



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Pray!



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pray without
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give thanks
in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God
in Christ Jesus for you.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

OUTDOOR MINISTRIES CURRICULUM

Week at a Glance: Pray!

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Day	Title	Daily Bible Text and Verse	Catechism Connection	Focus Points	Additional Bible Text References
1	Thanking and Praising	Exodus 15:20-25a (Miriam leads a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.)	Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We thank God for what God has done for us. We praise God for who God is. We discover what we have for which to be thankful. Our movements, music, and celebrating are prayers of thanks and praise to God. 	Psalm 66 Luke 1:46-55 Matthew 3:13-17 Mark 1:9-11 Luke 3:21-22 John 1:29-34
2	Asking	Luke 11:1-4, 9-10 (Jesus teaches us to pray.)	Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We learn from Jesus' example the importance of prayer. Jesus gives us a prayer. We are encouraged to ask, knock, and seek all things from God through prayer. God's kingdom exists here and now. 	Psalm 17:1-7 Matthew 6:5-15 Matthew 13:31-33, 44-50 Mark 1:14-15 Mark 12:28-34
3	Forgiving	Luke 7:36-48 (A tearful prayer brings forgiveness.)	Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our tears and cries for help are prayers. Jesus can forgive everyone. We can turn to Jesus in times of trouble and distress. 	Psalm 130 Matthew 14:22-33 Mark 2:1-12 Romans 5:1-11
4	Persisting	Luke 18:1-14 (Persistent and humble pray-ers get noticed.)	Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God wants us to be persistent in prayer. We can trust in God's goodness and compassion. Faith helps us to keep on praying. We are called to work for justice in the world. 	Psalm 113 Micah 6:8 Romans 3:19-26 Philippians 2:8 James 4:10
5	Listening	1 Samuel 3:1-4:1a (Samuel hears God's voice and listens.)	For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God speaks to us in prayer. Our friends can help us hear God. We respond in faith by listening to what God calls us to do. 	Exodus 3:1-12 Psalm 85:8-13 Jeremiah 1:4-10 Matthew 20:20-28 Romans 12:1-2

deeply, and listen to what God has to say. When a discussion becomes loud or chaotic, a few moments of silence helps the group regain a focus on what is important. Out of silence comes good speech, out of stillness comes right action.

Journey

Prayer becomes a way of life for the pray-er. Prayer is a way of being in the world that reveals the believer's faith, attitudes, values, commitment to God, and compassion for others. Prayer is a journey inward that centers the pray-er in God and opens the heart to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In prayer Jesus is revealed as God's Word and the pray-er hears the invitation to be God's word in the world. Prayer is a journey outward where the believer participates in the community of faith eagerly sharing the gifts, talents, and passions that are gifts of the Spirit. In prayer God reveals through Jesus what it means to live in God's kingdom on earth. The pray-er discovers what is true, beautiful, and enduring.

Life

Prayer cannot be separated from everything we do in our lives. The attitudes, values, and beliefs that become manifest in each relationship, each decision, and each moment of our lives is both a prayer to God and a celebration of our intimate connection with the creator. In this way we pray without ceasing. Everything we do during the day at camp—from singing to splashing in the water, from prayer times to play times, from boisterous times of celebration with others to quiet times alone for reflection, from worship to wondering about all of God's amazing gifts—is part of the prayer journey.

Teach us to pray. This simple request is the first step on a lifelong spiritual journey with God as traveling companion.

Pray!

Day 1: Thanking and Praising

We begin with a focus on God and prayers of thanking and praising. We offer prayers of praise for who God is and prayers of thanksgiving for what God has done for us. Miriam's prayer of praise and thanksgiving (Exodus 15:20-25a) provides the biblical basis for today's study. Miriam's prayer of unrestrained joy and celebration includes instruments, singing, and dancing. Explore the wonders of God's creation in the camp setting and our understanding of who God is, and celebrate all that God has done for us. It is also a day to consider water and baptism. By water God destroyed the Pharaoh's army, and by providing sweet water for the Israelites God provided what is most essential for life in the wilderness. Consider the connections between God saving the Israelites and God saving us through the waters of our baptism into the body of Christ.

