

Prayer

Session 1 of 5 – Page 1 of 4

Session 1: What is Prayer?

Series: Prayer

Themes: prayer, questions

Bible Passage: Jeremiah 33:2-3; Matthew 6:7-8; Philippians 4:6

Suggested age group: 9-11's

Session aim: To consider what prayer is

Way In 1 - Semaphore

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: red and yellow paper, straws, sticky tape, copies of resource sheet 1 'semaphore flags'

1. Get each pupil to make 2 flags, one yellow and one red, by sticking a rectangle of paper to a drinking straw.
2. Ask pupils to form pairs and give each pair 2 copies of resource sheet 1 'Semaphore Flags'.
3. Ask one member of each pair to stand at each end of the room
4. Each member should take it in turns spelling out their name using the semaphore flags, while the other member of the pair notes down what is signalled.
5. If time, give signallers more words to send, for their partner to work out.

Way In 2 – Communication

Time: 7 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: large sheets of paper, pens

1. In groups, ask pupils to write down as many ways they can think of to send a message, noting their ideas on sheets of paper
2. After 2 mins, call the groups together. Ask one group to read off an answer. If another group has it too, both score it off their sheet. If no other group has it, Group A scores 10 points. Swap to next group and continue until all have been read out.
3. Discuss which the most efficient forms of communication are. Might some be better than others for specific messages?

Connecting 1 – Prayer as Communication

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: resource sheet 2 'What is Prayer?' (one per group), pens

1. The things we wrote are all different ways of communicating. Did anyone have prayer on their list? Prayer is simply a way to communicate with God. We talk to God, he listens. He talks to us, and we listen to what he is saying. There is nothing complicated about it. Jesus said we were to talk to God naturally, not using fancy words or phrases.
2. In groups, get pupils to read the verses and discuss together what each one says about prayer.
3. With everyone together, feed back what each group thought. Point out (if the pupils haven't already) that Jeremiah talks about God listening and speaking to us when we pray, Matthew encourages us to say what we mean simply without using long meaningless words, Philippians suggests prayer instead of worry and also talks about giving thanks.

Prayer

Session 1 of 5 – Page 2 of 4

Responding 1 – Prayer time

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: notebook or something to record prayer requests; small teddy or similar object

1. Ask pupils if there are things they would like to talk to God about – perhaps things that are making them worried, or anything that is on their minds.
2. Make a note of any specific requests, saying that God has promised to answer when we pray, so we will come back to this list over the next couple of weeks to see whether God has answered yet.
3. With pupils sitting in a circle, invite each one to present their requests to God. You could pass a teddy round the circle – when a pupil is holding the teddy, it will be their turn to pray; if they don't want to pray, they can just pass the teddy on to the next person.

Responding 2 – Prayer challenge - Five

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: copies of 5 leaflet (kids) downloaded from <http://www.suscotland.org.uk/pray/resources>

1. Give out 5 leaflet, explaining to the pupils that this is a challenge for the next 5 weeks – to pray for 5 people, for 5 minutes (a minute each), for at least 5 days each week and to see what God will do.
2. Allow the pupils time to fill in the names of the people they want to pray for on their own leaflets.
3. Read through the verses on the leaflet, encouraging them to take up the challenge.

