

**Upper Primary**

**The first in a series of four.**

**Prayer** - Beginners' guide.

**Aim:**

To see that prayer is central to the believing Christian, to know the importance of prayer and to establish a prayer routine.

**Scripture:**

Luke 6: 12-19, 27-36

**Memory verse:**

'Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.'  
James 5:13

**Thought for the teacher:**

We look at the questions of when and what of prayer, which is general. The specific example will be of praying for enemies. The ending will be to focus back on the centre of prayer, that is God. Prayer is about communicating with God and ensuring that He is the focus, not us.

**Bible focus****Down to earth**

Can you remember a time when you were chosen for something? Perhaps it's a childhood memory, like selection for a sports team or a part in a play, or maybe it's a more recent example, such as a job appointment. How did you feel? Special? Probably. Excited? Hopefully. A little daunted by the challenges ahead? Very possibly!

As the twelve disciples made their way down the mountainside that morning, they must have felt a similar mix of emotions. Their appointment as Jesus' apostles carried a clear sense of privilege and purpose. If it wasn't enough to come to terms with, Jesus then gave them a 'blueprint' for discipleship which touched their deepest actions, motivations and attitudes, and included a challenge to love which was almost overwhelming in its scope and depth.

**An example to follow**

In the life of a disciple, prayer should not be self-seeking, but broad and generous, and should include those who do nothing to deserve our care and concern. Luke's interest in describing these incidents is deeper still, though. He tells us that before choosing the disciples and beginning to teach them, Jesus went up onto a mountainside and spent the whole night in prayer. Are these just details to give added interest to the story? I don't think so. Luke aims to show Jesus in prayer, and his intention was that his readers should

incorporate Jesus' prayer patterns into their own lives.

My experiences of being on mountains have helped take me out of my everyday experiences and have given me fresh perspectives! In the Bible, mountains are often places of worship and encounters with God. There are no mountains near where I live now, but Jesus shows me through this passage that I need to find somewhere to pray where I can focus on Him. Jesus clearly valued communion with God so highly that He was willing to give it time - lots of it! - and to sacrifice something for it, in this case, the comfort of a night's sleep.

We would probably be very happy to do all these things - to get up and go somewhere, to spend time and to give something up - in order to be with a good friend or a loved one... But would we consider doing it for God?

Elaine Williams

**Prayer**

Father, We want to speak to You and hear from You. Please help us to learn something new about what You say in the Bible about prayer.

Amen.

## Jumpstart



Begin today's lesson using the four simple questions from Resource 5A - Vital Importance. Have the children choose **one** item which is absolutely vital to be able to do that activity. Go through the answers and explain that although all the items are associated with the activity, there is only **one** that is absolutely necessary.

To follow God there are many things that are associated with being a Christian but there are certain things that are absolutely necessary. Today we are going to look at one of the necessities that Jesus viewed as important.

Divide the group into pairs and give one member a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Their partner should have a copy of Luke 6:12-16. If you have an odd number in the group, use a leader to make the number even.

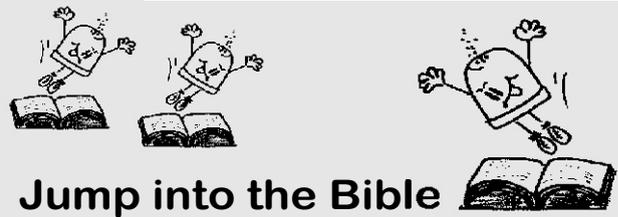
Stand all the members who have a piece of paper and pen/pencil on one side of the room. These are the writers. Stand all the members with a copy of the text on the opposite side of the room, preferably at least ten paces away from their partner. They should be facing their partner, as they are the readers.

When you say 'go', the readers have two minutes to read as much of the text out loud as they can. Their writing partner must write down as much as they can, accurately, within the time.

Give a prize to the pair who successfully wrote down the most from the text. Explain that the activity was difficult because of the amount of noise created and that it was easy to be distracted. When we pray, we are talking to God, and we can be easily distracted unless we are able to find a place where we can concentrate on talking to Him.

If your class is too big and they do not all have Bibles and pens, have two or more children choose a partner, and have these couples stand at opposite sides of the room as above. One partner tries to get a message or story across the room to their partner. After a short time (*of chaos!*) have the person listening repeat back what he/she heard.

Today we are going to see where and how Jesus drew His strength and power - from prayer - and how He ensured He was not distracted.



## Jump into the Bible

Before the session, write the names of the twelve apostles (Luke 6: 4 - 16) clearly on cards, plus at least eight other Biblical names. On the back of the apostles' cards, write key words from today's Bible passages, e.g pray, night, called, chose, healed, power (*and in a different colour*) love, enemies, hate, pray, give, Father.

