

THE LORD'S PRAYER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 6:1-18

*We live for the praise of God, not man.*

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Give in secret – This passage seems to contradict the one that came a chapter before. In Matthew 5:16 Jesus taught we should not keep our light hidden. Now we are instructed to keep our acts of righteousness hidden in secret. What is the difference? Clearly Jesus is speaking against the way the hypocrites lived, parading their good works for all to see. They wanted to look good in front of others. Outwardly they displayed their good works, but inwardly they were full of sin.

Pray in secret - Jesus continues to warn against hypocrisy using the illustration of prayer. He is not prohibiting public prayer. Rather He is speaking against those who, when praying, draw attention to themselves. Their focus, rather than being on God, is on themselves. Their concern, rather than being communion with God, is the praise of their fellow man.

Jesus goes on to teach His disciples how to pray. The first half of the Lord's Prayer is all about giving God the glory due His name. This stands in stark contrast to the self-glorifying prayer of the hypocrite. Jesus then introduces his hearers to the amazing truth that God is our Father in heaven. God is personal. He is our Father. He has a name, a kingdom, and a will. After celebrating the glory of God and His person, the prayer moves on to requesting help from God for daily living. What an amazing truth! Jesus encourages us to ask God for help.

Fast in secret - Jesus continues His warning against hypocrisy by using a third illustration of fasting. In each case, with good works, prayer, and fasting, Jesus mentions a reward. Even though all we do is by God's grace, God promises to reward us for the good works He enables us to do! But if we do our good works to receive praise from men, that praise will be our only reward.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 6:1-18

WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

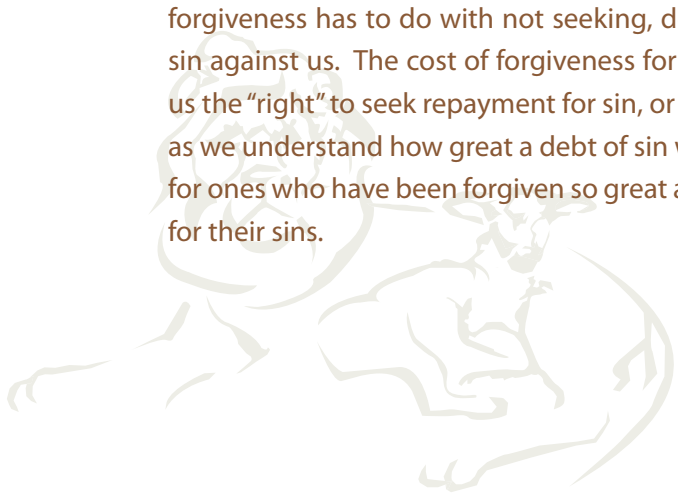
Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

When Jesus prayed that God's kingdom would come and His will be done, He was praying for His own death to be accomplished. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane for the cup of suffering to pass, but only according to the will of His Father. Jesus came as a servant, lived a sinless life, and then gave up His life so that we could be delivered from temptation and evil. Apart from the work of Christ, the Lord's Prayer would be meaningless.

Forgiveness would not be possible if it were not for Jesus' death on the cross. God can forgive us only because the penalty for our sin has been taken by Jesus. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness. The Lord's Prayer would be meaningless if Jesus were not to die on the cross to make forgiveness possible.

Forgiveness marks our lives as Christians – the Lord's Prayer assumes those who seek God's forgiveness have already forgiven those who have sinned against them. Jesus concludes the Lord's Prayer by explaining that forgiving others is a requirement to receiving forgiveness. This does not mean that we can earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others. Rather, this is one of many indicators of true conversion. If we understand our sinfulness and the tremendous suffering Jesus endured to make a way for our forgiveness, we will gladly forgive others.

