

# MENU

# BIBLE REFERENCES

## 1 God invites people to pray to him Jesus' name

### Prayers for help

|             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| Psalm 5:1–3 | Psalm 6  |
| Psalm 13    | Psalm 55 |
| Psalm 61    | Psalm 77 |
| Psalm 86    |          |

### Prayers of praise

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Psalm 8                  | Psalm 34:1–6                            |
| Psalm 92:1–4             | Psalm 95:1–7                            |
| Psalm 98                 | Psalm 103                               |
| Psalm 148                |   |
| An invitation to prayer  | Psalm 50:15                             |
| A prayer for forgiveness | Psalm 51                                |
| Mary's prayer            | Luke 1:46–55                            |
| Paul's prayers           | Ephesians 3:14–21<br>Philippians 1:3–11 |

## 2 God promises to hear and answer prayer

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Hannah's prayer is answered                     | 1 Samuel 1:1–20 |
| Hezekiah prays for the protection of his people | 2 Kings 18,19   |
| 'I will deliver you'                            | Psalm 50:15     |
| The first Christians pray for Peter             | Acts 12:1–17    |

## People who asked Jesus for help

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| A man with leprosy         | Matthew 8:1–3      |
| The disciples in the storm | Matthew 8:23–25    |
| Jairus                     | Mark 5:21–24,35–43 |
| The centurion              | Luke 7:1–10        |
| Ten men with leprosy       | Luke 17:11–19      |

## 3 Jesus taught people to pray

### Times and places Jesus prayed

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Jesus prays alone                | Matthew 14:23;<br>Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12; Luke 18:28,29    |
| Early in the morning             | Mark 1:35  |
| Before eating                    | Matthew 14:19; Matthew 26:26;<br>Luke 24:30              |
| At his baptism                   | Luke 3:21,22   |
| In the garden of Gethsemane      | Matthew 26:36–46   |
| For his friends                  | Luke 22:32; John 17                                      |
| For his enemies                  | Luke 23:34   |
| In public worship                | Luke 2:41; Luke 4:16;<br>John 5:1; John 7:10; John 10:22 |
| On the cross                     | Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:46                                |
| Jesus talks about prayer         | Matthew 6:5–8  |
| Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer  | Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:1–13                             |
| Jesus tells a story about prayer | Luke 18:9–14   |

## KEY BIBLE VERSES TO HEAR AND REMEMBER

*Ask God for what you need.*  
Philippians 4:6 (TEV)

*Pray for one another.*  
James 5:16 (CEV)

*Jesus would often go to a place where he could be alone and pray.*  
Luke 5:16 (CEV)

# MENU

# INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

## 1

God invites people to pray to him in Jesus' name

**TALK TO OTHERS** Students identify people whom they like to talk to and be with. Lead students to consider a range of people, including those from different age-groups, occupations or countries. Identify things they talk to these people about. Students could bring photos or make illustrations of themselves with one or more of these people.

Continue by telling students that God invites people to talk with him. People do this when they pray. (1a,1b)

**COMMUNICATION** Brainstorm and list ways in which people communicate, eg talking and listening, television, radio, newspapers, sign language, letters. Discuss why it is important to communicate with others and identify things that people want to and need to communicate.

Continue by telling students that God invites people to communicate with him. Christians do this when they pray. (1a)

**TALKING WITH A FRIEND** Students sit and talk with their friends for five minutes. At the end of this time, ask students what things they talked about. Record these and develop a list of things people talk about. Older students in this band could classify these, eg sharing news, asking questions, telling funny stories, talking to others about how you feel. Use this to introduce the concept that God invites people to talk to him as a friend. People can talk to God about many different things. (1a,1b)

**LETTERS** Tell students about a friend whom you do not see very often. Explain that because you cannot see this person, you communicate through telephone calls, sending cards or writing letters. Share parts of a simple letter that you have written to your friend. Tell students that for some people talking to God is just like talking to a friend they cannot see. (1a)