Responding 3 – Song

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

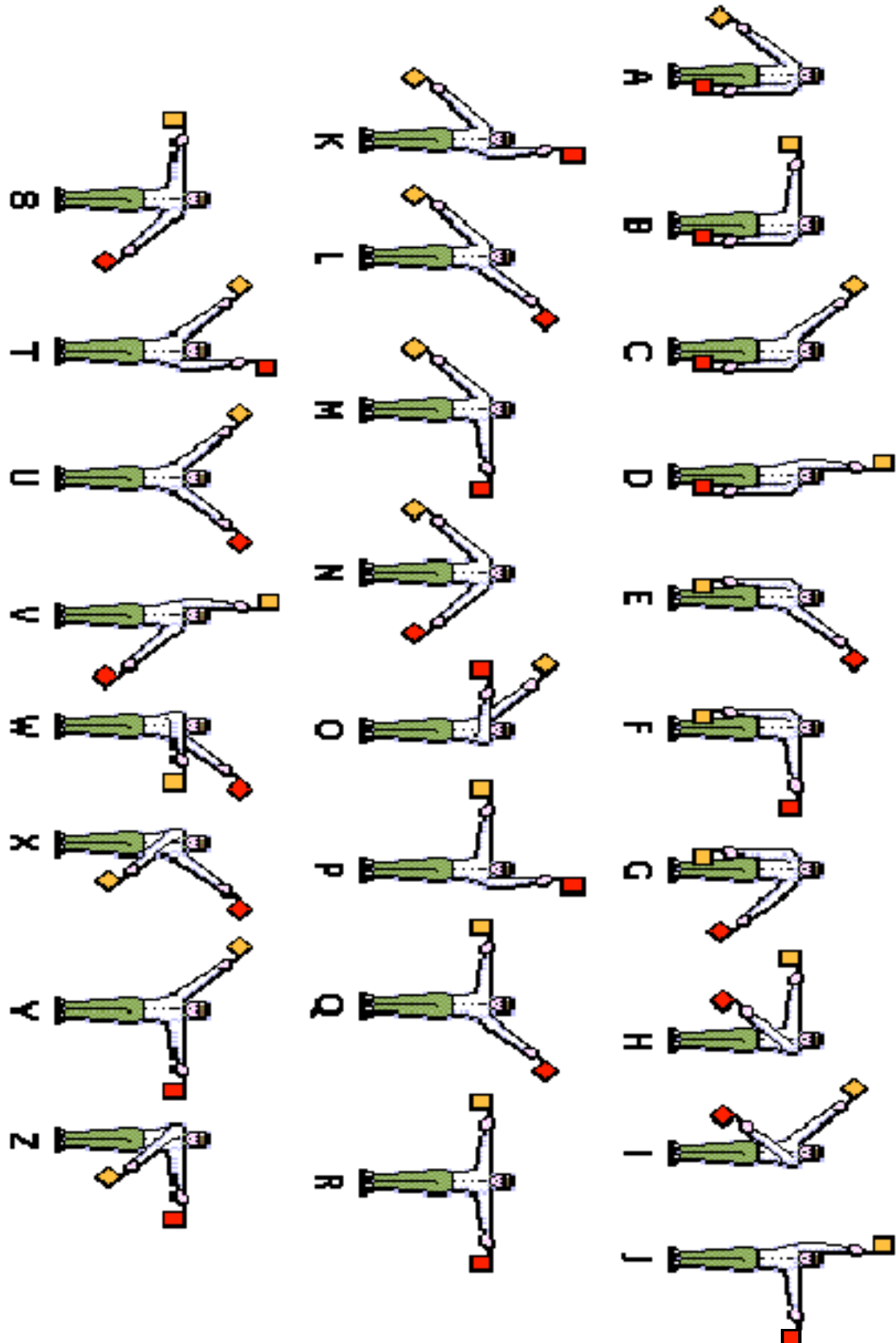
With: words and music of 'Prayer is like a telephone'

Sing 'Prayer is like a telephone' from Junior Praise 2 or kidsource

Prayer

Session 1 of 5 – Page 3 of 4

Resource Sheet 1 – Semaphore Flags



Prayer

Session 1 of 4 – Page 4 of 4

Resource Sheet 2 – Prayer

Jeremiah 33:2-3

These are the words of the LORD, who made the earth, shaped it, and gave it order, whose name is the LORD: 'Pray to me, and I will answer you. I will tell you important secrets you have never heard before.'

Matthew 6:7-8

Jesus teaches about prayer:

'And when you pray, don't be like those people who don't know God. They continue saying things that mean nothing, thinking that God will hear them because of their many words. Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.'

Philippians 4:6

Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks.

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Read these verses from the Bible carefully. Next to each one, write what you think that verse is saying about what prayer is. Underline the phrase that you find most helpful.

Prayer

Session 2 of 5 – Page 1 of 3

Session 2: When should we pray?

Series: Prayer

Bible Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Suggested age group: 9-11's

Session aim: To think about when we can pray

Way In 1 – What's the time, Mr Wolf

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

1. One player is the wolf and he will stand at one end of the room with his back turned to the others who will be at the other end. The others call out, "What's the time Mr. Wolf" and the wolf turns to face the others and shouts out a time, e.g. '10 o'clock.' The others would then take 10 steps toward the wolf. The group will take the same amount of steps toward the wolf as the amount of hours in the wolf's time, e.g. 2 o'clock = 2 steps, 6 o'clock = 6 steps etc. The wolf will then turn his back to the group again for them to yell "what's the time...." (He looks at the group only when he shouts the time at the group. When the group gets close to the wolf, the wolf will say 'DINNER TIME' and run after the group who are running back to the start line. Whoever is caught will then be the wolf.

