

**MODEL UNIT
BAND C
LEVEL 1**

PRAYER EXPERIENCES

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD HELPS PEOPLE PRAY

YEAR: SUGGESTED DURATION: 5 weeks (135 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 investigate prayer as a vital part of a Christian's relationship with God

1b investigate what it means to pray in Jesus' name

1c investigate and compare the features and benefits of personal and corporate prayer

2. GOD PROMISES TO HEAR AND ANSWER PRAYER

2a explore the Christian belief that God answers prayers according to his will

2b identify situations in which people are led to pray or which make praying difficult

2c investigate prayers written by Christians throughout history, including traditional church prayers

3. JESUS TAUGHT PEOPLE TO PRAY

3a examine Jesus' teaching on prayer

3b investigate the Lord's Prayer as a framework for Christian prayer

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Reflect on the features and benefits of various prayer experiences. (1c,2b)

Record the Bible's teaching about prayer. (1a,3a)

Record information about Christians' experience with prayer. (1a,2b)

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

⇒ observation of discussion, prayer kit

⇒ TRS C1/2 and prayer kit

⇒ observation of interview and prayer kit

UNIT SUMMARY

Students reflect on their understanding of prayer, investigate the Bible's teaching about prayer and explore a range of prayer experiences. They use the information they gather to develop a prayer kit for Christians with information about prayer and guidelines for various prayer experiences.

UNIT NOTES

This unit provides students with the opportunity to learn about prayer through a range of prayer experiences. As the students in your class may have a range of faith backgrounds, introduce each prayer experience as an opportunity for them to consider the features and benefits of this prayer experience for Christians. Do not coerce students to express a faith response.

Students create a prayer kit to help people pray. They add information about prayer as the unit progresses. After each prayer experience students use their journals to reflect on what they have learnt about prayer and record the features and benefits of the prayer experience for their prayer kit.

INTRODUCTION

1. PRAYER

Students work in groups on the task of developing a role-play to show their understanding of the word 'prayer'.

After viewing and discussing the role-plays, make a class definition of the word 'prayer'.

Students reflect on their experiences of prayer, using the questions on Teacher Resource Sheet (TRS) C1/1. Discuss whether students wish to make any changes to the class definition of prayer.

Tell students that they will be investigating prayer and ways people can pray. They will be creating a prayer kit that provides information about prayer and guidelines for various prayer experiences.

DEVELOPMENT

2. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN PRAYER?

From the Bible: Students work in groups to read and record the Bible's teaching about prayer (see TRS C1/2).

From other sources: Students can find further information about Christian prayer by

- using Christian reference texts, such as *Something You Can Stand For* (see Recommended Resources Menu)
- using Bible handbooks and encyclopedias.

The following points can be highlighted throughout the activities:

- Jesus is central to Christian teaching about prayer. It is only through Jesus that human beings can approach God.
- Prayer is an important part of Christians' relationship with God. It flows from God's communication with people.
- God encourages people to pray and promises to answer our prayers. This does not mean that God will always do what we want.
- Christians can pray in words, thoughts and actions.
- God answers prayers in many ways. Sometimes we cannot see God's answer, but Christians trust that God will ultimately work for their good because he loves them.

Prayer kit: Students individually reflect on what they have learnt about Christian prayer and add information to their prayer kit.

3. PRAYER EXPERIENCES

In this section four prayer experiences are described. Each prayer experience could be conducted in a forty-five minute Christian Studies session. Choose as many experiences as time allows.

Tell students that prayer is an important part of Christians' relationship with God. Christians pray or communicate with God in many different ways. The following sessions will give them an opportunity to be involved in different prayer experiences.

A. PRAYING WITH MUSIC

Music is an important part of adolescents' life and speaks to their experiences. Make yourself familiar with songs your students are listening to on the radio. Consider using a current popular song, as well as a contemporary Christian song, as the stimulus for the prayer experience.

To focus students' attention on the place of music in their lives, discuss:

- How important to you is listening to music? Why?

Distribute Part 1 of TRS C1/3 for students to reflect on a favourite song.

Choose a contemporary Christian song that presents a clear gospel message, preferably one most students have not heard before. Students make themselves comfortable, then listen as you play the song. They discuss their first impressions.

Provide students with the lyrics of the song and play the song again.

Students use Part 2 of TRS C1/3 to reflect on the song. Listen to the song again as they complete their reflection.

Prayer kit: Students individually reflect on this prayer experience and add information to their prayer kit.

B. PRAYING TOGETHER

Choose either option to explore the benefits of corporate prayer:

- Work with the local pastor to arrange for suitable members of prayer circles or Bible study groups to visit the class and talk to small groups of students about corporate prayer. The visitors could talk about their experiences of prayer in both small groups and public worship.
- Interview teachers on staff who can share their experiences of the benefits of praying together.

Provide students with the opportunity to be involved in a prayer circle (see TRS C1/4). Encourage students who want to pray to prepare their prayers beforehand either by writing them or choosing a prayer from a prayer book. Discuss the routines for the prayer time. After the prayer time discuss the benefits of praying together.

