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Author of Creed, The Walk, and The Journey

THE
LORD'S
PRAYER

THE MEANING AND POWER OF
THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT



YOUTH STUDY

ADAM HAMILTON

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE MEANING AND POWER
OF THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT

Youth Study

by Josh Tinley

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The Lord's Prayer

The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus Taught
Youth Study Download

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INTRODUCTION

Every week in worship, hundreds of millions of Christians join together to pray a prayer that Jesus taught his followers nearly two thousand years ago. There are variations of the prayer with slight differences, and we pray in many different languages, but we unite around Jesus's words and instructions for how to pray.

The fact that this prayer—which we know as the Lord's Prayer—has united generations of Christians around the world is powerful, as is the fact that Jesus used this prayer to teach his disciples how to pray. But when we pray the same prayer every week (or even more frequently), it's easy to lose sight of the words we are actually praying.

This six-session study based on *The Lord's Prayer*, by Adam Hamilton, breaks down the Lord's Prayer line by line. It considers the meaning of each phrase and examines how each part of the prayer is relevant for us as Christ's followers. Through this study, participants not only will gain a better understanding of the Lord's Prayer but will also identify ways they can live in response to the words they pray.

The study includes the following sessions:

Session 1: Our Father Who Art in Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name

What does it mean for us to call God "Father"? How is God, who is "in heaven," both beyond our world and present within it? How do we, as God's followers, treat God's name as holy?

Session 2: Whose Will Be Done?

How do we discern God's will and live according to God's will? What is God's kingdom, and what does it mean for us to be citizens of it?

Session 3: Our Daily Bread

How does God provide for us and meet our needs (our "daily bread")? How does God work through us to meet others' needs?

Session 4: Forgive . . . As We Forgive

How are we, as God's forgiven people, called to forgive others? What is forgiveness? What is it not?

Session 5: Lead Us Not into Temptation

Where do we find the strength and courage to resist temptation, and what can we learn from Jesus's example? How can we avoid and overcome temptation by following God's lead?

Session 6: For THINE Is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory

What does it mean for God to be our king and for us to recognize God as the ultimate power? How can we use our God-given gifts to glorify God?

Using This Resource

This study can be used in Sunday school, during evening youth fellowship gatherings, or as part of a small group or midweek Bible study. All session plans include:

- Learning objectives that leaders can focus on as they facilitate activities and discussion.
- A list of supplies that you will need for each session.
- An opening activity and prayer.
- Discussion questions, many with references to Scripture.
- A post-discussion activity that demonstrates how each line of the prayer is relevant to participants' lives.
- Closing discussion questions and a closing prayer.

These sessions involve few supplies. Most only require the following:

- Bibles
- Pens or pencils
- Paper
- A whiteboard or large sheet of paper
- Markers

The Lord's Prayer Book

This study is based on the book *The Lord's Prayer: The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus Taught*, by Adam Hamilton (Abingdon, 2021). The book contains much more in-depth information about the Lord's Prayer, the way Jesus taught it in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and its relevance for our lives today, and is suitable for youth as well as adults. Many youth may want to read it on their own or as part of the study, as a way of enriching their faith and understanding.

The Lord's Prayer Videos

Six video sessions on the Lord's Prayer are also available, featuring Adam Hamilton discussing the Lord's Prayer and the main ideas he discusses in the book. These videos are suitable for youth as well as adults and offer a great opportunity to enrich your group's study. The videos are available via *The Lord's Prayer DVD* (Abingdon Press) or streaming with an Amplify Media subscription (www.amplifymedia.com). If you wish to watch these videos as part of your study, allow an extra twenty minutes for viewing and discussion.

SESSION 1

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce the Lord's Prayer. Compare the Lord's Prayer that Christians traditionally say in worship to the prayer as it appears in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.
- Examine the significance of calling God "Father."
- Discuss how God, "in heaven," is both beyond our world and present in our world.
- Identify ways that we can treat God's name as "hallowed" or holy through our actions.

Supplies

- Bibles
- A whiteboard or large sheet of paper
- Markers
- Note cards
- Pens or pencils

Opening Activity: Thy? Hallowed?

