

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Read and discuss the scripture passage of Jesus teaching the disciples how to pray
- Highlight and explain the different components of the Lord’s Prayer (as an outline for prayer)
- Have each student write their own prayer based on the outline of the Lord’s prayer

Materials needed:

1. Movie clip (available on rfour.org) from *Catch Me If You Can*
2. Electronics that show the video clip
3. For activity
 - a. Print the two handouts located at end of lesson
 - b. Have writing utensils – one per person in the class.

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- One of the things we do every class is ask and answer the opening question at the beginning of class – because it helps us 1. Learn more about each other and 2. Helps “warm us up” for some of the ideas in the upcoming lesson. So we’re going to do that now.
- So here’s the opening question for today’s class. I [the teacher] will ask the question and then to give you some time to think of an answer, I will answer first.
- Once I answer the question, we’ll go around the circle and each of us will answer.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- ***Here’s this week’s question:*** What is something that you’re pretty sure you can improve at doing, if you took the time to practice doing it?

TRANSITION TO VIDEO CLIP

- Last class, we started a new session about prayer.
- In that class, we read the story of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest.
- Mostly what we focused on in that story were (some of) the benefits of praying, even when we’re in a really bad spot.

- In that story, we saw Jesus ask for God’s direction about what to do.
- And we see Jesus trust God’s response.
- Because Jesus trusted God’s response, then Jesus was not afraid of the crowd that came to arrest him.
- And, instead of attacking the crowd like his disciples did, Jesus healed his enemy; he healed the crowd member who his disciples attacked.
- In today’s class, though, we’re going to look more at the “how” part of praying.
- Because, just like the answers you gave to the opening question, prayer is also something that we can practice and improve upon when we practice.
- To help us with discussing and thinking about today’s scripture story, let’s watch a movie clip.
- The clip is from the movie “Catch Me If You Can.”
- Frank Abernacke, played by Leonardo DiCaprio, is a con-man
- In the scene we’re about to watch, Frank is in Louisiana, meeting his girlfriend’s parents for the first time.
- It happens pretty quickly at the start of the clip, so I’m going to explain it real quick. Frank mentions that he’s a Methodist (a denomination of Christianity), but he’s lying about that – because he lies about just about everything.
- Let’s see what happens after he says he’s a Christian.

WATCH VIDEO CLIP

ASK

- As a Christian, what does Frank’s girlfriend’s dad expect Frank to be able to do? (Be able to pray)
- And, how do you think Frank did?
- Do you think Frank actually prayed? Why or why not?
- How about you? Would you want to be put in that position? To have to pray out loud in front of and for a bunch of people?
- How do you think you would do in that situation?

TELL

- To be fair to Frank, trying is better than not trying.
- But, just like any other activity that we do, prayer is something that can be improved upon as we learn about it and practice it.
- In today’s scripture passage, Jesus tells his disciples what some of those things are that they (and we) can practice when they pray.
- Part of what Jesus tells them will sound pretty familiar, I think, since it becomes what we call “The Lord’s Prayer”
- Let’s see what Jesus has to say

READ **Matthew 6:5-15** (*recommendation: Have class read it aloud; one person per verse*)

5“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 6But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is

in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9“Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11Give us this day our daily bread. 12And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13And do not bring us to the time

of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. 14For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; 15but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

ASK

- In verse 5, what does Jesus say *not* to do? (basically, he says to not use prayer as a way to show-off in front of others)
- In verse 6, what does Jesus say to do instead? (pray in secret – in other words, make a time and place for praying where you won’t be interrupted very much)
- In verse 7, what else does Jesus say to avoid? (empty phrases; saying words that sound good, but don’t really convey any meaning)
- Verse 9-15 is what we base the Lord’s prayer on. Do you see any differences?
 - a) vv 12 “...as we also have forgiven our debtors,” we say as “...as we forgive our debtors”
 - b) vv 13 “...do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one,” we say as “...and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”
 - c) vv 14 and 15 – we don’t say at all. Instead, we end the prayer with “For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, Amen.”

TELL

- As we talk about the Lord’s Prayer today, let’s think about it from two different perspectives (and there’s no reason to believe that these two perspectives are in disagreement even though they are different).
 1. The Lord’s Prayer is a mighty fine prayer to pray, exactly as it is.
 2. The Lord’s Prayer is a model (or an outline) that shows us what components are in a prayer – which helps us learn how to pray with our own words.
- I think #1 is pretty self-explanatory, but I do want to share how much I appreciate that shared language – especially when I meet people from other churches and we can all pray that prayer together even though we’ve just met each other.
- let’s focus on #2: The components of the Lord’s prayer
- **[Pass out the handout to students]**
- Looking at the Lord’s prayer as an outline, the first thing we see is that Jesus addresses God.
- If we think back to the video clip, Frank doesn’t address anybody. He just starts saying words.
- Jesus, though, is letting God know that he, Jesus, is talking to God.
- This is no different than saying “Hello” when you see someone in the morning or when you call them on the phone.
- In that first greeting, though, Jesus also offers praise. “Hallowed be your name” is an old-fashioned way of saying, “You are pretty awesome”
- The reason for praise isn’t because God needs it, but because it is a reminder to us that we are addressing a higher power that we care about, love or, at the very least, respect.
- This becomes important to remember in the next two verses because that’s where Jesus encourages us to invite

God's influence into our lives. "Your Kingdom come and your will be done" is an invitation that needs our cooperation to become true.