As we consider who God is and what God has done for us, campers will begin to understand that all we have, including prayer, is from God. When we consider other aspects of prayer during the next four days, campers will come to a deeper understanding of what it means to have a God who loves and cares for us. When we ask God to be the center of our lives, all of our actions, attitudes, and values will be an unending prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Day 2: Asking

We learn about prayer from others who make prayer a priority in their lives and who take time to teach us to pray. Jesus taught his disciples about prayer by example and by teaching them a prayer that we still use today. The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4, 9-10) is simple yet deeply profound. It encompasses much of what we will study this week. We learn that we should honor God's name and that God



provides all that we need (Day 1); that God forgives our sins and protects us from the trials of daily life (Day 3); and that God encourages us to be persistent in asking for whatever we need (Day 4).

Today we focus on Jesus' encouragement to ask, search, and knock in our prayers. When we pray the Lord's Prayer we say "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven." This is a good day to consider the request that God's kingdom come. Our understanding is that Jesus did, indeed, establish the kingdom of God here and now. And while we don't live perfectly according to God's will, we are still forgiven and part of God's kingdom on earth. What does it mean to live in God's kingdom on earth? How does the Lord's Prayer help us understand God's kingdom and our role in that kingdom as we live our lives? What would it be like if everyone in the world lived according to God's will and ways? Consider these questions as we attempt to understand our role in God's kingdom.

Day 3: Forgiving

Life is not always easy. We often face times when we feel overwhelmed and fearful. God can seem far away or even absent in these times. Our prayers can be full of anger, frustration, and despair. We feel like yelling at God and we wonder how God could let life get so out of control. God welcomes these prayers, even when we feel so bad that we have no words. The woman in today's Bible story (Luke 7:36-48) has no words and, in the view of Jesus' host, no business being in Jesus' company. She is a sinner. Her prayer is one of tears.

We learn from this story that Jesus has compassion on this woman and welcomes her with open arms. In a moment that the woman probably never dreamed could happen, Jesus forgives her of all her sins. This is a day to consider our cries for help when all seems to be lost and God's surprising response to our prayers: forgiveness. We learn that we can turn to Jesus in times of trouble and distress. Consider times when we've been like the

woman, alienated and outcast; the Pharisee, judging and full of self-righteousness; and Jesus, accepting and loving.

Day 4: Persisting

Luke 18:1-14 provides two stories about prayer. In the first we encounter a widow (a person with no power or standing in the community) who is persistent in her cries for justice. An unjust judge finally grants her request because...well, because she has been persistently annoying. The implication is how much more accepting God will be in responding to the prayers of God's people for justice. We are encouraged in this text to be persistent in our prayers and to trust that God will respond. Today identify examples of injustice in the world and offer prayers of intercession for those who are oppressed or in need of help.

The second story is about trust. Do we trust in ourselves or in God? Prayer is not an opportunity to showboat or to brag about how well we live our lives. In prayer we come humbly before God and pray like the tax collector, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). It's all about humility. Being humble literally means staying close to the dirt. The word for *dirt* or *earth* in Latin, *humus*, is the root for the word *human*. Just as the Hebrew word for *dirt*, *adamah*, is the root for *Adam*. It is a reminder that we were created by God from the dust of the ground and therefore can only approach God in prayer humbly, remaining close to the ground.

This is a day to explore how our faith in a just and righteous God keeps us persistent in prayer and keeps us from being too full of ourselves.

Day 5: Listening

Perhaps the most difficult part of prayer is listening to God. Most of us find it easier to talk than to listen. And even if God did speak to us, would we recognize it as God's voice? How do we discern what God is saying to us in prayer? The story of Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-4:1a) gives some insight to prayer as listening and responding to the voice of God.