Beforehand, write on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper the opening line of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

As participants arrive, invite each person to take a slip of paper or note card and reflect on what these words mean. Each participant then should rewrite the line, as he or she understands it, in current-day language.

When most participants are present, ask each person to write his or her version of the opening line on the whiteboard or large sheet of paper.

Then discuss:

- How are our rewritten versions of this line similar? How are they different?
- What questions do you have about this line or its words and phrases?

Open the session with the following prayer or one of your own:

Our Father, thank you for bringing us together for this study of the prayer Jesus taught us. Open our hearts and minds that we might learn from you, through Scripture and through one another. Amen.

Discussion

Read aloud the Lord's Prayer as it is written in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. If possible, read these verses from different translations of the Bible.

- What stands out about the Lord's Prayer as it appears in Scripture?
- What, if anything, surprises you?

Put these Scriptures in context by reading the verses leading up to the prayer: Matthew 6:5-8; Luke 11:1.

- What lesson is Jesus teaching his followers through this prayer?

Through Scripture, God's people use several titles for God. Many of these names speak of God's royalty and divinity (for example, Lord and Almighty). But, when Jesus teaches us to pray, he tells us to call God "Father."

- What is the significance of calling God "Father" instead of referring to God as a king or lord?
- How do you (or how can we) relate to God as a parent? How is relating to God as a parent different from relating to God as a ruler?

The Lord's Prayer refers to God in "heaven." Adam Hamilton, in *The Lord's Prayer: The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus Taught*, explains that the Greek word translated as "heaven" describes a realm that "is distinct from earth, the material world, and yet it envelops both. Like the air or atmosphere or even wind, we cannot see it, but we breathe it and at times feel it" (page 13).

- What does this understanding of heaven tell us about God and our relationship with God?
- How is God greater than, or distinct from, our world? In what ways is God present in our world?

As needed, use online dictionaries as a reference for the meaning of *hallowed* and look how this line of the prayer is translated in Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2.

- What does the word *hallowed* mean? What does it mean for God's name to be hallowed?
- A common synonym for *hallowed* is "holy." What does it mean for something or someone to be holy?
- How can we "hallow" God's name, or treat God's name as "holy"?

- What are some common ways that we fail to hallow God's name? (In other words, how do we misuse or disrespect God's name?)

Those of us who identify ourselves as God's followers honor God's name through our actions and example.

- What specific things can you do that honor God's name?

Activity: How We Hallow

Say something like this:

We know that Our Father in heaven is present and active here on earth. One of the ways that we most fully experience God's presence is through the actions and witness of God's people. As Christians we strive to be reflections of Christ, and we "hallow" God's name when the people we encounter experience God's love and presence through us.

Instruct participants to think about how they can be a more faithful reflection of Christ in the coming week. Specifically, they should identify one thing that they can do to show God's love to someone in their school or community. This could involve doing something for a particular person (such as doing yard work for a neighbor or writing a letter of thanks to a teacher who had an impact on their life). It could also involve taking advantage of a volunteer opportunity through their church or school that will benefit the community as a whole.

Give each participant a note card and invite them to write on their cards whatever activity or action they come up with.

Then instruct participants to think of a way that they can be a more faithful reflection of Christ by *not* doing something. In particular, they should identify something that they normally do but know that they should not. This might include gossiping and spreading rumors or picking on a younger sibling. Again, invite participants to write on their note cards whatever they come up with.

Allow participants a couple minutes to think and write. Then divide them into pairs. (It is OK if you have one or two teams of three.) In pairs, or teams, have participants tell one another which two commitments they have made. If someone is uncomfortable revealing one or both of his or her commitments, he or she can say something like, "It involves school" or "It involves my family." Or, a participant may choose not to say anything.

Partners (or teammates) should promise to hold one another accountable to their commitments over the course of the following week. They will do this by giving one another reminders, by asking one another how they are doing, by giving one another encouragement, and—when appropriate—by offering to help.

Closing

Discuss:

- What is one thing you learned during our time together that you didn't know before?
- What is one thing that you will do in the coming week as a result of what we learned or discussed? (Think especially about what you wrote on the note card during the final activity.)

