



Confirmation Prayer Retreat

Session 1: The Lord's Prayer

SUPPLIES Needed: TV and DVD player; Movie Clip from "Catch Me If You Can"; Handout

TELL

- One of the things that we've been doing during this Confirmation year is learning how to think.
- We've been learning about what symbols the Hebrew people used, like, for instance, water was a symbol for what? (chaos)
- We've identified the types of people who swirled around Jesus: Pharisees, the crowd, the disciples.
- We've defined specific words like sin, baptism, anointed and repentance.
- Most of these things that we've learned can be summarized as this: Analysis.
- Analysis means, very simply, to break something into smaller parts.
- So we're going to continue our analysis during this retreat. We're taking the concept of prayer and will be breaking it into 4 smaller components.
- For our first session, we're going to analyze the Lord's prayer.
- But first we're going to watch a very short movie clip from a movie called "Catch me if you can." The movie is about a FBI agent chasing a Con man. We're going to watch a clip where the con-man, "Frank," is pretending to be a doctor. He's dating a woman and is eating at her parent's house when he's asked to open the meal with a prayer. Let's see how he deals with this situation.

WATCH VIDEO Clip

ASK

- So do you think Frank prayed the right way? Why?
- More specifically, do you think Frank prayed at all?

TELL

- I'd argue, not that Frank prayed wrongly, but that he didn't pray at all.
- But how would we be able to make that argument?
- Let's look at a scripture passage where Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray.

READ

(from The Message) Matthew 6:5 "And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat? 6 Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace. 7 The world is

full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. 8 Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. 9 With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

(NRSV)

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. “

ASK

- Do you notice that the prayer is a little bit different than what we say in worship? What differences do you notice?
- What images come to mind when Jesus says in verse 5, “Don’t turn [prayer] into a theatrical production”? (Jesus here is talking about the Pharisees who would pray for long periods of time on street corners)
 - Have you ever experienced someone praying before and thought “They’re just showing off” or “they don’t really mean what they are saying”?
- In verse 6, what does Jesus tell his disciples to do? (go find a quiet, secluded place)
- And then once they are in a quiet, secluded place, what will happen? (the focus will switch from you to God)

TELL

- So to summarize what Jesus is doing here, he’s basically telling the disciples, “Don’t pray like these other people tell you to pray. They are trying to get you do it their way so that they’ll have more power and influence. Instead pray this way.” And then he gives what we now call “The Lord’s Prayer.”
- So as we talk about the Lord’s Prayer today, think of it from two different perspectives (I don’t think these two perspectives are in disagreement).
 - 1. It’s a mighty fine prayer to pray as is. No changes or adjustments are needed.
 - 2. It’s a model that incorporates a number of components of prayer that we can think of as an outline to help us learn how to pray on our own.
- We’re going to look at those components now.
- As a warm-up, we’re going to do a little bit of a matching game: Here’s the hand-out.

DO Hand-out sheet

ASK

- So for line a, what components did you add?
- Ask same question for lines a,b,c,d,e,and f.

Go back over the verses and components:

- *Our Father* (**Intro**/who are you addressing?) – Names for God. All sorts of names we can use.

- *Hallowed be your name* (**praise** – telling God that God’s doing a good job)
 - Why would we do this? Because it helps us practice seeing how God is still as work.
 - It also helps us to give God credit when we otherwise might not.
- *v10: Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* (**inviting God into you, into your life**).
 - God’s kingdom is wherever God is allowed to be king. God will not force God’s kingdom upon us, so we have to invite the kingdom to be part of us.
 - One way to invite God in is by naming a problem and then telling God, I want your kingdom here, in this problem.
 - I invite you into this problem.
 - Help me to know your will.
- *v11: Give us this day our daily bread* (**petitioning/asking**)
 - We can take this request to be literal (give us bread)
 - We can also understand this request to be about anything that we think we want or need.
- *v12: Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors* (Subset of **petitioning. Asking** for forgiveness/asking to remove obstacles that are in the way between God and I and between me and others)
 - Forgiveness cannot be overrated. It’s a freeing exercise. But difficult. That’s why we need to experience it/receive it before we can offer it.
- *v13: Do not bring us to a time of trial* (**Surrender**. This line assumes that we are letting God lead (bring) us to a destination.)
 - This line reminds me of Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus says, “Take this cup from me.” God doesn’t take the cup away, and yet, Jesus follows through.
 - What good is listening to God if we don’t do what we hear?
 - We have to let go of our way and agree to do it God’s way.

If there’s time...

- Using what we’ve talked about and using the components on this handout as an outline, write out the Lord’s prayer using your own language (not even necessarily line for line, but trying to incorporate the five components we’ve talked about). Think about being willing to share your prayer with the class when we come back together.

DO Lord’s Prayer Activity

ASK/TELL

- Before we share our prayers, were there certain parts that were harder to write/think about than other parts?
- What parts did you find to be easier? Harder?

- Who is willing to read their prayer?

DO Sharing

TELL

- So in the movie, according to the outline Jesus gives us, the person doesn't pray at all.
- The character, Frank, doesn't address God, he doesn't give praise, he doesn't petition, he doesn't surrender his will or invite God into his life or way of living. So its not that he prayed wrong, it's that he didn't pray at all.
- We share these components with you, not so that you can think about whether someone else is praying wrongly or if you're praying wrongly, but so that you might use the gift of prayer more fully than before.
- Also, as we continue to talk about prayer and do activities today, keep these components in mind.

This is the end of session 1.

Let's take a ___ minute break.

Be back here at <insert time>.