**PRAY** Write the word 'pray' (or 'prayer') on the board and ask students what they know about prayer. Record students' answers and use them to develop teaching points for the unit. (1a,1b,1c)

**DRAW A PICTURE** Ask students to draw a picture of someone praying and write (or scribe) the words of that person's prayer. As a group discuss the drawings and use them to assess what students know about prayer, eg what do the illustrations show about postures for prayer, places in which people pray and things people might pray about? (1b,1c,2b)

**PRAYER BOOKS** Show students a range of books from different genres, eg a cookbook, a craft book, a picture book, a non-fiction book. Ask students in what situation a person may want to use any of these books and why.

Show students a prayer book and ask in what situation a person may use a prayer book. (1c)

**DISPLAY** If you have a prayer book that you used as a child, show it to the students. Tell them when you received the book and how you used it. Read several of the prayers.

Begin a collection of children's prayer books, using resources from the library and inviting students to bring books from home. (1c)

**BODY LANGUAGE** Students take turns to mime a variety of actions. Other students guess what they are doing.

Mime common prayer postures and ask students if they know what you are doing and why. (1c)

**POSTERS** Show pictures of people using different prayer postures, eg hands folded, hands raised, kneeling, eyes closed. (You could include pictures of people at prayer from religions other than Christianity.) Ask students what they think is happening in these pictures. Through discussion identify prayer as the common factor. (1c)

**2**

**God promises to hear and answer prayer**

**WHO DO YOU CALL ON?** Identify people students call on for help and why they go to these people, eg a teacher if they need help at school, parents if they need help at home, a doctor if they are not feeling well.

Use this introduction to lead students to consider that people can especially go to God when they need help. (2a)

**PLACES I LIKE TO BE (1)** Show pictures of different places that students are familiar with, eg a playground, the beach, a garden, a bedroom, a church. Students identify (and mime) things they enjoy doing in these places, or make an illustration of a place that they like to be. Lead into a discussion of places that people may go when they want to pray. (2b)

**3**

**Jesus taught people to pray**

**TIME ALONE** Ask students how they feel after they have been very busy. Discuss how it can be helpful to spend some quiet time by oneself. Give students several minutes to be quietly alone.

The Bible tells that Jesus also liked to be alone. Use the examples in the Bible References Menu to investigate this. (3a)

**JESUS PRAYS** Show students a picture of Jesus at prayer, eg in the garden of Gethsemane. Use this picture as an example of a time that Jesus prayed. Continue to investigate examples of times when Jesus prayed. (3a)

**TRADITIONAL PRAYERS** Read or otherwise share prayers that are commonly used by Christians, eg table graces, bedtime prayers.

Tell students about another prayer that many people use. Introduce the Lord's Prayer. (3b)

**HOW DO YOU PRAY?** Students identify times when they say 'How do you do that?', eg using the computer, building with small construction material, learning how to skip. Tell students that Jesus' disciples once came to him with a question like this.

Continue by telling about the disciples asking Jesus to teach them how to pray. (3b)

# MENU

# DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

## 1

God invites people to pray to him in Jesus' name

### TALKING TO GOD IN THE PSALMS

The psalms are examples of the way people in the Bible talked to God. They illustrate the way people can talk to God and tell him exactly how they are feeling.

Share excerpts from the psalms, either by adapting them yourself to language appropriate for the students in your class, or by reading psalms written for children.