Close with the following prayer or one of your choosing:

Our Father who is in heaven, thank you for this time we've had to learn about and reflect on the words of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Thank you for equipping us to be your representatives here on earth, and give us the strength and wisdom to honor your name through our actions and relationships. In the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray: [Pray the Lord's Prayer.] Amen.

SESSION 2

WHOSE WILL BE DONE?

Lesson Objectives

- Consider what it means for God's will to be done and explore ways we can discern God's will.
- Read Scripture to better understand God's kingdom.
- Examine how God's kingdom is already among us and what it means for us to be a part of it.
- Identify ways to make God's kingdom a reality on earth.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Slips of paper or note cards
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

Opening Activity: Current Song, Old Language

As participants arrive, hand out slips of paper or note cards. Ask each person to think of a favorite line from a popular song, then rewrite their lines in old-timey language, using words such as *thou* and *thine* and *hath*.

When most are present, invite volunteers to read aloud their rewritten lines. As participants read their lines, keep a track of the old-timey words that you hear.

Then go through your list of words. Discuss the meaning, or current-day equivalent, of each word.

Discuss:

- What comes to mind when you hear old-sounding words such as *thee* and *shalt*?
- Why, do you think, do we use words such as *art* and *thy* when we say the Lord's Prayer (instead of using current-day language)?
- What do you think we mean when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done" in the Lord's Prayer?

Open the session with the following prayer or one of your own:

Lord Jesus, thank you for bringing us back together to continue this study of the prayer you taught us. Guide our discussion as we reflect on your will and the coming of God's kingdom. Amen.

Discussion

After we open the Lord's Prayer by addressing God as "Father" and affirming the holiness of God's name, we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

- What are we praying for, or about, when we pray this line?

Read Matthew 6:10 and Luke 11:2, if possible from different translations.

- What do these Scriptures tell us about the meaning of this line?

We pray that God's "will be done."

- What are we talking about when we pray about God's will? (One possible definition: "What God expects and desires from God's people and God's creation.")
- How do we discern, or determine, God's will? How do we know what God desires and expects from us?
- What comes to mind when you think of God's kingdom?

Read aloud each of the following Scriptures. What do Jesus's teachings in these verses tell us about the kingdom of God, or kingdom of heaven?

- Luke 14:15-24
- Matthew 13:31-33
- Matthew 13:44-46

We can fully understand God's kingdom by looking to the teachings and example of Jesus. Read aloud Matthew 22:34-40.

- What do Jesus's teachings in these verses tell us about God's kingdom and how Christ's followers should live in relationship with God and one another?
- How is God's kingdom different from the world we live in?
- What do you think it means for God's kingdom to come "on earth as it is in heaven"?

Read aloud Luke 17:20-21.

- What does Jesus mean when he tells the Pharisees, "God's kingdom is already among you"?

- In what ways do you see people in our community and world living as citizens of God's kingdom by following Christ's example?
- In what ways are these people transforming their communities or the world?
- What can you do to make God's kingdom a reality on earth?

Activity: God's Kingdom Is Like...

Before moving forward with this activity, follow up on the activity from the previous session. Each person had identified two ways that they would be more faithful reflections of Christ during the week, and each person had made a commitment to hold another person accountable to what he or she had decided to do. Ask the group what the experience was like and what difference they saw as a result of doing this.

Then say something like:

We get our clearest vision of God's kingdom from Jesus, and we've already looked at some of Jesus's teachings about the kingdom of God. But we also see visions of God's kingdom elsewhere in Scripture, even in the Old Testament.

Invite volunteers to read aloud each of the following:

- Isaiah 11:6-9
- Micah 4:1-4
- Revelation 21:1-5

Discuss:

- What do these Scriptures tell us about God's kingdom?
- What metaphors or allegories do the Scriptures use to teach us about God's kingdom? (For example, when Isaiah writes that the "wolf will live with the lamb" in Isaiah 11:6, what do you think he is talking about?)

Drawing inspiration from these Scriptures, ask each person to write a description of God's kingdom. Their descriptions may be literal ("In God's kingdom, all people make sure that their neighbors have food and shelter") or figurative ("Dogs and cats will drink together from the water bowl of peace").