Way In 2 – Daily timetable

Time: 7 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: large sheets of paper, pens

1. Talk about different things we generally do at different times of day.
2. Ask pupils to draw out a time-line of a typical day, showing what they do at different times.

Connecting 1 – Pray – but when?

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With:

1. Ask pupils whether anyone has included prayer as one of the things they do during a typical day.
2. Discuss when pupils think we can pray.
3. Play a game of Hangman to find the verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:17 – Pray at all times.
4. The answer to "When should we pray?" is – at all times! God never sleeps. He is always listening. He doesn't want us to stop what we are doing and sit still to pray – he wants us to talk to him while we go about our business. He wants us to talk to him about everything, in the way we would talk to a friend.

Responding 1 – Prayer time

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: notebook, extra copies of 5 leaflet

1. Remind pupils of the prayer requests mentioned last week.
2. Ask whether they have seen any answers to their prayers yet.

Prayer

Session 2 of 5 – Page 2 of 3

3. Ask how they are getting on with the '5 challenge'. Give leaflets to any who weren't there the previous week. Have they seen any answers to their prayer yet?
4. Encourage the pupils to keep praying for their 5 friends, for 5 minutes on 5 days of the week.

Responding 2– Prayer cycle

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: *limited*

With: *copies of resource sheet 1 'Prayer cycle' printed on card, enough for 1 each, pens, scissors, paper fasteners*

1. Give each pupil a copy of the prayer cycle, printed on card.
2. Ask them to cut out both circles and the marked segment of circle 1.
3. Pupils colour in both circles and fasten them together with a paper fastener.
4. Talk about being able to pray at anytime, whatever you are doing.

Responding 3 – Song

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: *limited*

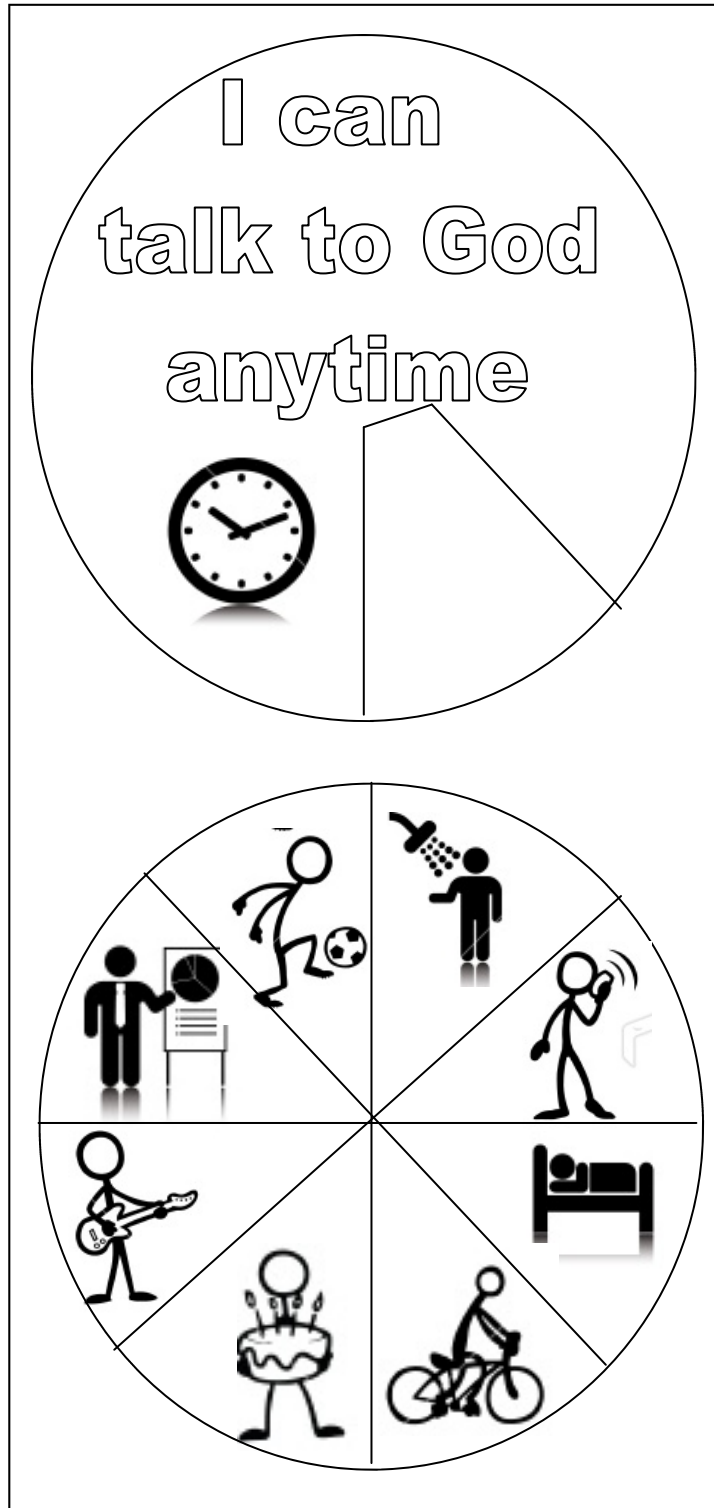
With: *words and music of 'Prayer is like a telephone'*