Students could

- illustrate the way they think the author was feeling at the time;
- discuss and illustrate a time when they have felt the same way. Add their own words which talk to God about this;
- use the psalms as a model for their own writing. (1a)

**CALL ME** Share God's invitation to call on him for help: *Pray to me in time of trouble*, Psalm 50:15. Students identify times when people may want to talk to God. Share Bible stories of people who did this (see Bible References Menu). (1a,1b,2a)

**BOOKS** Share books about prayer that have been written for children (see Recommended Resources Menu). Depending on the text of the book, identify aspects of prayer such as: who people talk to in prayer; when people pray; what they pray about; times and places at which people pray. (1a,1b,1c,2b)

### PEOPLE WHO CAME TO JESUS

Select stories from the Bible References Menu of people who came to Jesus for help. These people knew they could talk to Jesus about the things that were worrying them. Rather than focus on the miraculous element of Jesus' help, share Jesus' concern for the people who came to him and his willingness to help. (2b)

**TALKING TO GOD** (See *Letters*, Introductory Activities Menu) Model writing a letter to God, using simple everyday language and talking about everyday things that students are familiar with. This could be done over a series of days.

Invite students to write their own letters to God. (1a,1b)

**MODEL PRAYER** Take opportunities to model prayer at appropriate times during the day. This could be done at worship, in response to nature (for sunshine on a winter day), if the class is faced with a problem (eg, relationships, an accident on the playground) or with an individual who needs support through prayer.

You could also model the use of prayer books, inviting students who have prayer books to bring them along and share their favourite prayers. (1a,1b,2b)

### USE A PRAYER BOOK AS A MODEL

Select a children's prayer book (see Teacher Resources) and use it to investigate things that people talk to God about.

Older students could compare the types of language used in different prayer books, eg talking to a friend, rhyming prayers, formal prayers. Students collate a class book based on similar topics and prayers. (1a,1b)

**MEALTIME PRAYERS** If saying a prayer before lunch is part of your daily class routine, discuss why Christians want to thank God for the food that they eat. Tell the Bible story of Jesus feeding the 5000 and asking God's blessing on the food before the people ate. Students could participate in activities like the following:

- Make a collection of mealtime prayers. Teach and discuss different prayers with your students (include prayers in languages other than English).
- As a class prepare a special meal and write prayers which trace the production of the food and the making of the meal. Share this meal with another class.
- Make a collage using magazine pictures of food and display appropriate prayers on the collage.
- Students each decorate a paper plate or a placemat with pictures of food. Paste an appropriate prayer over the top and cover with a clear glue, varnish or laminate finish. (1b,1c)

**PRAYER POSTERS** Christian bookshops have posters and plaques with short and simple prayers written on them.

Make a display of these and discuss the prayers that are written on them. (1b,1c)

**A SENSE OF WONDER** Helping students at this band level develop an appreciation of the world around them is an introductory step to prayer. Consider activities like the following:

- Begin a collection of objects that could be used as a stimulus for thought and prayer, eg shells, coloured stones, flowers, a baby animal. Use these to model prayer thoughts to your students, eg 'When I see this shell, it reminds me of the sound of the waves as they go in and out. After I've listened to that sound for a long time, I often say: *Thank you, God, that the waves never stop. Thank you that your love never stops.*'
- Use posters, words and appropriate music to lead students in reflection, imagining that they are in a quiet place by themselves, eg beside the sea, in a garden or forest. Allow time for students to reflect quietly for short periods. Invite (but do not force) students to share their thoughts during this time.
- Students illustrate things that make them feel happy, thankful, peaceful, puzzled, contented etc. (1b,2b)

**GUESTS** Invite guests to talk about the place of prayer in their life. Older guests could share prayers they learnt as children; other teachers and older students could be invited to talk about times and places at which they pray. (1a,1b,1c,2b)

**VISIT A CHURCH** Tell students that one of the places in which people pray is in a church. Take students into the church and observe things that could help people pray, eg the cross to remind them of Jesus, stained-glass windows with pictures from Bible stories. Ask students to sit very quietly for a short time and listen to the silence. Invite (but do not force) students to engage in their own time of prayer. (1a,1c)

**PRAYING THROUGH SONG** Use songs, eg *God Gives* ATA 109, as the basis for exploring the many things that people can talk to God about.

The students' suggestions could be recorded in book form, as posters or as a mobile. (1a,1b,1c,2b)

**EXPRESSING PRAYER THROUGH MOVEMENT** Discuss and mime ways in which people express feelings through movement, eg

being happy: jumping up and down;  
being hurt: holding the body close;  
feeling sorry: keeping the eyes down.

