

Unit 4: Our Beliefs

Lesson 24:

Prayer: Talking With God

Welcome to Confirmation Class

Confirm Series: Lessons 24-25

As we wait to begin, take a moment to review our goals and expectations for class:

Lesson Goals



As a result of this lesson, I will be able to...

- Understand what prayer is and how to practice it on a regular basis.
- Explore different ways to talk and listen to God during prayer.

Class Expectations



- WORK HARD
- BE KIND

For Fun!



Be ready to share one of the following responses:

- What is one great thing from this week?
- What is one prayer request you have?
- What is one prayer habit you have?
(certain time of day, location...)

Pray without ceasing.



1 Thessalonians 5:17

Tentative Agenda

5:00-5:05= *Welcome/Opening Prayer*

5:05-5:40= *Lesson 24: Prayer, Talking with God*

5:40-5:55= Break/Snack

5:55-6:25= *Lesson 25: Prayer, Listening to God*

6:25-6:30= *Wrap Up/Closing*

Opening Prayer

Dear God, We thank You for bringing us together today.

As we learn about the power of prayer, help us to understand how to talk to You and, just as importantly, how to listen. Teach us to make prayer a regular part of our lives, so that we can grow closer to You each day.

May our hearts and minds be open to Your voice. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

00

Prayer Survey

Answer each of these honestly, your name will not be shared with the group. Be thoughtful in your responses. There are no right or wrong answers.

* Required

1. Select the response that best represents your views. *

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I believe that God always answers prayer.	<input type="radio"/>				
Even though I don't always see an obvious answer to prayer, I believe that God has answered.	<input type="radio"/>				
If God appears to say "no" to my prayer, I realize it is for my own good.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please take the anonymous survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/7smKMg1m7X>



- What is prayer?
- There isn't just one way to pray.
 - Sometimes just saying thanks can be enough.
 - God doesn't want us to pray only when things are tough or when things seem great.
 - God wants us to pray all of the time...like breathing.
 - Prayer is simply communication with God.
- There are many different types of prayers.
 - There is no wrong way to pray. God wants to hear from us regardless of what we say.
 - Praying takes practice, just like being good at conversations requires practice.
 - Remember that conversations have two parts: speaking and listening.
 - Sometimes prayers can be simply being quiet and listening.
- We believe that prayer is the lifeblood of every disciple of Christ and that it is essential to our Spiritual health.
 - But let's face it, a consistent prayer life is hard.
 - We have more things vying for our attention and focus than ever before and it seems like we're busier than we've ever been.
 - Because of this, it's easy to fall into a shallow prayer life that only happens when things in our life aren't going the way we planned.
 - So how can we avoid this and cultivate a life of prayer that can be built into the rhythms of our every day?
- When I struggle to know how to pray or what to pray for, I find it helpful to follow a guide.
 - Let's look at a few helpful guides to get you started in your prayer life.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

Amen.

- It can be difficult, however, to know where to start.
 - One of the greatest examples is given to us by Jesus in the Bible.
 - The Lord's Prayer is a guiding framework for the practice of prayer.
 - This is just one example of how to pray and an excellent place to begin if you are unsure of how to pray.
- Why Do We Pray the Lord's Prayer?
 - When we understand how to pray through the Lord's Prayer, we have a greater understanding of how to pray.
 - Even though the Lord's Prayer may seem simple, we can learn a lot about who God is and our relationship with our Creator in the practice of prayer.
 - Each section of the prayer teaches us about God and also teaches us one of the best ways to pray.
- In [Luke 11](#), right after Jesus teaches His followers the Lord's Prayer, He tells them that God is the perfect parent who loves and cares for us.

- Jesus tells us to knock at the door and God will answer.
- We should bring our prayers to God, the one who cares for us.
- If you need encouragement in prayer, the Lord’s Prayer can help guide you and teach you.

- Our Father in Heaven
 - The prayer starts by acknowledging God as our Father in heaven. This sets the tone for our relationship with Him. He’s not a distant God but a loving Father who cares deeply for us.
 - How does viewing God as our Father change the way we approach Him in prayer?
- Hallowed Be Your Name
 - “Hallowed” means holy and revered. By saying this, we’re recognizing and honoring God’s holiness. It’s like saying, “You are special, God!”
 - What does it mean for us to treat God’s name as holy in our daily lives?
- Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done
 - Here, we’re praying for God’s plans and purposes to be fulfilled on earth, just as they are in heaven. It’s a way of saying, “God, we want your way, not ours.”
 - How can we actively seek God’s will in our lives and live according to His kingdom values?
- Give Us Today Our Daily Bread
 - This part reminds us to trust God for our daily needs, not just physical but also spiritual and emotional. It’s about dependence on Him.
 - In what areas of your life do you need to trust God more for your daily needs?
- Forgive Us Our Debts
 - We’re asking God for forgiveness for our wrongdoings, but notice the catch – we must also forgive others. Forgiveness is key in our relationship with God.
 - Why is it important to forgive others as God forgives us?
- Lead Us Not into Temptation, But Deliver Us from the Evil One
 - This is a plea for God’s protection against temptation and evil. It acknowledges our vulnerability and our need for His guidance and strength.
 - How can we actively seek God’s help to overcome temptation in our lives?