Sing 'Pray at all times' from kidsource.

Prayer

Session 2 of 5 – Page 3 of 3

Resource Sheet 1 – Pray Anytime



Prayer

Session 3 of 5 – Page 1 of 3

Session 3: Why should we pray?

Series: Prayer

Bible Passage: Matthew 7:7-11

Suggested age group: 9-11's

Session aim: To investigate why God wants us to pray when he knows what we need anyway

Way In 1 – Drawing in the dark

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: hard-back books, pencils, paper

1. Give each pupil a book, pencil and piece of paper. Tell them to put the paper on top of the book, and then the book on their head.
2. Tell them to draw on the paper following your instructions, without looking!
3. Give the following instructions:
 - Draw a house
 - Give it a front door and four windows
 - Draw an apple tree in the garden to the left of the house
 - Draw smoke coming out of the chimney
 - Draw a car outside
4. Have fun looking at the results!
5. Comment: This game was really difficult to do, because we couldn't SEE anything. We might have been tempted to give up because it was frustrating, or because it was hard work. Sometimes people find prayer difficult because we can't see God in the way we see each other. We can't see if he is answering prayer, but he IS listening. He promises he listens, and as we pray we start to see God answering our prayers (share a recent answer to prayer). Sometimes people wonder whether there is any point in praying because God knows everything already, so why should we bother?

Connecting 1 – Why pray?

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: music, Bible, sweets, stone, slice of bread, rubber snake, resource sheet 1 'Matthew 7:7-11, cut into 4 sections

1. Have pupils stand in a circle and play some music.
2. As the music plays, pass a Bible round the circle.
3. When music stops, the leader gives the person holding the Bible a sweet and an object or picture in the order below.
 - Picture of question mark
 - Picture of door
 - Stone
 - Slice of bread
 - Rubber snake
 - Fish shape
 - Matthew 7:7-11, typed out
4. At end, leader reads out the Bible passage and everyone holds up the relevant object or picture at the appropriate point.
5. Comment, "The reason we pray is because God is like a Father who loves us, who wants to provide for us and give us good things. He says "ask!" and he will answer! What are you waiting for? Try it and see!"

Prayer

Session 3 of 5 – Page 2 of 3

Responding 1 – Prayer time

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: notebook, extra copies of 5 leaflet

1. Remind pupils of the prayer requests mentioned on previous weeks.
2. Ask whether they have seen any answers to their prayers yet.
3. Ask how they are getting on with the '5 challenge'. Give leaflets to any who weren't there the previous week. Have they seen any answers to their prayer yet?
4. Encourage the pupils to keep praying for their 5 friends, for 5 minutes on 5 days of the week.

Responding 2– Matchstick starters

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: matches, a safe receptacle for burnt matches

1. Ask for volunteers to complete the following sentences:
 - I asked God to
 - I find it hard to pray when
 - God answered my prayer when
 - People find prayer difficult because
 - I pray whenever I
 - I think prayer is
2. Strike a match when they start to speak, and they speak for as long as the match is burning.