Read simple prayers and ask students to express the words of the prayer through movement.

Incorporate movement into litanies, blessings, psalms and songs. (1b,2b)

**PRAYER POSTURES** Invite students to participate in postures like the following (these are all ways in which Christians throughout the ages have prayed): kneeling, standing, sitting, hands folded, hands upraised, lying down, bowing the head, holding hands, closing eyes, focusing on a particular religious object. Discuss why people may use postures like these when they pray.

Consider introducing the use of some non-traditional postures into your class worship. (1c)

**THE LANGUAGE OF PRAYER** Identify words and phrases that are commonly used in prayer, eg Father, Dear Jesus, Lord Jesus, in Jesus' name, Amen. Discuss the purpose and meaning of these words, eg people say 'in Jesus' name' because they know that Jesus is their friend and that he will hear their prayer. Model the appropriate use of these words and provide opportunity for students to do the same. (1c)

## 2

### God promises to hear and answer prayer

**TWO MEN GO TO PRAY** Ask students to imagine they are living in Bible times. They are standing near the church and see the following scene . . . continue to tell descriptively the story of the two men who went to the temple to pray (Luke 18:9–14).

Without adding Jesus' comments about the two men, ask students what they think of the way each man prayed.

Continue to discuss ways and places that people can pray.

Students could illustrate the story, adding their own words in speech bubbles, or make puppets and retell the story in their own words. (2a,2b)

**PEOPLE WHO PRAYED** Select stories from the Bible References Menu of people who prayed to God/Jesus and whose prayers were answered. For each story you tell, record the name of the character, how they were feeling and what they prayed about.

Through discussion develop students' understanding that people pray because they know God is their friend and will listen to their prayer, and that people pray to God for different reasons, eg when they are in trouble, when they are feeling sad, to say thank you.

Students could draw the character and include the prayer in their own words. The teacher could scribe for younger students.

Some stories will also be suitable for retelling through dramatisation or through the use of puppets. (2a,1a,1b)

**A PRAYER SPACE** Discuss with students how to make a special place in the classroom to which they could go for their own quiet time or to pray. Consider the use of screens, cushions, rugs, posters, children's prayer books or objects such as flowers or a lamp.

Discuss and establish expectations for the use of this space. (2b,1c)

**PLACES I LIKE TO BE (2)** Use the pictures from the introductory activity. Ask students to imagine what a person could talk to God about if they were in the playground, at the beach etc. Record students' suggestions and add them to the posters. (2b)

**CHILDREN'S PRAYERS** Read prayers from a book like *Prayers for Aussie Kids* (see Recommended Resources Menu). Identify times and places in which people could say prayers like these.

Compose and make copies of similar prayers for students to paste into their books. Students add an illustration which shows the context of the prayer. (2b,2c)

### 3

## Jesus taught people to pray

**TIMES JESUS PRAYED** Use the Bible References Menu to investigate the following examples of prayer in the life of Jesus:

- Jesus prayed as part of worship. He attended the temple where he would have heard and said prayers found in the Old Testament.
- Jesus prayed before eating. Jewish religious customs required that prayers be said at this time, as well as in the morning and evening.
- Jesus prayed for other people. He prayed for his friends and for his enemies.
- Jesus prayed when he needed help, eg in Gethsemane.

Use this framework to investigate times and occasions when Christians pray today. (3a,1b,2b)

**JESUS' PRAYERS** After sharing stories of Jesus at prayer (see Bible References Menu), make a mural depicting the places and occasions at which Jesus prayed.

Students imagine and write (or the teacher scribes) prayers they think Jesus may have prayed when he was beside the sea, on a mountain, with his friends etc. (3a)

**BEING ALONE** After discussing occasions on which Jesus prayed and spent time alone, provide opportunity for students to be alone and silent. Prepare students for this through the use of relaxation exercises. Keep the times of silence short at first and gradually extend them.