A.C.T.S Prayer

How To Pray:

A - Adoration	<i>Tell God how wonderful He is; worship Him</i>
C - Confession	<i>Admit your sins, cry out your brokenness, ask for forgiveness</i>
T - Thanksgiving	<i>Say "thank you" for all God has done in your life</i>
S - Supplication	<i>Make your requests to God - for yourself and for others</i>

- Modeled after Jesus' example prayer in Matthew 6 (referred to as the Lord's Prayer), the A.C.T.S prayer method is a great tool to help keep you engaged in prayer and communion with our Lord. This acronym highlights four key aspects of Jesus' teaching on prayer.
 - A: Adoration, giving God praise and honor
 - C: Confession, telling God what is heavy on your heart
 - T: Thanksgiving, letting God know what you're grateful for
 - S: Supplication, praying for the needs of others

The 5 Finger Prayer



The 5 Finger Prayer

1. Your thumb is nearest to you...so begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you--family and friends.
2. Next is the pointer finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors and ministers.
3. The middle finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for government officials, administrators, and leaders in business and industry.
4. Our ring finger is our weakest finger. It should remind us to pray for those who are struggling, feel weak or are in need.
5. And lastly comes the pinky, the smallest finger of all, which should remind you to pray for yourself. When you are done praying for the other four groups, you will be able to see your own needs in a good perspective.



- To help people learn to pray, Cardinal Bergoglio created the 5 finger prayer method.
 - Using a visual most everyone possesses – our fingers – he made a way to visualize their prayers and take them with them wherever they go.
 - Eventually, Cardinal Bergoglio became Pope Francis and now the 5 finger prayer method is a well-known teaching method.
 - This method serves as a simple yet powerful tool to direct our prayers in the right direction, fostering gratitude and compassion.
- Understanding the 5 Finger Prayer
 - The 5 Finger Prayer is a method of prayer that utilizes each finger on one hand to represent different categories of people and things to pray for.
 - As you move through the fingers of their hand, you focus your thoughts and intentions on specific aspects of life, offering prayers of gratitude, supplication, and intercession.
 - What I think is also such a cool memory trick is that the strength or location of each finger can loosely help you remember which people group you are praying for.
- Thumb: Family & Friends
 - Those closest to you.
 - Begin your prayer journey by focusing on your thumb, which represents those closest to you – your family, friends, and loved ones.
 - Offer prayers of thanksgiving for their presence in your life, as well as petitions for their health, happiness, and well-being.

- Index Finger: Teachers & Mentors
 - Those who point the way.
 - Next, move to your index finger or pointer finger, symbolizing those who guide and inspire you – teachers, mentors, spiritual leaders, and role models.
 - Offer prayers of gratitude for their wisdom and guidance, as well as requests for strength and discernment in their endeavors.
- Middle Finger: Government & Church Leaders
 - Those in authority.
 - The middle finger or tallest finger represents those in positions of authority – government leaders, policymakers, and authorities in various institutions.
 - Offer prayers for wisdom, integrity, and compassion in their decision-making, as well as petitions for justice, peace, and unity in the world.
- Ring Finger: Homeless, Weak, & Hurting
 - Those who are weak and vulnerable.
 - Move on to your ring finger, symbolizing those who are weak and vulnerable – the sick, the oppressed, the marginalized, and the suffering.
 - Offer prayers of compassion, healing, and liberation, as well as petitions for justice and mercy in their lives.
- Pinky Finger: Yourself
 - Pray for yourself!
 - Finally, focus on your smallest finger, representing your own needs last.
 - Offer prayers of self-reflection, repentance, and surrender, acknowledging your own weaknesses and shortcomings.
 - Seek guidance, strength, and grace to live a life of purpose, service, and love.