Our sin against God is worse than any crime that might be committed against us. If, however, we do not understand the priceless gift of God's forgiveness, we won't have a basis to forgive the debt of others against us. There is always a cost to forgiveness. Jesus endured the Father's wrath for our sin. He bore the cost of our sin in a justifying, redeeming way. Of course, we cannot do that. For us, the cost of forgiveness has to do with not seeking, demanding, or subtly exacting some kind of payment for the sin against us. The cost of forgiveness for us is in releasing the debt owed. Genuine forgiveness costs us the "right" to seek repayment for sin, or to try to somehow "get even." Such forgiving is only possible as we understand how great a debt of sin we have been forgiven in the gospel. It is simply unthinkable for ones who have been forgiven so great a debt of sin against a holy God to exact payment from others for their sins.



THE LORD'S PRAYER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 6:1-18

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 53:8

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus was stricken for our transgressions. The wrath of God was poured out on Him instead of us. In 1 Corinthians 15:3 Paul says that Christ died for us in accordance with the Scriptures. Paul also says that this is of first importance and the heart of the Gospel.

Questions for reflection:

- Why is Jesus standing as our substitute so important? (We are all sinners and deserve to be punished for our sin. If Jesus did not take our place, no one would be able to go to heaven. Instead we would all be judged forever in the fires of hell.)
- What does it mean that Jesus was stricken for our transgressions? (Jesus was stricken in two ways: by man and by God. Jesus-- the perfect, sinless man-- was persecuted and beaten by men. Secondly, Jesus was cursed by God upon the cross, and the wrath for our sin was poured out on Jesus.)



THE LORD'S PRAYER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 6:1-18

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Supplies:

Bring in enough sweet bread or sweet rolls for the entire class. (Be sure to leave nuts out of any recipe as many folks are allergic to nuts.)

Write the following verses on index cards but leave the references off.

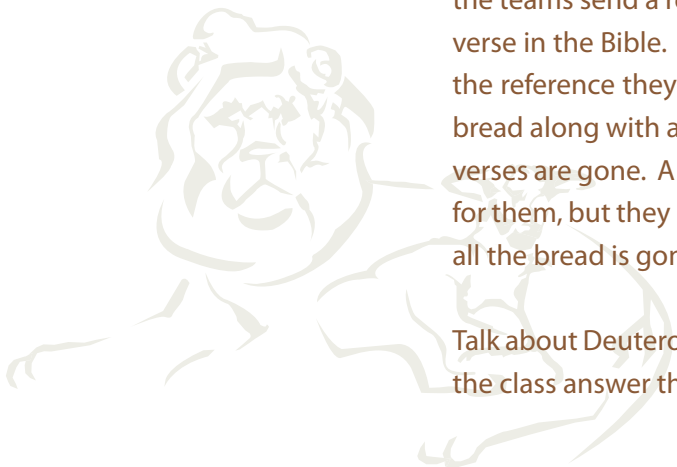
| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Genesis 18:6 | Exodus 16:4 | Exodus 34:28 | Deuteronomy 8:3 |
| 1 Kings 17:13 | Proverbs 31:27 | Luke 22:19 | John 6:51 |
| John 21:13 | Acts 2:46 | | |

Description: The object of this game is to illustrate the connection between our daily bread and the Word of God.

Divide the class up into teams. Each team can earn a portion of sweet bread or rolls for each reference they find. (Divide the bread up into ten portions. The team that gets the most verses correct will get the most bread.)

Place the cards face down on a table in front and when you give the word "go" have the teams send a representative up to select a card. His team must then locate the verse in the Bible. (They may use a concordance if they have one.) Once they find the reference they should show it to you and then, if correct, take their portion of bread along with a new verse back to their team. This should continue until all the verses are gone. A team may bring a verse back up to exchange it if it is too difficult for them, but they may only do that twice in the game. The game ends either when all the bread is gone or the class is stumped.

Talk about Deuteronomy 8:3 which Jesus quotes in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4. Have the class answer the question, How is the Word of God like bread to us?