As students develop these skills, you may wish to extend the activity by allowing students to go into their own quiet places within the school grounds. (3a)

**ABBA** List words that students use to identify their parents or grandparents, eg Mum, Daddy, Granny, Pa.

Tell students that one of the words Jesus used when he talked to Joseph his father was the word *Abba*. This means the same as *Daddy*.

The Bible tells that Jesus also used the word *Abba* when he prayed to God. Jesus knew that he could talk to God just as he talked to his father Joseph.

If you are discussing the Lord's Prayer, draw students' attention to the words *Our Father*. These words remind people that talking to God is just like talking to someone who cares about them very much. (3a,3b,1a,1c)

**AMEN** Discuss when this word is used and what students think it means. Tell students that saying *Amen* at the end of the prayer is like saying 'I can be sure that God has heard this prayer'. (3b,1a,1b)

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** Record the words of the Lord's Prayer to read to the students or to say together. Ask students when they have heard these words and what they think the words are about.

Find places where the Lord's Prayer is recorded or displayed, eg in worship orders, on plaques or bookmarks, on posters, in prayer books. (3b)

**KEY WORDS** (for older students in this band) Record the words of the Lord's Prayer, using different colours to group the petitions (see below). Highlight key words and briefly discuss the main message of each.

Our *Father* in *heaven*, hallowed be your *name*, your *kingdom* come, your *will* be done on earth as in heaven.

This part of the prayer tells us that God is like a father, but it also talks about God being a king.

Give us today our daily *bread*.

This reminds us that God is the one who gives all people everything they need.

*Forgive* us our *sins* as we forgive those who sin against us.

This part of the prayer asks God to forgive us and asks God to help us forgive others.

Lead us not into *temptation*.

This asks God to help us not do the things we know are wrong.

But *deliver* us from *evil*.

This asks God to keep us safe from things that could hurt us.

For the *kingdom*, the *power* and the *glory* are yours now and *forever*. Amen.

These words praise God and remind us that he is like a king in charge of all people forever. (3b)

## ACTIONS FOR THE LORD'S

**PRAYER** Discuss and teach appropriate actions that could be used to accompany the Lord's Prayer. Some resource materials will provide suggestions for this (see Recommended Resources Menu), or invite the students to make up their own actions. (3b)

## THE LORD'S PRAYER IN SONG

After discussing the message of the Lord's Prayer, teach and use the prayer in the form of a song (eg *All Together Now* 74, *Sing to Jesus* 24, or *Our Father* in *God Gives*, Book 3. (3b)

## THE LORD'S PRAYER FOR

**CHILDREN** Read books (see Recommended Resources Menu) which explain the Lord's Prayer in language appropriate for students at this band level. (3b)

## GENERAL ACTIVITIES

**BIBLE VERSE** Students learn an appropriate Bible verse (see page 10).

**SONGS** Students learn songs about prayer (see Resources for Music and Devotions in the Appendix).

**BIBLE CHARACTER** (a recommended activity for Level 3) Students learn about a specific Bible character. Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS A3/extra) contains a story and activities about Hannah.

# MENU

# RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

## 1

God invites people to pray to him in Jesus' name

**PRAYER POSTERS** After observing and discussing posters or plaques which contain prayers, students design their own poster or plaque. Computer programs, eg Print Shop or Kids Pix could be used for this task. (1b,1c)

### RESPONSES THROUGH WRITING

Students develop their own prayers in any of the following forms:

- shape poems
- acrostic poems
- contributing to liturgies or simplified psalms
- writing their own psalms
- prayers based on particular themes, eg Christmas, Easter, family, friends. (1a,1b,2a,2b)

**PRAYER BOOKS** Students could make prayer books in any of the following ways:

- Individual students make their own book of prayers that they have written;
- Photocopy and collate into a class prayer book prayers that everyone in the class has written;
- Compile a collection of familiar prayers that are used at school, and allow space for students to add prayers of their own. (1b,1c)

