

JESUS PRAYS BEFORE DECIDING

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

PRAY DECIDE DECISION ANSWER

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 6:12-16

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children learn to pray before making decisions.

MEMORY VERSE

"I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer" (Psalm 17:6, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Prayer was explicitly modeled by Jesus who taught his disciples to pray. Each of the four Gospels record Jesus spending time in prayer. He spent time alone, even at night, praying. Jesus prayed before the critical moments of his ministry, such as when he was choosing his apostles (Luke 6:12-13). We observe that his whole life was a prayer because he was in continual communion with his Father. In the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, Jesus' prayers show his committed relationship with the Father (John 17). Jesus' prayers display his devotion to the redemptive intentions of the Father.

Prayer is the cornerstone of the lives of Christians. Through it, our communication and relationship with God is nurtured and strengthened. Children should exercise the habit of prayer from an early age. It is sad to see that many people consider prayer synonymous with boredom, or that they simply do not know what to say to God.

Use these lessons to teach your group how important it is to talk to the Lord, following Jesus' example, approaching the Father with reverence, and finding in him the answers for all our needs.

It is difficult for some children to think about the needs of others. Suggest that they pray asking God to help them remember to share, instead of being selfish; that it is important to be friendly instead of discourteous; and that being kind will help them have more friends.

Elementary-aged children will have to make more and more decisions. Therefore, encourage them to pray and ask for God's direction to know how to act.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Luke 6:12-16. This passage reminds us that Jesus' ministry revolved around prayer. The evangelist Luke was careful to include this important aspect in his record of the Master's life. Jesus was baptized after a time of prayer (3:21); when he was surrounded by crowds, after ministering he retired to pray (5:16); before choosing his twelve disciples he spent time in prayer (6:12); when he climbed the mountain of transfiguration he went to pray (9:28).

Jesus spent time in communion with God before choosing his disciples. He knew that the decision was of the utmost importance, because they would be the basis of the church. They would be responsible for bringing the message of salvation to the whole world. Jesus knew that spending time alone with his Father, far from the distractions of the world, was the best thing before making such a decision.

The passage does not say that Jesus went before the Father and prayed hastily to ask for his direction. It also does not say that Jesus tried to pray all night and could not do it. Rather we are told that Jesus went away to that hill to spend the whole night talking with his Father. It was a time of communion with God, when his thoughts became like those of the Father, and he received the help he needed to make the right decision.

Jesus taught us not to make decisions before consulting with our heavenly Father. However small the decision we have ahead, it is always better to ask for God's guidance and wisdom to make the right decision.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Decisions

For this activity, you will need a bag of sweets/ candies of two different colors.

Show the sweets to your children and ask them to choose one of the color they prefer to take home with them at the end of the session. Allow everyone to come forward and take the candy of his or her choice.

Ask them to save it, and ask if it was difficult to choose the correct color. Tell them that many times the decisions we make are simple and we do not need to think too much. However, there are other decisions that are much more important. Through this biblical story, God wants to teach us to ask for his advice before deciding.

My prayer book

Give each child cardboard or poster board and four white pieces of paper. Ask them to fold the card in half and write on the front, "My prayer book." Fold the paper in half, and put them inside the cardboard. Fasten or stick the sheets along the fold to make a notebook. Allow time for your children to write their name there and decorate the outside of their prayer books. Keep them in the room to use during this unit.

TEACH THE LESSON

Jesus prays before making a big decision

"I need help," thought Jesus. "Many people want to know God, and I have to train some men to help me do that job. Who do I choose?"

Crowds of people followed Jesus everywhere. They wanted to hear his teachings and know how to live to please God. Later, some of these people could be leaders who would teach others.

"This decision is important and there is only one way I can make it," thought Jesus. "I will ask my Father to help me decide."

The decision was so important that Jesus went alone to a mountain to pray. Do you know how much time he spent praying?

All night! While the people were sleeping, he prayed. Perhaps he began to pray about nine o'clock at night, and when midnight came, he continued to pray. At two o'clock in the morning, Jesus was still praying, and this continued until four in the morning. "Father, whom should I choose?" he asked in prayer.

Then, Jesus knew who he should choose and prayed for each one.

He prayed for Simon Peter. Peter would be strong as a rock and would preach to many people about the kingdom of God.

Then he prayed for Andrew, Peter's brother. Andrew was the one who brought Peter to know Jesus. Surely, he was going to guide many other people to know Jesus.

When he prayed for James and John, he prayed for Peter again. Peter, James and John were going to be Jesus' best friends. Then he prayed for Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas.

Among the twelve apostles there was another James and another Simon, so Jesus prayed for them too.

Also, he prayed for two men called Judas. One would be a faithful follower, but the other would one day betray Jesus and deliver him to his enemies.

When it was already morning, perhaps like seven or eight, Jesus came down from the mountain to look for the men that God had chosen for this special work.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Pray before deciding

For this activity, you will need paper fasteners with two legs and scissors.

Hand out the worksheets for this session, and have the children cut out the three circles following the contours.

Read the instructions together, and explain in detail each of the steps to do the activity. After trimming the circles, they should place the circle of the title on the top, the circle of words in the middle and the circle of figures below, and join them in the center with the paper fastener. Make sure everyone follows the instructions so the circles spin easily.

As they work, tell them:

Jesus prayed before making important decisions. God wants us to pray and ask for wisdom before deciding.

It is important to pray

Have the children get the prayer books they made at the beginning of the session. Ask them to write down the title of the lesson and then draw or write an important decision for which they should pray. Then, talk with them about the importance of making wise decisions in light of God's Word.

Tell them they will use the prayer books during the next sessions but they can take them home when they finish the unit.

Make sure Student Activity Sheets #190-A and #190-B are printed back to back. Give the children Student Activity Sheets #190-A and #190-B. Use this activity to help them understand the importance of praying before deciding.

Encourage them to pray during the week when they have to make decisions.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Write the memory verse on a piece of poster board, and show it to your children. Teach them the following gestures to accompany each phrase of the verse, as they review it:

I call on you (place your hands around your mouth as if calling someone), my God (point above); for you will answer me (point to yourself), turn your ear to me (put a hand behind your ear), and hear my prayer (point to your mouth) Psalm 17:6.

Guide your children to make these gestures each time they repeat the memory verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Lead the group to sing a song about prayer. Ask the children to give their prayer needs. Then, have some volunteers offer short

prayers to conclude.

Encourage

Encourage to pray at home too.

Invite

Remind the students about the next session and encourage them to attend. Tell their friends are also welcome.