Prayer kit: Students individually reflect on this prayer experience and add information to their prayer kit.

C. MEDITATING ON BIBLE MESSAGES

Tell students that Christians believe the Bible is God's word and is the chief way God communicates with people. Christians can meditate on stories and verses from the Bible to help them pray in response to God. Choose one or both of the following:

- Students use TRS 1/5 which contains appropriate Bible verses and suggestions for meditation.
- Conduct a guided meditation of a Bible story, such as TRS C1/6.

Prayer kit: Students individually reflect on this prayer experience and add information to their prayer kit.

D. PRAYER IN NATURAL SETTINGS

This experience requires a quiet and natural setting. School grounds may be appropriate or consider using a local park or reserve.

Tell students that Christians believe that they can pray to God anywhere and everywhere. Many Christians have special places where they feel particularly close to God. This may be a quiet church or a natural settings. Read a Christian author's prayer or reflection about nature, such as: 'Simple Gifts' from *Jesus Our Future* by Bruce Prewer.

Distribute TRS C1/7 and discuss the guidelines for prayer experience. After the experience discuss the features and benefits of this type of prayer experience for Christians.

Prayer kit: Students individually reflect on this prayer experience and add information to their prayer kit.

4. CHRISTIANS' PRAYER EXPERIENCES

Interview Christians of different age-groups from the local congregations to explore their experiences and practices with prayer. Use the interviews to highlight that Christians can pray at any time and anywhere.

Questions that could be used to guide the interview could include:

- Why do you pray to God?
- How do you pray?
- What is your favourite prayer?
- What benefits do you receive from prayer?
- What helps you pray?
- What makes it difficult to pray?
- How have you experienced answer to prayer?

Prayer kit: Students individually reflect on what they have learnt about prayer and add information to their prayer kit.

RESPONSE

5. PRAYER KIT

Students use the information from the unit to complete a prayer kit for Christians. They include information about prayer and guidelines for various prayer experiences.

Provide students with TRS C1/8 to reflect on what they have learnt about prayer.

YOU WILL NEED

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> prayer books<input type="radio"/> to arrange an outdoor space for prayer experience in a natural setting<input type="radio"/> reference books on prayer<input type="radio"/> copies of TRS C1/1 – C1/8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> contemporary songs, secular and Christian<input type="radio"/> arrangements made for interviews with members of the local congregation or teaching staff |
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INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

ENGLISH: *Literature:* Explain and justify own opinions about texts. Find and cite elements of a text to support a point of view. Directed reading, reading alone. Editing skills. *Everyday Texts:* Consider needs of audience when speaking. Develop discussion and problem-solving skills. Use strategies for gathering, recording and reporting data. Report findings in speech and writing.

SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: *Investigation, Communication, Participation:* Formulate questions, reflect on knowledge and understanding. Consider audience in presentation. Cooperation skills.

from the National Statements and Profiles

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 of prayer?

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

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?



CHRISTIAN PRAYER



PRAYER

What do you think prayer is?

When have you seen people pray?

Why do you think people pray?

Tick the statement which describes you best:

- I have never prayed.
- I hardly ever pray.
- I pray but only at church and at mealtimes.
- I pray each night.
- I pray all the time.

What do you think people pray about?

What questions do you have about prayer?

 **CHRISTIAN PRAYER** 

THE BIBLE'S INFORMATION ABOUT PRAYER

Work in a group to read and record what the Bible teaches about prayer. Divide the following readings among group members. Summarise the Bible's teaching about prayer in your own words next to your readings.

① Psalm 6:6-10 _____

② Matthew 6:5-8 _____

③ Matthew 18:19,20 _____

④ Luke 11:9-13 _____

⑤ Luke 18:1-8 _____

⑥ Luke 18:9-14 _____

⑦ Romans 8:26,27 _____

⑧ Romans 12:12 _____

⑨ Ephesians 3:12 _____

⑩ Ephesians 6:18 _____

⑪ John 5:14,15 _____

Share with your group members what you have learnt about prayer. What information would you like included in your prayer kit?

 **CHRISTIAN PRAYER** 

PRAYING WITH MUSIC

Music speaks to most people. It can break down barriers of language and culture. It can give sound and words to our experiences. Music and songs can be a great stimulus for reflection and prayer.

PART 1

Write the title of a song that speaks strongly to you at the moment.

What is the message of that song? _____

How does the song relate to your experience?

What does the song make you think about? _____

How could this song be used by Christians to help them pray?

Part 2

Listen to a contemporary Christian song.

What is the message of the song? _____

What does the song make you think about? _____

How could this song be used by Christians to help them pray?

What do you think are the benefits for Christians of praying with music?

 **CHRISTIAN PRAYER** 

PRAYING TOGETHER

After tragic incidents in Australia's history, people have been urged to pray together for the families of victims. Why do you think people have a need to pray together? _____

PRAYER CIRCLE

Christians believe praying together is important. Jesus said: 'Where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them'.

One way Christians can pray together is in a prayer circle. People sit in a circle and take it in turns to say prayers.