**GIFTS** At the end of the unit present each child with a small gift to remind them of what they have learnt about prayer, eg a child's prayer book (the Lutheran Tract Mission has appropriate booklets or tracts), a bookmark with a simple prayer on it, or a personal prayer that you have written for each student. (1b,1c)

**A PRAYER SERVICE** As a class plan a service based on the theme of prayer to be used at a school worship or assembly. Include things that students have learnt about prayer, prayers set to music, prayers the students have written, movement or artwork which expresses thoughts about prayer. (1b,1c,2b)

**PRAYER BOARD** Make a notice board on which you display prayer topics, eg for families of the students, for special school occasions. Students could also use this board to write their own prayer requests or topics. Use these topics as a basis for prayer in class worship. (1a,1b)

**PRAYER CALENDAR** Use a blank calendar and invite students to add their name to particular days, eg a birthday, a special family event. Use this as a reminder for the class to pray for that person on that day. (1a,1b,1c,2b)

**PRAYER IN WORSHIP** Discuss prayer experiences that students would like to incorporate into class worship, eg lighting a candle, a time of silence, praying in a circle. (1c)

**DISPLAY OF PRAYER BOOKS** If you have access to a local Christian bookshop, arrange for a display of appropriate prayer books that students can purchase. (1a,1b,1c)

## 2

God promises to hear and answer prayer

### PRAYERS FROM THE BIBLE

**STORIES** After telling stories of Bible characters who prayed, share with the students simple excerpts of their prayers, eg  
Hezekiah: 'Keep us safe' 2 Kings 19:19  
Hannah: 'You make me happy, Lord'  
1 Samuel 2:1.

Students consider when people today may want to pray words like this. (2a,2b)

**PRAYERS FOR A DAY** As a class, record prayers that could be used at various times during the day, eg on beginning school, before and after playtime, before eating, before or after a session of work, at the end of the day. (1b)



**3**

Jesus taught people to pray

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** Show students illustrated copies of the Lord's Prayer, eg written in calligraphy or with decorated borders. Give students the words of the Lord's Prayer to colour or decorate. Mount or frame these. (3b)

**THE LORD'S PRAYER — MY PRAYERS** After investigating what the Lord's Prayer is about, invite students to write the parts of the prayer in their own words. Put these together to make a class version of the Lord's Prayer. (3b)

# MENU

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The introduction to LIFE contains suggested general resources for all LIFE concepts. The following resources may be used to develop a unit about *God helps people pray*.

Some of these resources may be out of print.

They are listed because they (or others similar to them) may be found in school libraries.

Preview these and any other resources you intend using to be sure that they are appropriate for your students.

## LITERATURE — NON-FICTION

Nystrom C *What Is Prayer?* Seed Books

Rock L *The Lord's Prayer for Children* 1993  
Lion

### Prayer books for children

Baynes P *Thanks Be to God Prayers from around the World* 1990 Lutterworth

Prewer B *Prayers for Aussie Kids* 1993  
Openbook

Rock L *All Year Long* 1997 Lion

Rock L *Safe This Night* 1997 Lion

Rock L *Sad News and Glad News: Easter Prayers for Little Children* 1997 Lion

Rock L *Best Loved Prayers* 1997 Lion

Watson C *365 Children's Prayers* 1989 Lion

## LITERATURE — FICTION

Caswell H *I Can Talk to God* 1989 Abingdon

McKissack P & F *When Do You Talk to God?*  
1986 Augsburg

## TEACHER RESOURCES

Beckett W *A Child's Book of Prayer in Art*  
1995 Dorling Kindersley

Sandell E *Including Children in Worship* 1991  
Augsburg Fortress  
(this book contains actions for the Lord's  
Prayer)

Put a plastic sleeve in this section of your LIFE binder to keep your own collection of clippings, cartoons, stories, photos, etc which you can use for these units. Add to your collection whenever you come across something that might be useful.