Responding 3 – Song

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: words and music of 'Prayer is like a telephone'

Sing 'Prayer makes a difference' from kidsource 2

Prayer

Session 3 of 5 – Page 3 of 3

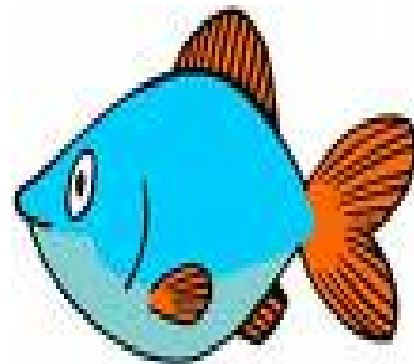
Resource Sheet 1 – Matthew 7:7-11

Matthew 7:7-11

⁷ "Ask, and God will give to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will open for you. ⁸ Yes, everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And everyone who knocks will have the door opened.

⁹ "If your children ask for bread, which of you would give them a stone? ¹⁰ Or if your children ask for a fish, would you give them a snake? ¹¹ Even though you are bad, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more your heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask him!

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Prayer

Session 4 of 5 – Page 1 of 3

Session 4: How should we pray?

Series: Prayer

Bible Passage: 1 Chronicles 16:34; 1 John 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:1

Suggested age group: 9-11's

Session aim: To learn how to pray

Way In 1 – Teaspoon races

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: teaspoons, small (new) potatoes, several 1p coins, jar, table tennis balls

1. Place pupils in groups at one end of room
2. Have relay races between the groups as follows:
 - Potato and spoon – place potato in teaspoon, race to one end of room and back without touching the potato, transfer potato into next person's spoon.
 - Transferring money – place teaspoon in mouth, with 1p coin in bowl of spoon; carry coin to a jar at other end of room, tip it in, then come back to tag next player.
 - Ping pong push – place chairs in a line along the room; using the spoon, players tap the ball round the chairs to one end of the room and then back, passing the ball to the next player.

Way In 2 – Spin the Spoon

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: teaspoon

1. Have pupils sit in a circle with a teaspoon on the floor in the middle of the circle.
2. One person spins the spoon.
3. When the spoon stops spinning, whoever the bowl of the spoon is facing must talk for one minute without stopping, and without repetition.
4. It is difficult! Prayer might seem difficult but God wants us to try.

Connecting 1 – Teaspoon prayers

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: copies of resource sheet 1 'teaspoon prayers', pens, glue stick, scissors

1. In all of these games we used a teaspoon.
2. In recipes, a teaspoon of an ingredient is often written as 'tsp'.
3. In a recipe, 'tsp' helps us to get the right ingredients. It also helps us to pray in the right way, as the letters 'tsp' can stand for something else – T for Thank you, S for sorry, and P for please.
4. Give everyone a copy of resource sheet 1 'Teaspoon prayers'.
5. Read the verses together, explaining any words that are difficult to understand (e.g. confess). Discuss which letter each verse may go with.
6. Allow pupils to cut out the verses and stick them next to the correct letter.
7. Encourage them to write their own 'thank you, sorry and please' prayers.
8. Have a time of prayer where pupils who would like to read out the prayers they have written.

Prayer

Session 4 of 5 – Page 2 of 3

Responding 1 – Prayer time

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: notebook, extra copies of 5 leaflet

1. Remind pupils of the prayer requests mentioned on previous weeks.
2. Ask whether they have seen any answers to their prayers yet.
3. Ask how they are getting on with the '5 challenge'. Give leaflets to any who weren't there the previous week. Have they seen any answers to their prayer yet?
4. Encourage the pupils to keep praying for their 5 friends, for 5 minutes on 5 days of the week.

Responding 2 – Board Game

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: card, pen, dice, counters

1. In pairs of small groups, pupils make board games that reflect various aspects of prayer – for example, some of the squares might have these statements on them: 'asked God to help a friend who is scared of the dark – move ahead 2', 'forgot to pray yesterday – miss a turn'.
2. Play the games together.

Responding 3 – Song

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: words and music of 'Prayer is like a telephone'

Sing 'Did you ever talk to God above?' from Junior Praise 2

Prayer

Session 4 of 5 – Page 3 of 3

Resource Sheet 1 – Teaspoon prayers

Thank you

Sorry

Please

Cut out the following verses. Paste each one next to the letter they represent. Write your own thank you, sorry and please prayers alongside them.

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1 John 1:9
But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done.

