

I Can Speak with Heavenly Father in Prayer

Purpose	To help the children understand that they can grow closer to Heavenly Father by praying reverently.
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Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prayerfully study Matthew 6:9 and 3 Nephi 18:19–20. See also <i>Gospel Principles</i> (31110), chapter 8.2. Make the following wordstrips:  3. Write questions such as the following on separate pieces of paper. Have at least one question for each child in your class (if your class is small you may want to have at least two questions for each child).<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. If someone in your family had to leave home for a while, what could you ask Heavenly Father for in your prayers?b. If our lesson taught us to choose the right, what could we ask Heavenly Father for in our class prayer?c. If our lesson taught us to be kind, what could we ask Heavenly Father for in our class prayer?d. If your friend were sick and unable to come out and play, what might you ask in your prayers?e. What could we ask for in our prayers each morning and evening?f. What could we ask for the children in our Primary class when we pray?4. Prepare to sing or say the words to “A Prayer Song” (<i>Children’s Songbook</i>, p. 22).5. Materials needed:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. A Bible and a Book of Mormon.b. Picture 2-14, Class Prayer (62200); picture 2-15, Brigham Young; picture 2-16, Heber J. Grant as a Boy.6. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities you want to use.
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Suggested Lesson Development

Attention activity	Before inviting a child to give the opening prayer, display picture 2-14, Class Prayer, and reverently sing or say the words to “A Prayer Song.” We bow our heads in prayer today, We fold our arms together, Then close our eyes, and while we pray We talk to Heav’ny Father.
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- While someone in the class says the prayer, what should the rest of us do?

Sing “A Prayer Song” again. Have the children get ready for the prayer by doing what the words of the song tell them to do.

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

We Get Ready Before We Pray

Discussion

- What did the song say we do to get ready to pray?
- Why do we bow our heads when we pray?

Help the children understand that bowing our heads when we pray shows Heavenly Father that we love, honor, and respect him. Heavenly Father is greater and more powerful than a king, a president, or any person on earth, and he has done many things for us. We should show that we love and honor him.

- Why do we fold our arms when we pray?

Help the children understand that moving their hands during the prayer might keep people from listening to the prayer.

- Why do we close our eyes when we pray?

You may want to have the children close their eyes for a moment while they think of an answer.

Help the children understand that they are less likely to be distracted by things around them when they close their eyes. They can think of Heavenly Father and what they are saying to him.

We Can Feel Close to Heavenly Father When We Pray

Teacher presentation

Explain that with our heads bowed, our arms folded, and our eyes closed, we can pay attention to our prayer instead of the things around us. We can get a quiet feeling and feel close to Heavenly Father. We are ready to talk to him.

Story

Show pictures 2-15, Brigham Young, and 2-16, Heber J. Grant as a Boy, and tell in your own words the following story about a little boy who felt close to Heavenly Father during prayer:

Many years ago, Brigham Young was the prophet and President of the Church. A boy about six years old named Heber J. Grant played with one of President Young's little boys. Often Heber would be playing in President Young's home when it was time to call the family together for prayer. Heber would kneel down with the family, fold his arms, bow his head, close his eyes, and listen as President Young prayed. Because of the way President Young talked with Heavenly Father, it seemed to Heber that Heavenly Father was right there in the room. Sometimes Heber even opened his eyes to see if Heavenly Father was there. Of course, he saw only President Young and his family. But still he was sure that Heavenly Father was with President Young, hearing him and giving him the help and guidance he was asking for.

When Heber grew up, he became an Apostle and later President of the Church (see Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], pp. 223–24.)

You may want to share a personal experience when you felt close to Heavenly Father during prayer, as Heber J. Grant did.

Remind the children that Heavenly Father is always listening to us when we pray. Bowing our heads, folding our arms, and closing our eyes while we pray can help us feel Heavenly Father near us.

We Speak Reverently When We Pray

Scripture discussion

Explain that we also show love and respect for Heavenly Father in the way we speak to him in our prayers.

- When you want to speak with someone, what is the first word you say to get their attention? (Their name.)
- When you want to talk with Heavenly Father, what is the first thing you say?

Explain that the first thing we say in a prayer is Heavenly Father's name. Tell the children that Jesus taught us to do this when he was on the earth. Read aloud Matthew 6:9, and explain that we usually shorten "Our Father which art in heaven" to "Our Father in Heaven" or "Heavenly Father."

Tell the children that Jesus also told us how to end our prayers. Read aloud 3 Nephi 18:19.

- How did Jesus tell us to end our prayers? (In his name. We end our prayers with the words *in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.*)
- When we are having a class prayer or a family prayer and the person saying the prayer says "amen," what do we do?

