

I Can Pray to Heavenly Father

PURPOSE

To help each child learn how to pray to Heavenly Father and know that he will listen.

PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully study Daniel 6. See also *Gospel Principles* (31110), chapter 8.
 2. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible.
 - b. Picture 1-9, Morning Prayer (62310); picture 1-10, Family Prayer (62275); picture 1-14, Daniel in the Lions' Den (Gospel Art Picture Kit 117; 62096); picture 1-15, Blessing the Food.
 3. Make the necessary preparations for any Enrichment Activities you want to use.
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LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Attention Activity

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Have the child who gave the opening prayer remain standing in front of the class. Remind the children that in the last lesson they learned that we lived with Heavenly Father before we were born. Heavenly Father has sent us down to earth.

- How can we talk to Heavenly Father while we are on the earth?
- Who was (name of the child who gave the prayer) talking to when he (or she) prayed?

Help the children realize that when we pray we are actually talking with Heavenly Father.

We can pray to Heavenly Father

Bear your testimony that even though we cannot see him, we can pray to Heavenly Father and he will listen to our prayers.

Show picture 1-9, Morning Prayer.

- What is this girl doing?
- Who is she talking to?
- What do you think this girl might be saying to Heavenly Father?

Use picture 1-9, Morning Prayer; picture 1-10, Family Prayer; and picture 1-15, Blessing the Food, as you discuss with the children the times when we pray. Explain that we can pray to Heavenly Father whenever we want; the most common times are when we wake up and when we go to bed, at mealtimes, with our families, and when we need special help. Let the children hold the appropriate pictures as you discuss them.

Jesus Christ taught us to pray to Heavenly Father

Explain that Jesus has taught us to do certain things when we pray. As we get ready to pray, we think about Heavenly Father.

- What do we do with our arms when we pray?
- What do we do with our heads and our eyes when we pray?

Activity

Have the children copy your actions as you demonstrate how to get ready to pray by folding your arms, bowing your head, and closing your eyes. You could then ask a child to stand in front of the class, and have the other children follow his or her actions as he or she shows how to get ready to pray.

Song

With the children, sing or say the words to "A Prayer Song" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 22) several times. Do the actions suggested by the words of the song.

We bow our heads in prayer today,
We fold our arms together,
Then close our eyes, and while we pray
We talk to Heavenly Father.

- What else can we do to get ready to pray?

Explain that at home, when we say our own or family prayers, we not only fold our arms, bow our heads, and close our eyes, but often we also kneel.

Song

Explain that there are special things we say when we pray. Sing or say the words to the second verse of "I Pray in Faith" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 14) several times. Have the children hold up one finger for each of the four special things we say when we pray.

I begin by saying "Dear Heavenly Father";
I thank him for blessings he sends;
Then humbly I ask him for things that I need,
In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

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- How do we begin our prayers?
- What could we thank Heavenly Father for?
- What could we ask Heavenly Father for?
- How do we end our prayers?

Heavenly Father listens to us when we pray

Story

Show picture 1-14, Daniel in the Lions' Den. Tell the story from Daniel 6. Read aloud the first part of verse 22 to explain why Daniel was not hurt while he was in the lions' den.

Explain that Daniel wanted to pray because it was a commandment from Heavenly Father and also because he wanted to thank Heavenly Father for his blessings.

- What did the king do because Daniel prayed? (See Daniel 6:16.)
- What happened to Daniel in the lions' den? (See Daniel 6:22.)
- How do you know that Heavenly Father listened to Daniel's prayer? (See Daniel 6:23.)

Testimony

Tell of a time when Heavenly Father listened to your prayers. Ask the children to share any experiences they have had with prayer.

Tell the children how thankful you are that we can pray to Heavenly Father, and assure them that Heavenly Father listens to us when we pray.

When you ask a child to say the closing prayer, review how we prepare to pray.

- What shall we do to get ready to pray? (Fold our arms, bow our heads, and close our eyes.)
- What is the first thing (child's name) should say in the prayer?
- What could (child's name) thank Heavenly Father for?
- What could (child's name) ask Heavenly Father for?
- How should (child's name) end the prayer?

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Choose some of these activities to use during the lesson.

1. Toss a soft object, such as a beanbag or ball, to the children. After each child catches the object, ask him or her to complete the sentence "When I pray, I can thank Heavenly Father for _____." The child might answer, "My family." After each child has had a turn, repeat the activity and have the children name things they can ask Heavenly Father for when they pray. You could show pictures to help them think of ideas.

2. Sing or say the words to "A Song of Thanks" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 20), doing the actions indicated below:
Thank thee for the world so sweet (*make arms into a circle to represent world*);
Thank thee for the food we eat (*pretend to put food in mouth*);
Thank thee for the birds that sing (*bring fingers and thumb together to mimic a bird's beak*);
Thank thee, God, for everything (*spread arms wide*)!
(From *First Year Music* by Hollis and Dann. © 1957 by D. C. Heath and Company. Reprinted by permission.)
 3. Recite the verse "I Am Thankful for My Eyes," pointing to the parts of the body as they are mentioned:
I am thankful for my eyes,
My ears, my mouth and nose;
Thankful for my hands and arms,
My legs, my feet and toes.
(Adapted from a verse by Lucy Picco.)
 4. Have the children dramatize the story of Daniel in the lions' den. You could bring simple costumes. If you do not want to act out the entire story, have the children pretend to be growling lions, and then have them close their mouths as if the angel shut them.
 5. Sing or say the words to "Thanks to Our Father" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 20) or "We Bow Our Heads" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 25).
 6. Have the children draw pictures of things they can thank Heavenly Father for when they pray. Write *When I pray, I can thank Heavenly Father for:* on each picture.
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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

1. Remind the children that when we pray we are talking to Heavenly Father, who loves us and listens to us. Help the children say the following verse:
I love my Heavenly Father;
I thank him when I pray.
My Heavenly Father loves me;
He hears the things I say.
2. Help the children say one or both of the following verses, demonstrating the appropriate actions:
Our arms we fold, our heads we bow,
Our eyes we close, we're ready now.

We fold our arms and bow our heads
And listen while the prayer is said.
3. Trace around each child's hand on a piece of paper. Talk about what we should do with our arms and hands while we pray. Let the children color their hand tracings. Label each picture with the child's name.