Spread the cards, names uppermost, on the floor or table, or put them around the room. Ask the children to use Luke 6: 14 -16 to check which of these names were men that Jesus chose to be His apostles or close followers. (*We also call them disciples.*)

Ask the children to hold the twelve cards they have selected and look at the words on the back. Read Luke 6: 12,13, 17 - 19). Whenever you read a word that appears on a card, a child brings it out or places it on the table. (*Pray is used twice.*) Ask the children how Jesus had started His day. Let them suggest why He prayed, and what He might have been praying about.

Say that Jesus told the crowd about living God's way - and who to pray for. Read Luke 6: 27 - 36, asking the children to bring words out. Was Jesus asking something impossible? How would things change if people prayed for their enemies?

Review the lesson with a short quiz as a group or in teams:

- ? Who did Jesus pray for before choosing 12 to be apostles? (*v13 - **disciples***)
- ? Who do we need to love? (*V27 - **enemies***)
- ? Who should we do good for? (*V27 - **those who hate us***)
- ? Who do we need to bless? (*V28 - **those who curse us***)
- ? Who should we pray for? (*V28 - **those who are cruel or ill-treat us***)
- ? If someone takes your coat, what else should you give him? (*V29 - **your shirt***)
- ? If someone slaps or hits you, what should you do? (*V29 - **let him slap or hit your other cheek too***)
- ? If we carry out Jesus' words, what will we get? (*V35 - **a great reward***)

After the quiz, ask the children what they think about how Jesus says we should treat those who are our enemies, those who are cruel to us or ill-treat us etc. What difference will it make to pray for them? Encourage honesty and ask them how easy

📖 they think it is to follow Jesus' example. Stress that praying changes the one who prays as well as changing the one who is prayed for.

📖 Look at Resource 5A and fill in the missing words by searching the relevant passages. When all the words have been found, the children should find and circle these words in the wordsearch grid.

There will be 47 letters not circled. These spare letters can be used to spell out a challenge for the children. Get them to work out the challenge by working down the grid from left to right and taking each spare letter in order. These form the sentence: **'Jesus used prayer as a lifeline to God and also wants us to.'**

## Jump into Life



☺ Read clearly through the interview on Resource 5B 'It's personal' or have one child read out the questions and another read out Andy's answers.

Ask them to think about what Andy has said and to think about whether their prayer life could be improved and how.

Pause for a quick game giving you a chance to find out what the children know / perceive to understand about prayer. Explain that you are going to say a word or phrase. You want them to say the first thing that comes into their head when they hear the word (*either to call it out or to write it down*).

Say the following: Prayer -

When do we pray?

Why do we pray?

How do we pray?

What is prayer?

Be sure to deal with any untruths that may come out.

Teach the memory verse: **'Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.'** James 5:13

It would be fitting, and if time and resources permit, to complete the prayer schedule and take it home. It's always a bonus that a child is equipped in this way. It is, of course, no guarantee that they will use it but if they are asked or reminded in the following weeks, it could well start them off with a wonderful, life long prayer habit.



## Words of Life

### Memory Verse:

James 5:13

**'Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.'**

Split the class into two groups. Each group will take it in turns to speak and act.

Group 1 says the verse, pausing at each sentence to allow Group 2 to mime an appropriate action, e.g

Group 1 - say 'Is anyone of you in trouble?'

Group 2 - act sad / worried.

Group 1 - say 'He should pray.'

Group 2 - kneel down

And so on!

### Resource pages:

- 5A - Vital importance, wordsearch
- 5B - Prayer schedule, 'It's personal' interview



### You will need:

- Jumpstart: Paper, pen/ pencil for each person in first group and a copy of Luke 6:12-16 for each in the other half.
- Jump into the Bible: Resource 5A, a Bible and a pen or pencil, sweets as prizes.
- Jump into Life: Resource 5B, a pen and a beanbag or ball.

### Song suggestions:

- ♪ Read your Bible, pray everyday
- ♪ Whisper a prayer in the morning
- ♪ Be still and know that I am God
- ♪ If you believe, I believe

### Extra Time:

Divide into groups of about five and give each group a copy of Luke 6: 27-36. Ask them to re-read the passage together. Give them 5 minutes to put together a minute-long sketch which illustrates something from the passage, perhaps using a modern parallel.

Ask each group to show the others their sketch, giving encouragement to the groups when they have all finished. Return to one group, and ask them how they feel about praying for their enemies, for those who hate or treat them badly. Encourage honesty. Bring in the issues of forgiveness and the need to 'let go' of things, even when we feel an injustice has been done.

Emphasize Jesus' example, the great reward in verse 35 and being as merciful as God in verse 36. Handle this discussion wisely as there could be children with anger, bitterness and regret, especially in countries where the political and economical climate is affecting their daily lives.