- And, if we don't think that God is awesome, then why would we seek to know and then do God's will?
- Then in verse 11, we ask God to help provide to us what we need. Again, this is along the lines of "You are a higher power, and I'm asking for your help."
- Another thing that Jesus is asking God for help with is forgiveness. In fact, forgiveness seems to be the main focus of the prayer: Forgive, forgive, forgive.
- I suspect (derived from my own life experience) that it is the difficulty of forgiving and how much it affects how we interact with others that causes Jesus to focus on it so much.
- And, why Jesus wants us to know that we don't manufacture forgiveness on our own, but that we receive it (in prayer) so that we can share it.
- Finally, there is the line that is about direction (*13 And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.*) – In other words, Jesus is saying "God, help us to know your directions for us and help us not get confused and think someone else's directions are your directions.""

EXPLAIN ACTIVITY

- So now that we have an outline for prayer from Jesus – thank you, Jesus! – let's use that outline to re-write the Lord's Prayer using our own words.
- We'll have about 7 to 10 minutes to do this using the prompts on the handout you received earlier.
- Remember, this is just practice – there isn't a right or wrong way to do this – but I do hope you give it a try.
- After we're done with the practice, we'll invite you to share some or all of what you wrote. You will NOT have to share, though. But it'll be great if you do.
- Any questions?
- **[Note to teachers:** *Write your own Lord's Prayer during this time and then share it during the sharing time as a way to model your own attempts to the class*]

DO 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 share their prayer?

DO Sharing

TELL

- Thank you for trying this activity and thank you to those who shared!
- So in the movie, Frank didn't really know how to pray.
- But he tried.
- And today, you tried too!
- And, I hope that you keep trying – maybe even by using this outline as a guide to writing or saying a daily prayer, either in the morning or at night.

- And just like it took us just 5 minutes or so to do today, it only needs to take that long every day, especially if you're just trying it out and trying to get used to it.
- Then, as you get more comfortable with the practice of praying, the prayer time might go longer because you'll want it to go longer.
- It's like learning a sport, in some ways. Just like when you first start running, you can only go so far at first before you have to stop.
- But if you keep practicing, then you can run farther each time.
- Praying is similar: It gets easier and makes more sense the more you practice it.
- Next class we'll talk about one other component about prayer that we didn't talk too much about today.
- Thank you again for your willingness to do this today!

CLOSING PRAYER

See next page for Lord's Prayer Handouts

The 5 Components of *The Lord's Prayer*

- *Our Father*
 - This is the **GREETING** part of the prayer. Who are you addressing? Say the name of who you are addressing.
 - Also, by saying hi and God's name, you're telling yourself that this is a conversation, not a demand or obligation.
- *Hallowed be your name*
 - This is giving **PRAISE** to God. Giving praise to God is just like giving praise to others. Tell God what you think God has or is doing well.
 - Also, consider listing why you respect and/or like and/or love God.
 - The reason for praise is not because God is insecure and needs to be reminded of God's greatness. The reason for praising God is because it is a way for you to remind yourself of who God is. This is a helpful thing to keep in mind once you get into the other parts of prayer.
- *Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*
 - This is the **INVITATION**, where we invite God into our lives.
 - God's kingdom is wherever we allow God to be king.
 - In other words, God's will cannot be done if we do not do it.
- *Give us this day our daily bread*
 - This is the part where we **ASK FOR HELP** and in so doing, it helps to admit that we can't do these things on our own.
 - Ask God for what you think you need or what you want – and then remember to give time to listen for a response.
- *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*
 - This is also part of the **ASK FOR HELP** section, but because forgiveness is so important, it gets its own section within the ASK FOR HELP section.
 - Forgiveness cannot be overrated. It's a freeing exercise. But incredibly difficult. That's why we need to experience it/receive it before we can offer it.
 - We can talk in generalities here, but the more specific you are in naming the issues you see/feel between you and God or between you and others -- the better you'll be able to receive or offer the forgiveness.
- *And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. "*
 - This is the part where we **SEEK GOD'S DIRECTION** with the idea that we want to follow God's directions and not the directions of others (summarized as "the evil one").
 - This section is difficult to follow through with because it requires us to trust that God's direction is better than our own directions. Think of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane agreeing to not do his own will, but God's will. That was *tough*.
 - Also, this is why it's helpful to remind ourselves at the beginning of the prayer that God is a higher power that we respect and trust – if we didn't remind ourselves of this, then why would we be seeking or trusting God's direction in the first place?
 - A good way to seek God's direction is by naming a problem and then telling God, "What do you think I should do, here?"

Rewriting the Lord's Prayer Handout

Using the components from the Lord's Prayer, rewrite the Lord's Prayer by filling in each section on the page with your own words. Be honest and playful, just like you would in a conversation with a friend.

Greet God in your own words:

Let God know what you like or respect about God:

Tell God that God is welcome in your life (and maybe why):

Ask God for help with problems / ask God for help with forgiveness:

Ask God to help with being able to tell what God's directions are for you

Give thanks and say goodbye