

Aim of lesson

To discuss prayer and its answers and to learn from the prayer of Jesus.

Bible background

John 17

Outline of lesson

A human father or mother

Begin the class with a discussion on the following; ask the members of the class if they have asked their mother or father for anything during the last week. If they say no, query it: Not even for a drink or biscuit?

- Did they hear when you spoke to them?
- Did they answer?
- Did you get what you asked for?
- Do you always get what you ask for? Why not?

If children grow up always getting everything they ask for, what sort of children do they become?

- Does God always hear our prayers?
- Does he always answer them?
- Why don't we always get what we ask for?

Our Father, which art in heaven

Help the young people to see that it is because God loves us and knows what is best for us.

- Do you only speak to your parents to ask for something?
- Do you only speak to God to ask for something? What else should you include? Praise, thanks, confession, and just talking things over, often form the basis of our prayers.
- What would you think of a friend who only spoke to you when he wanted to ask for something? What other things do you talk to friends about? Can you talk to God about these?

The key questions about God in this discussion could be put on a blackboard or chart before the lesson and the answers from the class filled in as you go along.

Eternal life

Turn to the workbooks and use the questions to guide discussion. What matters to Jesus is that his disciples should have eternal life. Knowing God, and Jesus, is what changes people and is the quality of life which will last for ever. Jesus' death shows us the character of the Father more than anything else and so is the way we can know him and therefore have eternal life.

Encourage the class to see that loving and caring for one another, and serving God together humbly, is the sort of unity he wants – not the unity of all being exactly the same. It may be useful to point out that Jesus wants us to share with himself and with each other the same sort of oneness he shares with his Father.

Read together John 17:1-26 then answer the questions making sure they find the two parts of the answer. Encourage them to see that this prayer is about them. Had they realised that God loves them just as he loves Jesus?

Let the class crack the code; the method is to take alternate letters. The solution is 'they may have the full measure of my joy within them'.

Digging deeper

Jesus always prayed

This section looks at the occasions when Jesus prayed, showing that his whole life was really a life of prayer.

Relevance to our lives

Ask the class to think of a time when they are alone each day – perhaps walking to school or at the bus stop. Ask them to try to remember to use it each day this week to thank God for one thing or tell God about something they are worried about.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, thank you that you hear us when we pray. Help us to share all our thoughts with you.

Other suggestions for activities

- The class could each take the role of one of the disciples, and write their own account of the impression Jesus' prayer made on them.
- The class may like to put together an account of the whole experience in Gethsemane by consulting all four gospels.