus’ disciples and current helpers, your students can put this example into practice and pray for their friends.

Throughout this lesson, they’ll be glad to know that Jesus prayed specifically for the believers of the future. That includes them and you.

In a real way about 2,000 years ago, Jesus approached them that day, encouraged them, and prayed for each one by name.

It is important that the group knows that Jesus prayed for them, and that he asked the Father that future believers be united with one another and also united with God. This unity comes only by being in Christ, that is, knowing him as personal Savior.

The preadolescents need to know that Jesus said he would give them the same glory that he had received from the Father. He prayed that they would have the courage to walk in his footsteps, that is, to live as Jesus lived.

The unity between believers and the glory he gave us has a purpose: "I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:23).

When you pray for your students, you're participating in the same prayer that Jesus prayed for them.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

In his prayer for future believers (John 17:20-26), Jesus asked for three things: unity, glory, and love.

Unity: Jesus made this request twice: "That all of them may be one" (v. 21), and "that they may be brought to complete unity" (v. 23). This unity includes three characteristics that cannot resemble a simple human agreement:

First, it would be supernatural or something that science cannot explain. This would be seen through the unity of the Father and the Son (vs. 21-22). As Christians, we're directly involved in the unity with the triune God.

Second, it would be visible or easily seen. The unity that Jesus had with the Father and desired for his disciples would show the world that he had sent his Son into the world.

And third, it would be evangelistic. The world would believe that God sent Jesus into the world upon hearing "their message" (v. 20). That Gospel had been extended by the first disciples and also by the generations of Christians that would come later.

Glory: Jesus prayed for future believers to enjoy a glorious relationship with God, following the example of his own life. That included the cross, which Jesus saw as a glory instead of defeat. It also included his obedience to the cross. That same obedience is what Jesus expected from his followers: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). It is not a new concept; however, it is difficult. A well-known preacher said, "There is no crown of glory without the anguish of the cross."

Love: Jesus prayed that the lives of future believers would be full of love. Not only a human or fraternal love, but the love of God. The love that God the Father had for Jesus, and the love of Jesus who lives in believers, is the love that "always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:7-8). The love of God creates a solid community of faith, unified and glorified. It is that love that Jesus said would identify us as Christians: "By this everyone will know that you're my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). That love would show itself to the world, and by that love the world would know that we're different.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Who is praying for you?

Pass out Student Activity Sheet #391-A (Who is praying for you?). Tell the students to answer the questions.

Do you know if someone is praying for you right now?

Who do you wish would pray for you?

Do you know of someone who prayed for you before you were born?

When finished, ask some of the group to share with the group what they wrote, as a testimony.

Say: "Today we'll learn that there was someone who prayed for each of you, long before you were born."

TEACH THE LESSON

Jesus prayed for you

Say: "This is the time to reveal the third part of Jesus' prayer. Do any of you know who Jesus prayed for in this part?" Wait for the answers.

Emphasize: "Yes, Jesus prayed for you and for me. He prayed for each one of you, for each one of us. Let's read what the prayer says."

Look at the Bible story on Student Activity Sheet #391-B (Jesus prayed for you), and read the passage from John 17:20-26.

Allow time for them to read, answer, and discuss with the group the questions found at the bottom of Student Activity Sheet #390-C.

What phrase of this prayer refers specifically to you?

In this prayer, what does Jesus ask God to give us?

Why do you think Jesus prayed this prayer?

How can this prayer affect your life?

How does it make you feel to know that Jesus prayed for you while he was still on earth?

Say: "Jesus prayed for believers in the future. That included you and those who would know Jesus because of what we'll tell them about him. How does that make you feel? What can we do so that the prayer continues to multiply?" Let the students express their feelings and ideas.

CONNECT THE LESSON

And now that?

Ask: "What things make a group united?" (Shared goals, common interests, the same friends, the same school, the same church, etc.)

"What things make a group divided?" (Fights, misunderstandings, speaking badly of others, telling unpleasant jokes, making fun of others, making others feel inferior, having prejudices, etc.)

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #390-C (And now what?) and allow time for them to read the questions and answer them on the sheet. Then they can tell the rest of the group what they wrote. Lead them to reflect on how we can put Jesus' prayer into practice in our daily lives wherever they are.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

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Take out the cards from the previous sessions with the memory verse, mix them well, repeat the text several times and provide enough time for the students to assemble the puzzles on the table. If there are some who know it by memory, ask for volunteers to write it on the board. You can bring a fruit, such as an apple or orange, to reward students (do not forget to bring paper towels or napkins to clean their hands).

Talk to the pastor and ask him to give the students the opportunity to recite the verses of the different units during worship services.

If you wish, at the end of the year you can invite parents to attend the session, and have the preadolescents recite all the verses together. Parents should be pleased to see their children participate and learn the Word of God.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Ask them to pray for you, and then finish by you praying for them.

Encourage

Encourage your students to keep praying. Emphasize how significant prayer should be to them, and that since Jesus gave it so much importance, they should as well. Prayer keeps us connected with the Lord. How happy it should make us to know that there is someone who listens to us all the time and intercedes for us!

Invite

As they depart tell the group the next session is the beginning of a new unit and encourage them to attend. Tell them this is a good time for new members to join the group.