You might also give participants the option of drawing their vision of God's kingdom.

Allow participants about five minutes to work. Then invite volunteers to read aloud or show their descriptions of the kingdom.

Then discuss:

- What can you do, as an individual, to make these visions of God's kingdom a reality?
- What can we do, as a group, to make these visions of God's kingdom a reality?

Closing

Discuss:

- What is one thing you learned during our time together that you didn't know before?
- What is one thing that you will do in the coming week as a result of what we learned or discussed?

Close with the following prayer or one of your choosing:

God our King, thank you for this time we've had to learn about and reflect on the words of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Guide us, so that we will live according to your will and do our part to make your kingdom a reality on earth. In the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray: [Pray the Lord's Prayer.] Amen.

SESSION 3

OUR DAILY BREAD

Lesson Objectives

- Explore all the ways that God provides for us and meets our needs.
- Struggle with the truth that many people are nonetheless hungry or lack other necessities.
- Consider how God works through us—followers of Christ—to meet the needs of all people.
- Appreciate all the people who are involved in providing our food and other needs.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

Opening Activity: Our Daily Stuff

As participants arrive, instruct them to list on a sheet of paper all the things that they do every day (or almost every day).

When most are present, invite volunteers to read aloud their lists. See which person has the most complicated daily routine.

Then discuss:

- What are some items you listed that you consider absolutely necessary (things you would never even consider skipping)?
- What are some items on your list that you could probably do without if you had to?

Then ask a volunteer to read aloud Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Discuss:

- What commandment is given to the ancient Israelites in these verses?
- Why is this commandment so important?
- What instructions, related to this commandment, are the Israelites given in these verses?

Say something like:

This commandment to love God with our whole heart, soul, and strength was so important to the ancient Israelites that remembering and reciting it was part of their daily routine.

Discuss:

- What does the Lord's Prayer have to do with our daily routine?
- Where in the Lord's Prayer do we say the word *daily*?

Open the session with the following prayer or one of your own:

Our Father, thank you for bringing us back together to continue this study of the prayer Jesus taught us. Guide our discussion as we reflect on how you provide for us each day. Amen.

Discussion

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say, "Give us this day our daily bread." The Greek word translated as *daily* doesn't necessarily refer to something that happens every day, but to something that is essential or necessary for survival.

- What things are absolutely necessary for your survival?
- What do you think bread refers to? (Be clear that "bread" is not limited to foods made from grains and baked, but likely refers to food in general.)
- In what ways does God provide your daily bread? How does God provide for your other needs?

We have faith that God provides our essential needs. But we also know that there are people in our world and community who are hungry and homeless or lack other basic needs.

- If God is faithful and provides, why are there people whose needs aren't met?
- Which people does God work through to make sure that you have food, shelter, and other essential needs?

Read aloud Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

- What instructions does God give to the ancient Israelites regarding meeting people's basic needs?

We know that we need certain material things, such as food, water, and shelter, to survive. But we have other needs that cannot be met by physical things.

- What other needs do we have?
- How does God, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, meet these other needs?

Read aloud John 6:26-40. (If time permits, you might also read aloud Exodus 16:1-32, which Jesus refers to in the verses from John.)

- What does it mean for Jesus to be the “bread of life”?

Activity: A Different Kind of Food Chain

Discuss:

- Students learn about food chains in science classes. What is a food chain?

Food chains show how energy and nutrients pass from one organism to the next as food. (Plants receive energy and nutrients from the sun and soil; animals eat these plants; other animals eat the plant-eating animals; and so on.) This activity considers another type of food chain: how food makes its way to our cupboards, refrigerators, tables, and drive-through windows.

Make sure each person has a sheet of paper. Have participants draw or describe a favorite meal, including all the major ingredients that they can think of.

Then, for each major ingredient in their meal, instruct participants to create a chain going step-by-step back to the food's origin. Links in the chain might include:

- a cook who prepared the food
- a store where food was purchased
- a truck that shipped the food
- a factory that processed and packaged the food
- a person who harvested the food
- a person who planted the food, and so on.

Allow participants about five minutes to work. (It is OK if they don't have time to make a chain for every major ingredient in their meal.) Then have each person select one item from their meal and describe the “food chain” for that ingredient.