THE LORD'S PRAYER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 6:1-18

A LITTLE MISUNDERSTANDING

Supplies:

trumpet or other horn

Do this humorous ad lib skit with a fellow teacher. Don't worry about memorizing lines, just act it out.

One teacher plays the role of the hypocrite who misreads the Scripture and is trying to be a good Christian by doing all three outward demonstrations of hypocrisy: They are announcing their giving with trumpets, babbling prayers out loud, and disfiguring their face in strange ways.

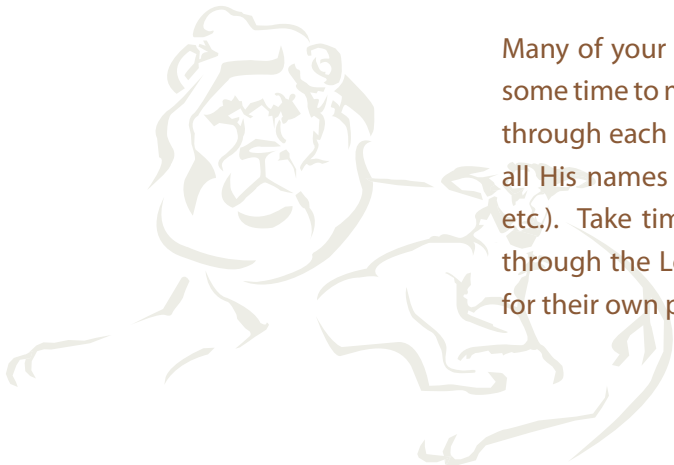
When class starts, the hypocrite should come into the class with a trumpet and blow on it and announce they just gave to the church's orphan's fund. Then the hypocrite immediately starts making faces followed by another trumpet blast and an announcement that they are going to fast today. Throw in a few loudly babbled prayers and repeat until interrupted by the teacher.

The teacher should stop the hypocrite and inquire as to what he is doing. The hypocrite should say that he is just trying to be a good Christian and then explain that he is giving (blow the horn), praying (babble a prayer), and fasting (say with a disfigured face). To this ridiculous act the teacher should explain that he is doing a few things wrong.

The teacher should open up the Bible to Matthew 6 and read through it. The hypocrite should look surprised and read the text himself out loud. Every place it says "not" he should pronounce the word "note." That of course will completely reverse the meaning of the text. The teacher can laugh, explain the difference between note and not and then continue teaching the lesson.

MEMORIZE AND PRAY THROUGH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Many of your students may have already memorized the Lord's Prayer. Take some time to memorize it through repetition. Then set aside some time praying through each part. Expand upon what is written. For instance, praise God for all His names (Creator, Almighty, Lord of Lords, King, Prince of Peace, Father etc.). Take time to hear the daily requests and petitions of the class. Going through the Lord's Prayer in this expanded way will give them a great model for their own prayer lives.



THE LORD'S PRAYER

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 6:1-18

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:
pencil and paper

Draw a picture of a hypocrite fasting. What would a fasting hypocrite look like? See Matthew 6:16-18

FOR THE OLDER GRADES

BE A HYPOCRITE

Supplies:
pencil and paper

Divide the class up into groups of 5. Have them review the passage and create a short skit to illustrate one of the following: Hypocrisy in good deeds, prayer, or fasting. Have them use Matthew 6:16-18 as their reference and give them the liberty to modernize their presentations to make them believable for today. Talk about ways hypocrisy finds its way into the lives of youth today and how genuine Christianity stands in contrast.

How does the way we live our lives when no one is watching give us a real picture into our lives of faith? (Hypocrisy rarely keeps up its act in private but usually only parades when others are looking. If a person acts one way in front of Christians and another way in private when no Christians are watching, they should examine their lives closely for hypocrisy.)

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Hypocrite – The word hypocrite originated as a Greek term for an actor in a drama who pretended to be someone other than himself. In the Bible a hypocrite is someone who pretends to love God on the outside but has sinful motives in his heart.