

**MODEL UNIT  
BAND A  
LEVEL 1**

# WHAT IS PRAYER?

**LIFE CONCEPT: GOD HELPS PEOPLE PRAY**

YEAR: .....SUGGESTED DURATION: 3 weeks (100 minutes per week)

DATE OF USE: ..... FAITH STATEMENTS: ① ② 3

**UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)**

**1. GOD INVITES PEOPLE TO PRAY TO HIM IN JESUS' NAME**

- 1a explore the Christian belief that prayer is talking to God
- 1b investigate things Christians can pray about
- 1c investigate things Christians use to help them pray, eg books, postures, learned prayers

**2. GOD PROMISES TO HEAR AND ANSWER PRAYER**

- 2a explore Bible stories in which God answers prayer
- 2b explore the Christian belief that people can pray at any time and in any place

**3. JESUS TAUGHT PEOPLE TO PRAY**

- 3a investigate Bible accounts of Jesus praying
- 3b hear the prayer Jesus taught his disciples

**STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

**ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Illustrate or dramatise the story of a Bible character who prayed to God. (1a,2a)

Illustrate or model people at prayer. (1c)

Write or illustrate ways that people can talk to God. (1a,1b,2b)

**ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES**

⇒ work sample

⇒ work samples

⇒ TRS A3/1

**UNIT SUMMARY**

Students learn that when people pray they are talking to God. The stories of Hannah (who prayed before and after Samuel was born) and king Hezekiah (who prayed for protection from the enemy army) are used as examples of Bible characters who prayed. Students observe different forms of prayer that are used in the school, and then hear and respond to simple prayers that could be used at any time during the day.

## UNIT NOTES

This unit aims to help students understand what prayer is about and what Christians do and say as they pray.

There are opportunities for students to write or say their own prayers, if they wish. Remember that prayer is a response and must not be forced.

### WORDS TO KNOW

pray prayer fold (hands) bow Amen

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. TALKING WITH OTHERS

Give students time to talk with their friends. This can be done in pairs or small groups. At the end of this time, ask students to share the things they talked about.

Ask students to think of a person they cannot see. How could they talk to this person? Identify means of communication such as e-mail, telephone, fax, letter.

Involve the students in one of these ways of communicating, eg make arrangements to send a fax or e-mail to a class at another school or to a parent of one of the students, and have them communicate back to you.

## DEVELOPMENT

### 2. PRAYER: TALKING WITH GOD

Explain the meaning of the word 'pray' or 'prayer':

*People can't see God, but if they are friends with God, they want to talk to God. When people talk to God, it is called prayer. The Bible tells that God wants people to talk to him. People can talk to God at any time and about anything they want.*

*The Bible tells stories of people who were God's friends and about times when they talked with God.*

#### A. Hannah talks to God

1 Samuel 1:1 – 2:11

This story is used in the concept *God creates human relationships*. If you have used it before, retell it with the emphasis on Hannah's prayers before and after Samuel was born. You will find an account of this in *The Lion First Bible*, Story 19.

Use this story to discuss the following aspects of prayer:

- Hannah knew that God was her friend. She wanted to talk to God and tell him how she was feeling. She knew she could do this when she was upset and when she was feeling happy.
- People who are friends with God know they can tell him just how they are feeling.

#### B. Hezekiah talks to God

2 Kings 18,19

The Bible tells the story of Hezekiah, a king who trusted in God. When his country was invaded by the Assyrians, it was God he turned to in prayer. You will find a simple account of the story in *The Lion First Bible*, Story 29. Introduce the characters and the context of the story before reading it to the students.

Use this story to discuss the following aspects of prayer:

- The king knew that God was his friend and that he could talk to God when he was in trouble.
- People who are friends with God know that they can talk to God and ask God for help.

Students do one of these activities:

- Select the story of Hannah or Hezekiah to illustrate. Students imagine they are the character and record (or the teacher scribes) what they think that character might say to God.
- Dramatise either of the stories. The whole class could be involved in retelling the story of Hezekiah.

### 3. WHAT DO CHRISTIANS TALK TO GOD ABOUT?

Tell students that when Christians pray, they can talk to God about anything they like. They can do this at any time and use whatever words come into their head.

The Bible says *Pray about everything* (Philippians 4:6 CEV).

Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS) A1/1 contains examples of times and places when people could talk to God. Select some of these and read them to the students. Ask students to imagine what might have happened for the person to say a prayer like this.

Students could

- select a prayer to illustrate in their books. Paste the prayer alongside;
- use these prayers, and others like them, to make a class book of things people can talk to God about;

- write their own prayers about things people could talk to God about at any time.

#### 4. HOW DO CHRISTIANS TALK TO GOD?

Before beginning this section you will need to talk with other teachers to identify some of the prayer methods being used in the school, eg using a prayer book, circle prayers, prayer partners, songs as prayers.

Arrange for small groups of students to visit other classrooms to observe different forms of prayer. (Discuss with teachers the need to explain to your students when the prayer begins, what is happening and why).

You could also ask people who are leading school worship to draw students' attention to the times and ways in which prayer is used in worship.

Students observe prayer situations in the school setting, eg class devotions in other classes, prayers before meal or end-of-day prayers in other classes, whole-school worship.

Through discussion identify and record things students have observed about the ways people pray. You are aiming to develop understanding about the following concepts:

- **times people pray at school** In a school day there are special times when people pray;
- **ways in which people pray at school** People can pray in different ways, eg sit quietly by themselves, pray with a partner or in a group, listen to someone else praying, sing as they pray;
- **ways people in the school community use their bodies to help them pray** They may fold their hands, close their eyes or bow their heads. They may hold the hand of the person next to them. These are ways of helping people think about their prayer;
- **words people use in prayer** Some words that are used in prayers are *Dear God, please help, thank you for, forgive, in Jesus' name, Amen.*

Students could

- illustrate people at prayer;
- make pipe-cleaner people and shape them to represent people at prayer.

## RESPONSE

### 5. CREATING A PRAYER ENVIRONMENT

Together with the students, identify ways of incorporating into the classroom what they have learnt about prayer. Ways of doing this include:

- Make a corner where students can go to have their own quiet time. Include Bible story books, a listening centre with tapes of Christian songs, prayer books, cushions, paper and pencils.
- Arrange the worship centre to include aids for prayer, eg a box with prayers that students have written, children's prayer books, prayer lists, a box of objects that can be used to stimulate prayer.
- Incorporate short times of silence into class worship. Students can use this time for prayer if they wish.
- Include in your class worship forms of prayer that students have observed in other classes, eg circle prayer, prayer with a partner, songs or liturgies as prayers.
- Model spontaneous prayer and draw attention to what you have done, eg I just heard that X's mother is sick. Let's stop what we're doing and have a time to pray.

## YOU WILL NEED

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> arrangements to send and receive a fax or e-mail to another person</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Lion First Bible</i></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> arrangements for your students to observe students at prayer in another class and in school worship</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> optional: pipe-cleaners</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> photocopies of TRS A1/1 for students' use</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> material for the responses of your choice</li></ul> |
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## INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

**ENGLISH:** *Literature:* Relate what is read and viewed to their own knowledge and experience; identify the plot, setting and characters; recognise features characteristic of some kinds of texts (prayers).

**ARTS:** *Drama:* Use given stories for the basis of their own drama. *Visual Arts:* Draw or paint to express their imagination, record observations, express feelings and thoughts.

**SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT:** *Culture:* Observe the traditions and practices of familiar groups; participate in school events.

from the National Statements and Profiles

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## UNIT EVALUATION

Which activities worked well in this unit?

Which resources were useful in the implementation of this unit?

How did I respond to the range of students' understanding that prayer is talking to God?

How did I respond to the range of students' attitudes towards prayer?

What would I do differently if I was teaching this unit again?

How will I use and build on knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes, and values students have developed in this unit?

# TALKING TO GOD

Select some of the following prayers to read to the students, and use them as a starting point for discussion of other things that students could talk to God about.

**G**od, I like it when my puppy licks my face.  
It makes me giggle.

**D**ear Jesus, I'm sorry I made my mum cross.

**D**ear God, loud noises make me feel scared.  
Please look after me.

**I** love chocolate ice cream.  
Thank you, God.

**J**esus, sometimes I feel lonely and sad.  
Please be my friend.

**G**od, sometimes my brothers and sisters make me cross.

**G**od, I can't kick the ball as far as the other kids.  
That makes me feel silly.

