

Aim of lesson

To encourage the young people to pray and give help in how to go about it.

Bible background

1 Samuel 1:9-20; 2 Kings 19:14-20, 32-37; Nehemiah 2:1-8; Psalm 51:1-2; Psalm 32; Matthew 26:36-47; Luke 22:43; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Matthew 6:5-15

Preparation required

Read through the references and the Students' Notes and decide on your answers. Be prepared for the students to make their own suggestions. Prayer is between the individual and God and our position should be to listen and help rather than dictate a set of rules.

You may decide to give the examples of prayer for the students to read as homework beforehand.

Suggested outline of lesson

The first four questions in the Students' Notes will help to get them talking. Using the examples of prayers (and any others you may choose) and the references, get the students to fill in their answers. Suggestions for what they might put are:

Why?

Because God is our father and we need to talk to him as to an earthly father.

How?

- Humbly
- Honestly
- Recognising 'God's will be done'
- Kneeling, standing, sitting, lying down?

Where and When?

- Regularly
- Constantly
- Whenever we feel like it
- Anywhere
- When we are feeling good/bad
- In bed, our own room, the garden

What?

- Praise God
- Thank him
- Tell him our sins and ask for forgiveness
- Tell him our problems and ask for help

By the time you get to the last question the young people may already have told you what they find difficult. It does not hurt for them to realise that none of us find it easy but don't give them problems they would not have thought of for themselves. Their problems will probably include:

- I forget to pray
- I don't know what to say
- I don't feel God will listen to me
- I find it hard to concentrate on a prayer someone else says
- I always seem to say the same things.

What they fill in will depend on your discussion but here are some suggestions:

- Make some times when you always pray and don't be deflected from it.
- Find somewhere quiet - the bathroom may be an ideal place.
- Try praying with someone else.
- Sing a hymn or say the Lord's prayer if you get stuck.
- Make a list of things to pray about or pray about different things at different times.
- Ask God to help you pray.

Think about God first and realise he won't think you're stupid. He doesn't mind what words you use. He wants you to pray. He wants to help you. He loves you. Luke 11:5-13; James 1:5-8; 1 John 5:14-15; Romans 8:26.

Be honest. If you are not sure whether you ought to pray for something, tell God and ask him to do what is best, James 4:3.

Relevance to our lives

Prayer should be a vital part of all our lives. It really does make a difference when we pray regularly and sincerely but as a community we do not talk very much about the practicalities.

Prayer

This would be an ideal time for the young people to write or say their own prayer to God asking for his help in this matter.

Other suggestions for activities

1. The young people could list everything they could thank God for including their problems, opportunities, etc.
2. You might like to talk about the background to prayer, how it was associated with offering incense and sacrifices in the tabernacle (Psalm 141:1,2).

'Prayer - Studies in Principle and Practice' by Melva Purkis and Cyril Tennant, is a very helpful book. The Christadelphian Sunday School Union has published some study notes to accompany the book, which you may like to use with the young people in a deeper look at this subject.