After everyone has had a chance to present their chains, discuss:

- What does this activity teach us about how God provides our daily needs?
- How does this activity change your perspective about the food you eat?

Closing

Discuss:

- What is one thing you learned during our time together that you didn't know before?
- What is one thing that you will do in the coming week as a result of what we learned or discussed?

Close with the following prayer or one of your choosing:

God our provider, thank you for this time we've had to learn about and reflect on the words of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Thank you for providing us with our daily bread. Open our hearts and minds to the ways that you work through people, including us, to meet the needs of all your children. In the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray: [Pray the Lord's Prayer.] Amen.

SESSION 4

FORGIVE...AS WE FORGIVE

Lesson Objectives

- Examine the different ways that we translate what Jesus says about forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer and what these translations say about forgiveness.
- Discuss how we, as God's forgiven people, should extend forgiveness to others.
- Consider what forgiveness is, and what it isn't.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Objects for "Opening Activity: Hold On"; might include a ball or a jacket

Opening Activity: Hold On

As participants arrive, give each person two pencils and/or pens. Ask them to hold one pencil or pen in each hand. Tell them that, no matter what they do, they must keep ahold of the pencil or pen in their hands.

Then give participants various tasks to perform using their hands. You could ask someone to write or draw something on a whiteboard; you could have another catch a ball then toss it to someone else; you could ask a participant to clap or turn a doorknob or put on a jacket or anything else that would be difficult or awkward to do while holding a pencil or pen in each hand.

When most participants are present and have had a chance to perform a task while holding on to pencils or pens, discuss:

- Why do you think I asked you to hold on to the pencils or pens while you did these other tasks?
- In this activity, you physically couldn't let go of the pens or pencils. What are some non-physical things that you have trouble letting go of? (Examples might include a crush, a bad habit, an addictive video game, or a grudge.)
- In the Lord's Prayer, what line follows, "Give us this day our daily bread"?

Open the session with the following prayer or one of your own:

Our Father, thank you for bringing us back together to continue this study of the prayer Jesus taught us. Guide our discussion as we reflect on how we forgive others as you have forgiven us. Amen.

Discussion

In a common version of the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

- Have you ever prayed a different version of this line? If so, what words were different? (Find out if any participants have prayed, "Forgive us our debts," or, "Forgive us our sins.")
- What does the word *trespass* mean when we say it in the Lord's Prayer?
- What does the word *trespass* mean in other contexts? (One way to think of trespassing is "wandering off the correct path." When we are on someone's property without permission, we have wandered off the correct path and into an area where we shouldn't be. Likewise, when we sin, we wander off the path God has set for us.)

Instead of "trespasses" and "those who trespass against us," some people pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

- What is debt? Who are debtors?

Read aloud Matthew 18:23-34.

- According to this parable, how is sin like debt?
- What does this parable teach us about how we treat our debtors? What does it teach us about forgiveness?

Read aloud 1 Peter 2:21-25. In the Lord's Prayer we pray for forgiveness.

- Why can we be confident that God forgives our sins?

After we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses," we pray, "as we forgive those who trespass against us." Look back at Matthew 18:23-34.

- What does this parable teach us about *why* we should forgive those who sin against us?
- What does it mean for us to forgive someone?
- If we forgive someone, does that mean we excuse what that person did or that what that person did no longer matters? (Make sure that participants understand that forgiving bad behavior does not excuse that behavior or make it OK. In some cases, it might not even be safe to spend time

with the person who has been forgiven. Rather, when we forgive, we let go of resentment and hatred; we don't let our anger toward that person control us.)

- Think back to the opening activity. How is forgiveness like letting go?

Read aloud Matthew 18:21-22.

- What, do you think, does Jesus mean when he instructs us to forgive “as many as seventy-seven times”? (One interpretation: As the person we forgive repents and changes his or her behavior, we continue to extend forgiveness to that person.)

Activity: *Acts of Forgiveness*

If you have seven or more participants, divide them into teams of three or four. If you have six or fewer, do this activity as a single group.