# Vital Importance

What do you need in order to play basketball?



- Skill.
- A ball and hoop.
- The rules of the game.
- A referee.
- Your sports kit.



Tick the correct answer for each question.

What must you have in order to drive?



- A driving licence.
- Your own car.
- Passengers.
- Money.

What must you have in order to travel to a foreign country?



- Foreign money.
- A suitcase.
- A passport.
- A good book.
- New clothes.



What do you need in order to watch television?



- A digital box.
- A comfy chair.
- Snacks.
- A television guide.
- Electricity.

Is any one of you in trouble?  
He should pray.  
Is anyone happy?  
Let him sing songs of

# Find it out!

Check your answers by finding them all in the wordsearch grid. When you have completed this you will have 47 letters not circled. These letters will make a sentence, which is a challenge to you. Work out the sentence and challenge by starting at the top left hand corner of the grid and moving from left to right along each line down taking the letters in order.

Using your Bible, answer the following questions by filling in the relevant words.

What time of day was Jesus praying?

- 1 Matthew 14:23 \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark 1:35 \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ in the morning  
Luke 6:12 \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Where was Jesus?

- 2 Mark 14:32 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 23:32-35 On the \_\_\_\_\_

How did Jesus pray ?

- 3 Luke 9:18  
In private (or \_\_\_\_\_)

Who was Jesus with?

- 4 Luke 9:28 \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

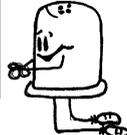
s	j	j	e	s	u	s	v	u	t
e	n	o	l	a	s	e	e	c	h
m	d	h	p	r	a	y	r	e	g
a	r	n	a	r	s	o	y	a	i
j	l	i	e	f	s	e	e	l	n
g	e	t	h	s	e	m	a	n	e
i	e	n	e	t	o	g	r	o	t
p	d	a	n	d	a	i	l	s	h
o	w	a	n	t	s	u	y	s	e
e	v	e	n	i	n	g	t	o	

The challenge

Is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answers: 1. Evening; very early; the night. 2. Gethsemane; cross 3. Alone 4. Peter, John, James  
Challenge - Jesus used prayer as a lifeline to God and also wants us to.

# It's personal



Andy Hawthorne is the director of the Message To Schools Trust in Manchester, England. The Trust is best known for the musical sensation, the World Wide Message Tribe. The Trust's work is based in and aimed at Manchester and it is devoted to sharing Jesus with teenagers in and around the city, with a substantial amount of time being spent in schools. We asked Andy about prayer in his life.

## Why do you pray?

Andy: Prayer is the way I get to know God. It's not just me talking to Him, it's Him talking to me, too. It really is the most unbeatable privilege in the world that we have access to the throne room of the universe, where all the big decisions are made about what goes on. God invites us in and says, 'Let's do this business together.' How cool is that?

## How important is prayer to you?

Andy: The most important thing anyone can do is pray. It's right and good thing to do lots of things for God and tell lots of people about Him, but without the prayer bit, those things aren't really going to get anywhere.

## Do you find prayer easy?

Andy: I find it dead easy to mouth it about being a Christian but really hard to pray. I think that's because the Devil knows it's where the action is and will do anything to distract us from it.

## Do you always pray in a quiet room on your knees?

Andy: Definitely not. I sometimes pray flat out on my

**A**doration - worship God first and get your eyes off yourself.

**C**onfession - tell God where you've messed up. Say sorry!

**T**hanksgiving - thank God for everything He's done for you.

**S**upplication - a funny old word that means asking for stuff!

**Only when you've adored, confessed and thanked, are you in a good place to start telling God about your needs and desires.**

face, or with my hands in the air, or jumping around. Probably once a week I'll go for a good walk with God and tell Him how I'm really feeling. The people who walk their dogs through the woods must think I'm completely bonkers!

## What would be your best tips on praying?

Andy: My two top tips would be first to keep plugging away and don't give up. God answers prayers in the timescale that is best for you and through which He will get the most glory. It is so cool to have been praying for something or someone for ages and then suddenly, wallop, the answer comes. My second tip would be to expect a big God to do big things. He really is able to do 'more than you can dream or imagine' in your life and the lives of people you know. So pray like it.

<p><b>P</b> <b>r</b> <b>a</b> <b>y</b> <b>e</b> <b>r</b> <b>e</b></p>	<b>S</b>	<b>Monday:</b> People                      School Other	<b>Tuesday:</b> People                      School Other
	<b>C</b>	<b>Wednesday:</b> People                      School Other	<b>Thursday:</b> People                      School Other
	<b>h</b>	<b>Friday:</b> People                      School Other	<b>Saturday:</b> People                      School Other
	<b>a</b>	<b>Sunday:</b> People                      School Other	<b>NOTES</b>
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