Unit 4: Our Beliefs

Lesson 25:

Prayer: Listening to God



- Listening to God is just as important as talking to Him.
 - It is imperative to be still and know God. Sometimes prayer isn't about saying the right thing, but rather it is about taking the time to push everything aside for focus on God.
 - Listening is an essential skill in relationships.
 - In a world full of distractions, we must work hard to tune in to what others are saying and show others we care.
 - Although we may not always think of prayer this way, listening is also a vital part of prayer.
- In the story of Elijah, he is a great prophet (chosen by God to deliver God's message) who we find hiding in a cave because he had challenged the prophets of Baal, a false god many worshipped, including Queen Jezebel.
 - He showed the prophets the power of God at Mount Sinai while disapproving Baal.
 - Because of his boldness, his life was in danger.
 - Elijah was frustrated because he felt that everyone had lost their way and they no longer followed God, and he was scared because he thought that he was alone.
- **Read: 1 Kings 19:3-13 as a group.**
 - The story says that God didn't come to Elijah in a booming voice or a great sign.
 - God wasn't in the wind or the earthquake or the fire. God communicated through a "thin, quiet sound."
 - Some translations say "a whisper" or a "still, small voice."
 - We sometimes expect God to be revealed through miracles or great signs, but often God is found in the stillness.
 - We may not hear an audible voice, but we can experience and sense God's presence in moments of quiet and reflection.
 - But that is hard to do.

- Our lives are filled with noise and busyness.
- If we are honest, we are so used to the stimulus of our screens, it is hard to just breathe and listen for God.



- Prayer playlist:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0A13s_gMBQC6ax3G85k3v1wAnrKFH03W
- 3 Ways to Focus When You Pray:
https://youtu.be/hjs4t47xNFQ?si=VSbc_IUVuIXBPeDT



- Who do you consider your best friend? Or at least a close friend?
 - How often do you talk to this person?
 - Can you consider them your best/closest friend if you don't talk to them? Know anything about them?
- When we think about our best or closest friends, the more we talk to them and spend time together, the stronger our bond becomes.
 - The same is true with our relationship with God.
 - When we make time to talk to God through prayer and listen for His voice, we grow closer to Him.
 - Just like with a friend, the more we communicate, the deeper our connection becomes.
 - Prayer is a way to nurture that closeness, sharing our thoughts and feelings, and also taking time to listen for God's guidance and love.
 - The more we do this, the more we experience His presence and strengthen our relationship with Him.

PRAYER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATION OF YOUR DAY. TAKE IT TO GOD BEFORE YOU TAKE IT TO ANYONE ELSE!

5 Finger Prayer

In the boxes below write the names of those you want to pray for

Thumb - Pray for family & friends

Index Finger - Pray for teachers and mentors

Middle Finger - Pray for government and church leaders

Ring Finger - Pray for the homeless, weak, and hurting

Pinkie - Pray for your own needs

Prayer Journal

TODAY'S DATE ____/____/____

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

PRAYER FOR MYSELF

PRaise AND THANKSGIVING

HOW HAVE I SEEN THE HAND OF GOD IN MY LIFE TODAY?

PRAY MORE, WORRY LESS

My Prayer List:

Ways I will pray for my family and friends:

Ways I will pray for my world:

Ways I will pray for my community:

Ways God has answered my prayers:

Prayer is simply talking to God like a friend and should be the easiest thing we do each day.

Joyce Meyer

- There are lots of ways to pray.
 - Lots of ways to talk and listen to God.
 - Using resources and tools can help you stay focused on what you want to talk to God about and what God is trying to tell you.
 - Take a few minutes to sit quietly in prayer—you can sit anywhere in either room, but like the video said, you need to stay focused.
 - Use any of the pages provided and just as much as you talk, take the time to listen.
- *[Time for prayer—about 10 minutes]*
 - What did you find the hardest about this exercise?
 - What was easiest about this prayer time?
 - What do you hope to incorporate into your daily prayer life after today's lesson?

Wrap-Up

Confirm Series: Lessons 24-25

As we wrap up class, lets go over a few things together:

Objective

The objective of class today was...

- Understand what prayer is and how to practice it on a regular basis.
- Explore different ways to talk and listen to God during prayer.

Application

Today's lesson is important to me because...

Closing Prayer

One confirmand will lead us in a closing prayer.

Upcoming Dates

- Friday, February 27
 - Voices of Pride performance
- Sunday, March 1
 - SNL...Professional cookie decorating
- Sunday, March 8
 - Mentor Meet-Up
 - Confirmation Class
- Sunday, March 15
 - SNL...Easter Eve set creation
- Thursday, March 26
 - Culver's Dining for Dollars
 - Bernie's Book Bank volunteering