1 Timothy 2:1
First, I tell you to pray for all people, asking God for what they need and being thankful to him.

1 Chronicles 16:34
Thank the Lord because he is good. His love continues forever.

Prayer

Session 5 of 5 – Page 1 of 2

Session 5: Putting prayer into practice

Series: Prayer

Bible Passage: Colossians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10; Philippians 1:9; Matthew 7:7-11;

Romans 1:9-10; 1 Timothy 2:1-3

Suggested age group: 9-11's

Session aim: To engage with what God says about prayer and put it into practice

Way In 1 – Pictionary

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: paper, pencils, cards with objects (methods of communication) written on them

1. In groups have someone come up and collect a card with the name of some means of communication which they have to draw for their team to guess (computer, smoke signals, Morse code, radio, drums, mobile, torch, telephone, prayer)
2. Say that all these are means of communicating with someone – some more modern than others! The one that Christians should be using most isn't the mobile, or the computer, but prayer, yet that is often the one we find hardest of all to engage with.

Connecting 1 – What God says about prayer

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: verses and questions below printed out on separate sheets of paper

1. Print out the following verses and questions on separate pieces of paper, and spread them round the room
 - Matthew 7:7-11 Ask, and God will give to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will open for you. Yes, everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And everyone who knocks will have the door opened. If your children ask for bread, which of you would give them a stone? Or if your children ask for a fish, would you give them a snake? Even though you are bad, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more your heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask him!
 - Why should we pray?
 - Colossians 4:2 Continue praying, keeping alert, and always thanking God.
 - What does this verse say to someone who thinks God isn't answering?
 - 1 Timothy 2:1-3 First, I tell you to pray for all people, asking God for what they need and being thankful to him. Pray for rulers and for all who have authority so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives full of worship and respect for God. This is good, and it pleases God our Saviour.
 - Who should we pray for?
 - Romans 1:9-10 God is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times
 - When should we pray, and what about?
 - Colossians 1:9-10 Because of this, since the day we heard about you, we have continued praying for you, asking God that you will know fully what he wants. We pray that you will also have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things so that you will live the kind of life that honours and pleases the Lord in every way. You will produce fruit in every good work and grow in the knowledge of God.
 - What should we pray for each other in this group?
 - Philippians 1:9 This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love
 - What should we pray for each other in this group?

Prayer

Session 5 of 5 – Page 2 of 2

2. Invite the children to go round reading the verses and thinking about the questions either individually or in pairs.
3. After about 7 minutes, draw the group back together and ask, 'What is the most exciting thing you have discovered from these verses?'

Responding 1 – Prayer time

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: notebook, extra copies of 5 leaflet

1. Remind pupils of the prayer requests mentioned on previous weeks.
2. Ask whether they have seen any answers to their prayers yet.
3. Ask how they are getting on with the '5 challenge'. Give leaflets to any who weren't there the previous week. Have they seen any answers to their prayer yet?
4. Encourage the pupils to keep praying for their 5 friends, for 5 minutes on 5 days of the week.

Responding 2– Prayer stations

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: equipment for prayer stations – newspapers, material from <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/>, outline of school building, post-it notes, pens, wooden cross, bible, candle, instrumental worship music cd, cd player

1. Invite the young people to form groups of two or three to engage with various prayer stations around the room (if a large room). If a large room is not available, or you have a small group, engage with one at a time.
 - World:** Look at current newspapers. Ask pupils to think themselves into the situation they are viewing. How would they feel? How does God feel about this situation? What can they pray for? Invite them to pray.
 - Persecuted Church:** Use Open Doors material – show pictures of young people in other countries and their prayer needs. Ask them to picture the country the person is from, the situation the person is facing, and pray for the person on their sheet.
 - School:** What are the prayer needs of your school? Talk about them together and write them down on post-it notes, stuck onto an outline of the school building. Pray together for these things.
 - Personal:** Set up a reflection area with a wooden cross, an open bible, a lit candle and quiet instrumental worship music on in the background. Invite the young people to sit quietly and read Isaiah 53 to themselves, thinking of what Jesus has done for them. In quietness, make their own response to him.
2. Finish by praying for each other as a group. Ask everyone to split into twos and to share one thing they want that person to pray for. Ask them to pray for each other, not just today, but in the weeks to come. Invite them to take a note of what the other person has said and to keep on praying for them – and check up with them in weeks to come how the prayer is being answered!

Responding 3 – Song

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: words and music of 'Prayer is like a telephone'

Sing one of the songs sung on previous weeks: 'Prayer is like a telephone' from Junior Praise 2 or kidsource, 'Pray at all times' from kidsource, 'Prayer makes a difference' from kidsource 2 or 'Did you ever talk to God above?' from Junior Praise 2.