Have each team come up with a twenty-first-century version of the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:23-34). Instead of a king forgiving a servant for a large sum of money, teams should think of an authority figure and a large debt that are relevant to their lives. They also should think of a smaller debt that they would have trouble forgiving. (For example: A coach allows a player to miss practice for a week so that she can perform in the school play. Meanwhile, the player is angry at a friend who canceled plans to go out for pizza after the play.)

Teams should jot down a rough outline of their scenarios and prepare to act them out for the entire group.

Allow teams about five minutes to prepare. Then have each team act out its scenario.

Discuss:

- Which authority figures in your life—parents, teachers, coaches, and so forth—have forgiven your big debts?
- Are there things you get mad about that you are guilty of doing yourself? (Invite, but do not pressure, volunteers to give examples.)

Say something like:

When we are angry and resentful and are having trouble forgiving others, we should reflect on the people who have offered us grace and patience and forgiveness. We also should remember that, through Christ's death and resurrection, God forgives us of all sin. And God calls us to extend grace and forgiveness to those who sin against us.

Closing

Discuss:

- What is one thing you learned during our time together that you didn't know before?
- What is one thing that you will do in the coming week as a result of what we learned or discussed?

Close with the following prayer or one of your choosing:

God of grace and forgiveness, thank you for this time we've had to learn about and reflect on the words of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Thank you for the forgiveness we have through Christ. Give us the strength to offer grace, patience, and forgiveness to those who sin against us. In the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray: [Pray the Lord's Prayer.] Amen.

SESSION 5

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Lesson Objectives

- Consider how all humans face temptation and are tempted to do things we know we should not do.
- Explore how we can find the strength and courage to resist temptation.
- Examine where sin and evil come from and how God leads us away from these things.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Slips of paper
- A container such as a jar or hat

Note: See “Activity: Rationalize” below for preparations you’ll need to make beforehand using these supplies.

Opening Activity: I Would Never, Unless...

As participants arrive, ask them to think of (a) one thing they would never do and (b) something that might tempt them to do it anyway. For example: “I would never go skydiving, but I might if you offered me free sushi for life,” or, “I would never hold a python, but I might if you offered me a chance to record in a professional recording studio.”

Encourage participants not to come up with examples that are illegal or morally questionable.

When most participants are present and have had time to think of an example, have each person say what he or she would never do and what he or she would be tempted by.

Then discuss:

- Would these temptations you mentioned also tempt you to do things that are illegal, dangerous, or morally wrong?
- What do you do when you are tempted to do something that you shouldn’t do? Where do you find the strength to resist temptation?

Open the session with the following prayer or one of your own:

Our Father, thank you for bringing us back together to continue this study of the prayer Jesus taught us. Guide our discussion as we reflect on temptation and how we find the strength to be faithful to your will. Amen.

Discussion

The next line in the Lord's Prayer is, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

- Why, do you think, does Jesus include this line in the prayer?

Read Matthew 6:13 and Luke 11:4b (the second sentence of Luke 11:4), if possible from different translations.

- What do these Scriptures tell us about the meaning of this line?
- Why are we as humans tempted to do things we know that we should not do?

Read aloud Genesis 3:1-7. Temptation pops up early in the biblical story.

- Why are the first humans tempted to do the one thing that God instructs them not to do?

Genesis describes the serpent as "intelligent" or "crafty." Jesus encounters a smart, crafty tempter in Matthew 4:1-11. Read aloud these verses.

- What is the first thing the tempter tries to convince Jesus to do? How does Jesus respond to this temptation?
- What is the second temptation Jesus faces? How does he resist this temptation? (Jesus responds to each temptation by citing Scripture. Notice that, here, the devil also uses Scripture to make his case.)
- What is Jesus's third temptation? How does he respond this time?

We pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

- What sorts of things "lead" you to be tempted? (Encourage participants not to name people. Examples might include, "peer pressure," "advertising," or "wanting to impress someone.")

We pray that God will "Lead us not into temptation," not because God causes us to be tempted, but because God leads us away from temptation.

- How does God equip us and empower us to resist temptation?

Read aloud James 1:14-15.

- According to James, where do sin, evil, and death come from?
- What historical figures come to mind when you think of evil?

We remember these people not only because they were evil but also because they convinced large numbers of otherwise normal people to follow them.