Explain that when we say "amen" at the end of a group prayer, it means that we agree with what the person speaking said in the prayer. We have been praying with the person who said the prayer.

Wordstrip discussion

Ask the children if they have noticed that when we talk to Heavenly Father, we don't say *you*, as in "We thank you" or "We ask you."

Display the wordstrip "You."

- What word do we use instead of *you*? (*Thee.*)

Cover the wordstrip "You" with the wordstrip "Thee." Have the children repeat reverently "We thank thee" and "We ask thee."

- Why do we say *thee* instead of *you*? (It is another way of showing Heavenly Father that we respect and honor him.)

We Pray to Thank Heavenly Father for Our Blessings

Game

Tell the children that there are two very important reasons why we pray. To help the children discover the first important reason for praying, divide them into two teams. Alternating between teams, have the children take turns naming something Heavenly Father has done for them. Each time they must name something that has not previously been mentioned. If a team cannot answer promptly, the turn goes to the other team. Play the game for a few minutes or until neither team can think of something not already mentioned.

If the children did not give the following possible answers, mention them now:

- Heavenly Father gave us our lives.
- He gave us our families.
- He gave us the earth.
- He sent Jesus Christ to the earth to help us.
- He promised to answer our prayers in the best way.

Discussion

Discuss the following questions with the children:

- When someone gives you a gift or is kind and loving to you, what should you say?
- Who has given us more gifts than anyone else? (Heavenly Father.)
- What is the first reason for praying? (To thank our Heavenly Father for the many blessings he gives us.)

Emphasize that just as we thank our parents, family members, or friends for things they do for us, we should also thank Heavenly Father for things he does for us. Heavenly Father is happy when we thank him.

We Pray to Ask for Heavenly Father's Help

Story

Tell in your own words the following story about Stephen to help the children discover the second reason we pray:

Stephen had just moved with his parents to a new town. On the first day of school he didn't know anyone in his class. Stephen began to feel terrible. He wanted to go home. He put his head down on the desk because he didn't want anyone to see him cry.

Soon the teacher noticed that Stephen had put his head down on the desk. She thought he must be sick, so she went over to talk to him. Stephen was embarrassed to be crying in school, and he tried to stop. But he felt so bad he couldn't.

Softly, so no one else could hear, he prayed, "Please, Heavenly Father, help me stop crying."

Soon Stephen was able to stop crying. He told his teacher he felt better, and he had a happy day.

Discussion

- What helped Stephen feel better?
- How have your prayers helped you?

Activity

Explain that a second reason we pray is to ask for Heavenly Father's help. To help the children understand some specific ways they can ask for help in their prayers, spread the question papers on the table or floor. Let each child select a piece of paper. Read each question and have the child who selected it give the answer.

Help the children understand that to receive Heavenly Father's help, we must try hard to choose the right. Then if we pray for help and ask for what Heavenly Father knows is best for us, he will give us what we have prayed for (see 3 Nephi 18:20).

Summary

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What could we thank Heavenly Father for in our closing prayer today? (Answers may include the opportunity to come to Primary and learn more about prayer.)• What could we ask Heavenly Father for in our prayer? |
| Testimony | <p>Bear your testimony of how important it is to talk to Heavenly Father every day. Remind the children that we should pray in the morning, in the evening, and whenever we need special help or feel especially grateful to Heavenly Father.</p> <p>Encourage the children to remember to pray in the morning and the evening every day this week.</p> <p>Invite a child to give the closing prayer. Before the prayer, have the children get ready to pray by softly singing "A Prayer Song" and doing what the song tells them to do. Remind them that Heavenly Father is listening and that everyone in the room is praying even though only one person is saying the words. Remind all the children to say "amen" at the end of the prayer.</p> |

Enrichment Activities

Choose from the following activities those that will work best for the children in your class. 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. Give each child a copy or tracing of the handout titled "I Will Pray Reverently," found at the end of the lesson. Give the children crayons and let them color their pictures. Encourage the children to show their pictures to their families and tell their families what they learned about prayer today.
2. Help the children sing or say the words to the first verse of "We Bow Our Heads" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 25), doing the actions indicated:

We bow our heads (*bow heads*) and close our eyes (*close eyes*)
And say a little prayer (*fold arms*).
We thank our Father graciously
For blessings we all share (*outstretch arms*).

3. Sing or say the words to the second verse of "I Pray in Faith" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 14) to remind the children of the things they should say when they 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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4. Give the children paper and crayons or pencils, and let them draw pictures of themselves praying. They could draw pictures of family prayer, morning or evening personal prayer, prayer at mealtime, or any other place and time when they pray.

I Will Pray Reverently

