

Aim of lesson

To encourage the class to take all their needs and problems to God in prayer and to be confident that he always hears and always answers.

Bible background

1 Samuel 1; 2:1-11, 18-21; Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11.

Outline of lesson

Prayer

Ask the class about when they pray. In the morning, at night, before meals? What sort of things do they pray for; to thank for food, clothing, families; to ask for help? Include a few comments of your own experience of prayer as appropriate throughout the lesson. Tell them that today's lesson is about prayer and answers to prayer.

A man from Ramathaim-zophim

Ask the class to turn to 1 Samuel 1 and read verses 1-8. You may like to read an abbreviated version of your own, stopping at points for them to fill in key words, e.g. 'there was a certain man whose name was He had two One was called' and so on.

Hannah's sadness

Turn to the workbooks and go through the first part, discussing their conclusions. It may be a good idea for you, as teacher, to complete the workbook yourself, since sharing your problems and prayers will encourage the class to be open and will be very helpful in letting them see something of the reality of your relationship with God.

You may also like to think of a few situations to prompt them, such as having an argument with their best friend, the death of a pet, exams, etc.

Her prayer

Together read 1 Samuel 1:9-18, giving different characters to the members of your class. Then complete the last section of the workbook together. The children could write a private prayer about the problem they have suggested. Bring out the point that Hannah prayed silently. God knows our thoughts and he can read our minds. Eli did not know what she had prayed for but she went home confident that it would be answered because of the high priest's words.

Get the class to turn to Matthew 6:5-15 and 7:7-11 for the questions about their prayers and be prepared to discuss how God answers prayer. Like the good Father that he is, he may say yes, no, wait, or something else that we do not expect. However, he knows everything and his answers are always the best. We should have complete confidence that he hears and that he answers, but we will not always know what the answer will be.

Digging deeper

Eli

This exercise finds out more about Eli and his sons.

Relevance to our lives

Get the class to choose something for all to pray about during the week. It could be a drought in Africa, a classmate in hospital, or some friends who are not speaking to each other. Choose one subject and discuss how, and when, all of the class are going to pray for it. Make sure you also remember to pray for it and allow time next week to discuss how you got on and what answers you may have had.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, thank you that you are always here, and that you listen to our prayers and answer them. Please help us to pray and to share all of our lives with you.

Other suggestions for activities

There may be a member of your ecclesia whom you could ask to visit the class, to talk about answers to prayer that they have had. Plan beforehand with the class the questions they could ask.

The class could write a prayer together for the closing of Sunday School. This could be read either by one of them or by the Superintendent.