- What might cause ordinary people to participate in evil? (You might mention that many people who identified as Christians participated in atrocities such as slavery, the Holocaust, and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.)

Read aloud Ephesians 6:10-17.

- What do these verses teach us about resisting temptation and avoiding evil?

Activity: Rationalize

Beforehand write each of the following situations on a slip of paper.

- cheating on a test at school
- helping another student cheat at school
- lying to a parent and going somewhere you were told not to go
- telling people an embarrassing story about a friend or peer
- making fun of a peer on social media
- driving above the speed limit
- forging a parent's name on a permission slip
- laughing at a joke made at another person's expense
- ignoring a parent's request for you to do the dishes
- breaking something and hiding it instead of admitting what you'd done

Plan to have one slip of paper for each participant. Feel free to put some situations on more than one slip of paper or come up with additional situations of your own. Place all of the slips in a container such as a hat or a jar.

Say something like:

Usually, when we give in to temptation, we don't purposely decide that we're going to do something bad. Instead, we come up with reasons why it is OK. We convince ourselves that it isn't really wrong or that it isn't wrong in one particular situation. Maybe we tell ourselves that it's OK if other people are doing it too.

Ask participants, one at a time, to draw a slip from the container. The participant should read aloud the situation on his or her slip then come up with a justification he or she might give for doing it. (In other words, how might he or she rationalize cheating on a test or lying to a parent.)

By doing this activity participants are not saying that they have done this situation or that they would rationalize doing something they know they shouldn't. And some situations will not be applicable to all participants. For example, not all participants will have had a chance to drive over the speed limit. Still, challenge them to think of ways people might rationalize their behavior in these situations.

Discuss:

- When have you rationalized doing something you knew you shouldn't? (It is OK if some participants don't feel comfortable answering.)
- Why, do you think, do we find ways to justify doing things that we know are wrong?

Say something like:

We are often tempted to do things that we know we should not do. Sometimes, instead of resisting that temptation, we make excuses and rationalizations. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil," we are asking God to give us the strength and courage to resist temptation and live according to God's will.

Closing

Discuss:

- What is one thing you learned during our time together that you didn't know before?
- What is one thing that you will do in the coming week as a result of what we learned or discussed?

Close with the following prayer or one of your choosing:

God of goodness, thank you for this time we've had to learn about and reflect on the words of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Give us the strength and courage to resist temptation and reject evil so that we can be faithful to your will. In the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray: [Pray the Lord's Prayer.] Amen.

SESSION 6

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, POWER, AND GLORY

Lesson Objectives

- Discuss what it means for God to be our king.
- Explore the nature of power and what it means for God to be the ultimate power.
- Consider how we glorify ourselves and others, and how we can give glory to God.
- Identify specific ways we can use our God-given gifts to glorify God.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Large sheets of paper, cardstock, or small posterboards (for making posters)—one per person
- Markers
- Other art supplies for making posters

Opening Activity: One Word at a Time

As participants arrive, ask them to think of something famous—other than the Lord's Prayer—that a lot of people would know. This could be a well-known song, something that children memorize and learn to recite in school, or a popular movie quote.

When most participants have arrived and have had a chance to think of an idea, ask for a volunteer to recite his or her song, saying, or quote slowly, one word at a time. Other participants should join in as soon as they recognize what is being said.

Continue, allowing each person to recite what he or she has chosen. Then discuss:

- Why are so many people familiar with the song, saying, or quote that you chose?
- When do you recite something in unison with a group of people? (Examples include saying the Pledge of Allegiance, singing along to a song at a concert, reciting a creed or affirmation of faith in church, and so forth.)
- When you recite these things, how often do you think about the words that you are saying or singing?
- How often do you think about what you are saying when you pray the Lord's Prayer?

Say something like:

Christians have been praying the Lord's Prayer for nearly two thousand years. There is power in just reciting something that hundreds of millions of people say each week in worship. It unites us with Christians around the world and throughout history. But there is also value in taking time to reflect on these words that Jesus taught us to pray.

Open the session with the following prayer or one of your own:

Our Father, thank you for bringing us back together to conclude this study of the prayer Jesus taught us. Guide our discussion as we reflect on the power of this prayer and what it means for our daily lives. Amen.

