

Lesson 39

Question

With what attitude should we pray?

Memory Verse

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6

Answer

With love, perseverance, and gratefulness.

Main Idea

When we pray, our attitude matters.

Lesson Outline

Open in prayer

Introduction: Collect some pictures of world leaders and people you know the children will admire.

Introduce Question 39: "With what attitude should we pray?" by explaining to the children what the word attitude means. Help them to understand that it is a response to knowledge about an idea, person, or situation that can affect behavior.

Show the children some pictures of famous people and ask them to describe what attitude they might have if they were to meet them. For example, if they met the Queen of England, would they have a humble or sincere attitude? If they encountered a famous sports personality, would they have an enthusiastic attitude? If they met someone who had been in an accident, would they have a sympathetic attitude?

Ask the children what kinds of attitudes they express

To their teachers in school

To their siblings

To the school principal

To an old person

Remind the children that Question 39 is "With what attitude should we pray?" Highlight that this lesson will help them consider how they approach God and what their heart response to God is when they come to him in prayer.

Activity: Give each child an Emoticon Template (RB) along with crayons (make sure you have plenty of yellow) and markers.

Have the children design their own emoticons showing four different attitudes. Encourage them to show the rest of the group their emoticons and let the others guess what attitude each one represents.

Ask the children what sort of attitude they usually have when they pray. Are they bored? Hopeful? Silly? Distracted?

Lesson: Explain to the children that what we know about people affects our attitude around them. God has revealed himself to us in his Word, and what we know about him should determine our attitude when we talk to him.

Read Philippians 4:4-9. Provide Bibles for the children to read along with you.

Explain to the children that Philippians is found in the New Testament and that Paul wrote to Christians in Philippi. Explain to the children that Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison enduring difficult circumstances.

Ask the children if they would be able to write words like Paul's if they were in prison.

Explain to the children that these few verses will teach a lot about God and how to approach him in prayer. In verse 4 Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." Explain to the children that Paul is encouraging Christians to find joy in the Lord. This is because he is a trustworthy, sovereign, and good God who loves his people and saves them from judgment, death, and hell through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus. Despite the fact that Paul is in prison, he is able to say "Rejoice!" not because his life or circumstances are good, but because he fully places his trust in God. Encourage the children to look at the second part of verse 5 and to realize that God is near to his people. He is not a far-off distant deity, but he is near, intimately and lovingly involved in the lives of his children. Help the children to see how amazing it is that the Creator of the universe wants to know his creatures and longs for a relationship with them.

In verse 6 Paul encourages Christians to bring their prayerful requests to God. Explain to the children that this should encourage them to recognize that God loves to hear and answer his people's prayers: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Ask the children if they can imagine living a life without ever worrying about anything. You might want to ask them what kind of things they worry about. Paul knows firsthand that life can be difficult, and yet he says that we can bring our worry and anxiety directly to God. 'Things might still feel scary, and we might want to give in to worry, but God wants us to let him take care of the things that make us anxious. Paul is encouraging Christians to trust God in each and every situation, from the really tricky ones to the everyday occurrences. The passage encourages Christians to be frequent and persistent in prayer. The way to fight off our anxiety is to pray about everything and ask God to replace worry with his peace.

Ask the children if they noticed the attitude Paul is encouraging Christians to have in bringing their prayers and petitions to God.

Christians are to have an attitude of thanksgiving in their relationship with God. Christians should have hearts that are thankful that God saves, that God is in control, that God is near, and that God hears and answers the prayers of his people. What does Paul say will happen as we pray and trust God? Ask the children to read verse 7 aloud with you: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Explain to the children that as Christians learn to pray and understand God's will, they will be able to know peace, because they are confident that God is in control and that he is working for their good and his glory.

Recite: Finish the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 39 and the answer to memory.