

Lesson  
**34**

# We Can Pray to Heavenly Father

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**Purpose** To strengthen each child's desire to pray to Heavenly Father as Jesus Christ did.

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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study 3 Nephi 17 through 19.
  2. Prepare to sing or say the words to "I Thank Thee, Dear Father" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 7).
  3. Prepare a sheet of paper for each child as follows:

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| I Thank Thee | I Ask Thee |
|--------------|------------|

4. Materials needed:
  - a. A Book of Mormon.
  - b. A pencil or crayon for each child.
  - c. Picture 3-60, Girl Praying (62310); and picture 3-61, Jesus Praying with the Nephites (62542).
5. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities that you will be using.

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**Suggested Lesson Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Follow up with the children if you encouraged them to do something during the week.

**We Can Talk with Our Heavenly Father**

- Attention activity
- Display picture 3-60, Girl Praying.
- How can we talk with our Heavenly Father?
  - Why do we pray to our Heavenly Father?
  - When can we pray to our Heavenly Father?

Because Heavenly Father loves us so much, he has made it possible for us to talk with him. He wants us to thank him for our blessings. He also wants us to ask for his help whenever we need it.

### **We Can Thank Our Heavenly Father**

Discussion

Explain that when we pray, we should thank Heavenly Father for our blessings.

- What are some blessings Heavenly Father has given us that we can thank him for? (Responses could include our homes, our families, the beautiful world, food, and clothing.)

When we talk to Heavenly Father, we use special words. When we thank him, we say, "We thank thee."

Allow the children to tell the class how they would thank Heavenly Father for a specific blessing. Ask each child to think of something to thank Heavenly Father for, using the words *I thank thee*.

Story

Have the children listen while you tell in your own words the following story about Jean and how she remembered to thank Heavenly Father:

It was a time of war in England. It was dark and Jean was frightened. Her grandmother lived in a small village near London, and Jean was on her way to visit her. She had to pedal her bike for two miles to reach the main road. Jean prayed with all her heart that she might be safe.

As she pedaled her bike and prayed, a strong cold wind almost took her breath away. Again Jean prayed for safety and the ability to see the way.

Suddenly a light appeared over the hill. Jean pedaled toward the light. The light stayed in front of her for the rest of the way.

Jean was very thankful. She knew Heavenly Father had answered her prayer. Whenever she was reminded of it, she thanked Heavenly Father again. (See Lucile C. Reading, "The Light," *Children's Friend*, Aug. 1965, p. 45.)

Emphasize that just as Jean remembered to thank Heavenly Father, each of us should remember to thank him for all that he gives us and for the help we receive.

Song and discussion

Sing or say with the children the words to the first verse of "I Thank Thee, Dear Father."

I thank thee, dear Father in heaven above,  
For thy goodness and mercy, thy kindness and love.  
I thank thee for home, friends, and parents so dear,  
And for ev'ry blessing that I enjoy here.

Ask the children to share other blessings for which they have thanked Heavenly Father.

### **We Can Ask Heavenly Father for Help**

Picture and testimony

Point to picture 3-60, Girl Praying.

Bear your testimony that no matter what kind of problem we have, we can ask Heavenly Father for help whenever we need it.

- What are some of the things we can ask Heavenly Father to help us with?

(Allow time for the children to think. Responses could include help with giving a talk or doing schoolwork, help in understanding and learning to obey the commandments, special protection, and help to get well.)

Have the children tell of times when they prayed for someone else, such as family members, friends, or neighbors.

Special words we use when we ask Heavenly Father for help are *I ask thee*. Have the children repeat these words.

Song

Sing or say the words to the second verse of "I Thank Thee, Dear Father." Ask the children to listen to the words and tell what they might ask Heavenly Father for.

Help me to be good, kind, and gentle today,  
And mind what my father and mother shall say.  
In the dear name of Jesus, so loving and mild,  
I ask thee to bless me and keep me thy child.

### **We Should Pray Often, As Jesus Christ Did**

Teacher presentation

Point out that Jesus Christ prayed to Heavenly Father many times when he lived on the earth. After his resurrection, he also prayed to Heavenly Father. When Jesus visited the Nephite people, he taught them and blessed them. He also prayed for the people and taught them that they should pray too.