Discussion

We usually close the Lord's Prayer by saying, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." Read aloud the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4.

- What do you notice about the Lord's Prayer as it appears in these verses?
- What does *thine* mean? (It is an archaic way of saying "yours.") Who is it referring to?
- What are we saying about God when we pray the closing line of the Lord's Prayer?

The final line of the Lord's Prayer is a doxology.

- Where have you heard the word *doxology*? (If participants are familiar with this term, they may know it as the name of the short song that many congregations sing in worship after taking up the offering.)

A doxology is a brief statement of praise to God. Doxologies appear throughout Scripture. Read aloud a doxology from King David in 1 Chronicles 29:11.

- How is this doxology similar to and different from the final line of the Lord's Prayer?

Kings don't have a great deal of power in our world, but the first Christians who prayed the Lord's Prayer lived in a world where kings, emperors, and other monarchs wielded a great deal of power.

- What kind of statement were they making by praying, "For thine is the kingdom"? (It says that God, and not any earthly king, is the ultimate authority; it identifies them as a citizen of God's kingdom, regardless of what earthly nation they belong to.)
- What does, "For thine is the kingdom," mean for us living in places not ruled by kings?

- What does *power* mean in this context? What does it mean for a person to have power? Where does this power come from?
- What are some famous examples from history of human leaders abusing or misusing their power?
- For what reasons might someone be tempted to abuse his or her power?
- In what situations do you have power? (Encourage participants to think about situations where they have influence over other people.) When have you been tempted to abuse this power?
- What are some ways that God has used God's power? (Think about examples from Scripture or from your personal experience.)

When we pray the doxology to the Lord's Prayer, we say that power belongs to God.

- When we recognize God has the ultimate power, how does it affect our relationship to earthly powers? (On one hand, we should remember that we answer to God and not to any earthly powers; on the other hand, it is also important to recognize that God works through and empowers humans—including us—as God's representatives on earth.)
- What is glory? (Look up definitions of the word in online dictionaries.)
- Whom do you glorify? What persons do you promote or celebrate or boast about?
- In what ways do you glorify yourself?

In the doxology of the Lord's Prayer, we say that glory belongs to God.

- In what ways do we glorify God?

Activity: Glorify You, Glorify Me, Glorify God

Divide participants into pairs. It is OK to have a team of three to make the numbers work.

Give each person a large sheet of paper (or a small posterboard or sheet of cardstock). Make sure everyone has access to scrap paper for notes and assorted art supplies.

Instruct the partners, or teammates, to interview each other, asking the following questions:

- What are you good at?
- What do you like most about yourself?
- What are your best qualities?
- What are some things you really care about?

During the interviews, interviewers should jot notes on scrap paper.

Then each person should use information from the interview to create a poster promoting, or glorifying, his or her partner. (In a team of three, each person will make a poster for one other person in the team.)

Allow about ten minutes for pairs to interview each other and make posters. Then invite each participant to present her or his poster.

Say something like:

Each one of us is worthy of glory. We all have skills and qualities that make a positive difference in our community and world. We should celebrate these things. But we also should remember where they come from. God blesses us with gifts and talents, as well as opportunities to use them. When we work hard to develop a skill or when we use one of our qualities to show love to another person, we glorify God, the source of all our gifts.

Gather participants in a circle. Begin a prayer by saying, "Thank you, God, for blessing us with so many gifts, talents, and opportunities that we can use to glorify you and show your love to others." Then go around the circle. Each person should say, "Thank, you God, for . . .," and complete the sentence with a positive quality of the person whom they made a poster for. After you have gone all the way around the circle, close by praying, "May we use all of these gifts for your glory. Amen."

Closing

Discuss:

- What is one thing you learned during our time together that you didn't know before?
- What is one thing that you will do in the coming week as a result of what we learned or discussed?

Close with the following prayer or one of your choosing:

God of power and glory, thank you for this time we've had to learn about and reflect on the words of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Empower us to be faithful servants of your kingdom and equip us to use the gifts you have given us for your glory. In the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray: [Pray the Lord's Prayer.] Amen.