

## Aim of lesson

To learn how to pray.

## Bible background

Luke 18:9-14; Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11

## Outline of lesson

### Teach us to pray

You may like to begin by asking the class if they find it easy to pray. Bring into any discussion that follows the fact that the disciples felt they needed to learn how to pray and they asked Jesus to teach them. In this lesson we are going to look at what Jesus teaches them about prayer.

### A Pharisee and a Tax Collector

Read Luke 18:9-14 together. Get the class to fill in the prayers in the workbook. Discuss the three questions that follow. During the discussion read Matthew 6:5-8 together. The questions are intended to bring out the point that the Pharisee was really praying to himself. He was not conscious of the presence of God at all; he was only conscious of his own goodness. The tax-collector on the other hand, bowed his head and was ashamed because he was conscious of the presence of God and God's holiness. That was why he was so aware of his own sin.

The second question is answered by Matthew 6:5. The Pharisee prayed to be seen of men. That was what he wanted and that was what he got. He received his reward. The tax-collector really wanted mercy, and he got it. Jesus said he went home justified before God; that means he was forgiven and so made righteous again before God.

It would be helpful to list what you learn about praying as you go (either on a blackboard or on a large sheet of paper). For example:

- Be conscious of God.
- Mean what you say.
- Be confident that God loves you and wants what is best for you.

### Ask, and it will be given to you

Read Matthew 7:7-11 together. The second page in the workbook is to encourage the class to be confident that God really cares about them, hears and answers their prayers and wants the best for them. It may be useful to ask the class what a good father would give if his child asked him for a pet python or a scorpion! This will help them to see that our Father may also have to say no. He does know what is best for us, and there is nothing better than God's best! Note that the reference to eggs and scorpions is in Luke 11:9-13, so you may like to use that along with Matthew 7:7-11.

## Digging deeper

### What did Jesus mean?

This section looks at some of the more tricky passages in the Sermon on the Mount and helps the young people to understand what Jesus meant.

## Relevance to our lives

The most helpful thing for the class to do during the week is to pray. Ask them to remember the three points they have learned. They may like to write them on a bookmark and keep it by their bed.

## Prayer

Dear Father, please help us to be conscious of your presence. Thank you for really caring for us.

## Other suggestions for activities

- The class could write a prayer based on the Lord's Prayer, expanding each phrase with, for example, "We are glad that you are our Father because. . ." or "We want your kingdom to come because..."
- The class could make a poster illustrating the words of Matt. 7:7 or Matt. 7:9-11.