Picture

Show picture 3-61, Jesus Praying with the Nephites.

Explain that the Book of Mormon tells us that Jesus Christ gathered the people around him and had them kneel down. When they had knelt on the ground, he also knelt and prayed to Heavenly Father. He gave such a beautiful prayer that the people were filled with joy when they heard his words.

After Jesus Christ had taught them many wonderful things, he taught them that they should pray as he did.

Scripture discussion

Read 3 Nephi 18:16.

- What does this verse of scripture tell us that Jesus Christ taught the Nephite people? (He taught them to pray.)

Explain that Jesus Christ left the Nephite people, but he returned a second time. When he returned, he prayed again to Heavenly Father to thank him for helping his Nephite disciples. He also asked Heavenly Father to bless the people. Jesus Christ prayed many times while he was with the Nephites. Some of his prayers are recorded in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon tells us that some of the prayers that he gave were so beautiful that they could not be written down.

Explain that each of us should do as Jesus Christ taught the Nephites and pray often to Heavenly Father.

- When can we pray to Heavenly Father? (Allow responses, and discuss the different times the children can pray, including each morning and night, at mealtimes, with their families, or whenever they have problems or need special help.)
- What special words do we use when we talk to Heavenly Father?

Have the children repeat “I thank thee” and “I ask thee.” Encourage the children to use other proper language for prayer. They might practice using “thee,” “thou,” and “thine.”

### Summary

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|-------------------|--|
| Activity          | Give the children the papers you have prepared and a pencil or crayon. Ask each child to draw a picture on each half of the paper showing what he is grateful for and what he would pray for.  |
| Teacher testimony | Share your testimony of prayer with the children. Emphasize that it is a great blessing to be able to pray to Heavenly Father to thank him and ask him for help. Invite the children to say their prayers daily, and remind them that they can pray anytime and in any place that they want to.<br><br>In preparation for the closing prayer, have the children suggest things that the person giving the prayer might thank Heavenly Father for. Also have them suggest things they might ask for.<br><br>Give the closing prayer yourself, remembering to use the ideas the class has suggested. |

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### Enrichment Activities

Choose from the following activities those that will work best for your children. You can use them in the lesson itself or as a review or summary. For additional guidance, see “Class Time” in “Helps for the Teacher.”

1. Recite the following poem, doing the actions. Then repeat it with the children, doing the actions.

We thank thee, God, for sunshine bright, (arms up, fingers touching to make a sun)

For birds that sing in morning light, (arms outstretched as birds flying)

For happy children everywhere, (smile)

And for Heavenly Father’s loving care. (head bowed, hands folded, as for prayer)

2. Tell in your own words the following story of how a little boy’s prayer was answered.

An eight-year-old boy was on the operating table in a hospital. His parents had died, but he had learned to pray. He knew the operation was serious. He asked the doctor who was going to operate on him, “Doctor, before you begin to operate, won’t you pray for me?” The surgeon looked at the boy amazed and said, “Why, I can’t pray for you.”

Then the little fellow asked the other doctors who were helping, and they each replied in the same way. Then the boy said, “If you won’t pray for me, won’t you please wait while I pray for myself?” He got up on the operating table on his knees, folded his hands, and said, “Heavenly Father, I am only a little orphan boy, but I am awful sick and these doctors are going to operate. Please help them to do it right. And now, Heavenly Father, if thou wilt make me well, I will be a good boy. Thank you for making me well.”

When he finished praying, there were tears in the eyes of the doctors and nurses. The boy lay down on the table and said, “Now I am ready.” (Adapted

from George Albert Smith, *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, sel. Preston Nibley [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1948], pp. 144–45.)

3. Make a one-week prayer chart for each child on one half of a piece of paper so that he can mark it morning and night when he says his prayers. On the other half of the paper, have each child draw a picture of himself praying. Invite each child to place his prayer chart in his home where he can see it and remember to mark it morning and night.
4. Review with the children the first article of faith.