To help us consider the benefits of praying together, our class is going to have the opportunity to participate in a prayer circle. You will have the choice of praying or sitting quietly in the circle and listening to the prayers of others.

If you would like to pray with the class, write your prayer thoughts below or choose a prayer from one of the prayer books in the class.

So that all class members feel comfortable with the prayer circle, we need some guidelines, eg

- ① Sit quietly and listen to the prayers of others.
- ② Say Amen after your prayer to let the next person know you are finished
- ③ Say 'pass' if you do not want to pray.

Can you think of any other guidelines to ensure that the prayer circle is a positive experience for all class members?

- ④ _____
- ⑤ _____
- ⑥ _____

After the prayer circle:

What do you think was the benefit of praying together?

Why do you think Christians believe praying together is important? _____

 **CHRISTIAN PRAYER** 

MEDITATING ON BIBLE MESSAGES

- Step ① Make yourself comfortable in your chair. Relax. Listen to your breathing.
- Step ② Read the following Bible verses through quietly.

My help will come from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:2 (TEV)

'The mountains and hills may crumble,
but my love for you will never end.
I will keep forever my promise of peace.'
So says the Lord who loves you.
Isaiah 54:10 (TEV)

I am the Lord your God.
I am holding your hand, so don't be afraid.
I am here to help you.
Isaiah 41:13 (CEV)

I will be with you always.
Matthew 28:20 (TEV)

Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads,
and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:28 (TEV)

Be determined and confident. Do not be afraid of them.
Your God, the Lord himself, will be with you.
He will not fail you or abandon you.
Deuteronomy 31:6 (TEV)

- Step ③ Choose one Bible verse for the meditation.
- Step ④ Read it again and again, pausing at the end of each line.
Read it concentrating on each word.
- Step ⑤ Say the verse again in your head. Think about it.
- Step ⑥ Read it through, thinking about these questions:
What does it mean? What does it say to you?

After the reflection:

What did the Bible verse lead you to think about? _____

What do you think is the message of the verse? _____

How do the verses relate to your experiences? _____

 **CHRISTIAN PRAYER** 

GUIDED REFLECTION ON A BIBLE PASSAGE

Make yourself comfortable and listen as the teacher reads this story to you.

Meeting Jesus

Based on Matthew 4:18-22

Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Concentrate on your breathing. Focus on where the in-breath turns to the out-breath. As you breathe out, relax each muscle in your body. (Pause)

You are standing by the sea. Breathe in the sea air. Walk along the beach. Feel sand between your toes and the sun warming your face.

This is a special beach, one you know very well. You have been walking these shores since you were a young boy helping your father with his fishing boat.

Now you have your own fishing boat and you walk these shores and sail these seas each day. You know every turn of the tide, how the wind changes late in the afternoon and, of course, the best places to cast out your net.

Today has been a fair day. You have filled your nets with a good catch of fish and you are weary after your day's work. You are bending over cleaning the weed from your nets, when you become aware of a presence beside you, and a shadow is cast on your net. You look up into the sun, finding it hard to recognise the face before you. You squint and shade your eyes with your hand. You think to yourself: Who is this man? What does he want?

You recognise the man as Jesus, the man from Nazareth. You have heard him speak at the synagogue. He spoke boldly, and you pondered his words. He looks at you with eyes that say 'Hello, friend'.

You feel at ease with this man and start telling him of your day at sea and the good catch. You sit quietly together with your feet dangling in the water, watching the sun set – just like old friends with no need to speak – relaxing and just being still. (Pause)

After a while Jesus gets up and just says: 'Come with me'.

After the meditation:

What did the Bible story lead you to think about? _____

What do you think is the message of the story? _____

How does the story relate to your experiences? _____

 **CHRISTIAN PRAYER** 

PRAYER IN A NATURAL SETTING

- ① Find a quiet spot to be alone.
- ② Use all of your senses to experience the place.
- ③ Look around and then choose one thing to look at more carefully.
- ④ What colours can you see? Is it really all the same colour, or are there different shades of the same colour?
- ⑤ What can you hear? Listen to the loud noises and then listen more carefully to the quiet noises.
- ⑥ What can you smell? Take a deep breath of the air in this place. What are the smells? Is the air sweet, strong or fresh?
- ⑦ What can you touch? Close your eyes and gently run your hands along the ground around you. What are the surfaces like? Pick up something and feel it with both hands. What textures can you feel?
- ⑧ Sit and think about this place. What does it remind you of? What does this place make you think about? What is special about this place?
- ⑨ Think about this place. How could this place or experience help Christians pray?

After the meditation:

What do you think are the features and benefits of praying privately?

What do you think are the features and benefits of praying in a natural setting?

     **CHRISTIAN PRAYER**     

MY REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER



Which of the prayer experiences you have had in this unit do you think would be most beneficial for Christians? Give reasons to support your answer. _____



Which prayer experience would you like to have again? Why?



What have you learnt about why Christians pray? _____



List the most important things you have learnt about Christian prayer.

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What questions do you still have about prayer? _____
