

# Jesus Christ Teaches about Prayer

## Lesson 11

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**Purpose** To help each child gain the desire to have daily personal prayer.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study Matthew 6:5–13 (note the Joseph Smith Translation in footnote a of verse 13), 7:7–11, and Alma 34:19–27. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture accounts (see “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii).
2. Additional readings: Matthew 4:2, particularly footnote c; 14:23; 26:36–46; Luke 9:28–29; 11:2–4, 9–13; John 17; 3 Nephi 14:7–12; 17:14–21; 18:16.
3. Select from the discussion questions and enrichment activities those that will best help the children in your class achieve the purpose of the lesson.
4. Materials needed:
  - a. A Bible or a New Testament for each child.
  - b. A Book of Mormon.
  - c. Pencils for marking scriptures.
  - d. Pictures 7-12, Sermon on the Mount (Gospel Art Picture Kit 212; 62166), and 7-13, An Eleven-year-old Kneeling in Prayer (62218).

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### **Suggested**

### **Lesson**

### **Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

### Attention Activity

Write on separate pieces of paper several situations, similar to the ones in the following list, that the children might find themselves in (or you could tell them the situations). Ask the children to each come up and choose a piece of paper. Have them talk about how they would feel in the situation and what they would do.

You have fallen off a bike and hurt your leg. No one is around and you don't know if you can walk home.

You have a fever and an upset stomach. Your parents have done everything they can to make you feel better, but you are still very sick.

You have an assignment due in school tomorrow. You've worked hard on it, but it's not as good as you want it to be and you don't know how to fix it.

You have been outside playing and when you come home no one is there. You are frightened because you don't know where your family has gone.

Your grandparents gave you some money for your birthday, and now it isn't where you thought you put it.

You are sitting outside after dark and you notice how beautiful the stars look.

You are helping your family grow a garden, and you notice that the plants are getting bigger and the vegetables and fruit are getting ripe.

Explain that we can pray to Heavenly Father for help with any problem that troubles us, to share our feelings with him, or to express our gratitude. Heavenly Father will always hear our sincere prayers.

#### Scripture Account

Teach the children that Jesus showed his disciples how to pray in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 6:9–13). (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.) You may want to have the children take turns reading these verses. You may also want to give them time to mark any or all of the verses in their own copies of the scriptures. Discuss the concepts in each verse and explain any difficult words. Display the pictures at appropriate times.

#### Discussion and Application Questions

Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.

- What did Jesus mean when he said, “When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are”? (Matthew 6:5.) How can we pray sincerely so that we are not like the hypocrites? (A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be good when he or she is not or who is good and pretends not to be.)
- How did Jesus say we should be different from the hypocrites when we offer personal prayers? (Matthew 6:6.)
- What did Jesus mean when he said, “When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do”? (Matthew 6:7.) (*Heathen* here means those people who worship many gods or who are not Christians. A *vain repetition* is when we repeat the same words and phrases thoughtlessly and insincerely.) How can we avoid “vain repetitions” when we pray?
- What does Jesus mean when he tells us to ask, seek, and knock? (Matthew 7:7–11.) What is Heavenly Father’s promise to those who ask, seek, and knock? (Matthew 7:7–8.) How has praying to Heavenly Father helped you?
- Does Heavenly Father always answer our prayers? Help the children understand that even though we may not get an immediate answer to our prayers or do not receive the answer that we expect, Heavenly Father does answer every sincere prayer. Sometimes his answer is “no” or “not yet.”
- Why might Heavenly Father answer “no” or “not yet” to a prayer? Give an example from your own experience, if possible. Help the children understand that because Heavenly Father knows all things, he knows what is best for us.
- Where and how often should we offer personal prayers? (Alma 34:19–27.) What should we pray about? What has Heavenly Father given us that we should be thankful for?
- Why do you think Heavenly Father wants us to pray to him?
- Why is it important to have a personal prayer every morning and night? (Alma 37:37.)
- How do you feel when you offer a humble and sincere personal prayer? How can we become closer to Heavenly Father through prayer? How can we always have a prayer in our heart? Why should we try to do this?

## Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Divide the class into small groups and have each group look up one of the following scripture references. Then have the group tell the entire class about the scripture. In each instance discuss why Jesus was praying and decide how his example can help us with our prayers.

JST Matthew 4:2

Matthew 14:23

Luke 9:28–29

John 17

Matthew 26:36–42

3 Nephi 17:14–21, 18:16

2. Tell the children about a time when your prayers were answered, or ask the children to share their special experiences with prayer. You might also want to tell the following story:

“A remarkable young missionary leader . . . related an inspiring experience of when he was hopelessly lost in Petropolis (Brazil), unable to speak the native language and with no address for the chapel or the missionaries. After a fervent prayer in which he pleaded with the Lord that he must have help to fill his mission, he heard a voice which told him twice to follow the man on the corner. Obediently he followed the man as directed and was led directly to the chapel without further difficulty” (L. Brent Goates, *Harold B. Lee, Prophet and Seer*, p. 282).

3. Tell the children that *thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine* are special words we use to refer to God in our prayers that show our respect and love for him. Have a child read Matthew 6:9–13 and have the other children raise their hands whenever they hear one of these prayer words. Do the same thing with the song, “I Thank Thee, Dear Father,” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 7).
4. Prepare a chart of the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer or write it on the chalkboard, leaving blanks for some of the words. Write the words that have been left out on wordstrips or in a column on the chalkboard. Have the children try to fill in the blanks with the words on the wordstrips.

“Some (b) will come from reading the (d), some from hearing (c). And, occasionally, when it is important, some will come by very direct and (e). The promptings will be (a) and unmistakable” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 30; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 20).

- a. Clear
- b. Answers
- c. Speakers
- d. Scriptures
- e. Powerful inspiration

5. Help the children memorize one of the following scriptures about prayer: Matthew 7:7, James 1:5, 3 Nephi 18:20, or the first half of Doctrine and Covenants 19:38.

6. Invite the children to sing or read the words to “Did You Think to Pray?” (*Hymns*, no. 140) or “A Child’s Prayer” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 12).
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## **Conclusion**

Testimony	Bear testimony that Heavenly Father does hear and answer our personal prayers. Testify to the importance of saying our prayers every morning and every night, and challenge the children to do this during the coming week.
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Matthew 6:5–8 at home as a review of this lesson.  Invite a child to give the closing prayer.