

## Lesson 40

### Question

What should we pray?

### Memory Verse

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. (Eph. 3:14-11)

### Answer

The whole Word of God directs and inspires us in what we should pray

### Main Idea

The prayers of God's people should develop in response to God's Word.

### Lesson Outline

#### Open in prayer

**Introduction:** Introduction to Question 40 Give each child a copy of Q40 God Speaks to Me (RB).

Introduce Question 40: "What should we pray?" Remind the children that Christians are in a relationship with God, and because of Jesus's death and resurrection, they can come directly to God in prayer. Highlight for the children that prayer is having a conversation with God. The more Christians know and understand God, the easier it will be to know what to pray.

Explain to the children that good conversations go two ways. When we converse with God, he speaks through his Word, and we respond in prayer.

Tell the children that God has already started the conversation with us by speaking to us in his Word. The Bible verses on the page are all things God has said to them.

**Activity:** Ask the children to line up side by side and put their arms around each other's backs. They will need this support to keep their balance.

Tell the children that people often pray in ways that go against what the Bible teaches instead of what the Bible commands. Tell them that you are going to read out some prayers. If the prayer you pray agrees with what the Bible teaches, then they should stand on their right foot. If the prayer goes against something the Bible teaches, then they should stand on their left foot. Make sure everyone knows which is the left foot and which is the right. Practice a few times switching from the right to left foot while supporting one another. Then read out these sample prayers:

« Father, I know I won't be happy unless I can have an American Girl doll, so please give me one. (L)

" Father, help me to be content with what I have. If it would be good for me, I would like a new bike. (R)

" Father, don't let my mom find out that I stole money from her purse. (L)

" Father, forgive me for lying to my dad. Help me to have the courage to confess to him. (R)

" Father, I know you have the power to heal. Please heal my grandmother's pneumonia. (R)

« Father, thank you that it is always your will to heal us. Thank you that if we believe you have healed us, we won't ever need medicine. (L)

" Father, I know you are too busy to be bothered. So I won't ask for your help on the test I am about to take. (L)

« Father, I know that you love me and care about every detail of my life. Would you please send a friend to sit with me at lunch? (R)

« Father, my little sister has messed up my room for the fifth time this week. I know you can't expect me to forgive her. (L)

« Father, help me to forgive my big brother for shouting at me. Help me to remember that because you have forgiven me, should forgive others. (R)

**Lesson:** Introduce the children once again to Paul. Paul was a man of prayer, and he recorded many of his prayers in the letters he wrote to God's people. Explain to the children that they will begin to learn what to pray as they study Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14–21.

Ask the children to consider what they pray for most often (reassure them that you don't expect them to answer out loud). Tell the children that a great way to find out what someone loves most is by examining what he or she prays.

Read Ephesians 3:14-21. Provide Bibles for the children to read along with you.

Explain to the children that just before Paul prays this prayer in Ephesians 3, he clearly explained God's purpose in his world. That purpose is to draw together a people for himself through Jesus Christ. That's why Paul says, "For this reason" at the beginning of his prayer (v. 13). Because Paul clearly understood God's will, he fell to his knees in prayer for the Ephesian Christians.

Ask the children how they might more clearly understand God's purposes for his world and his people. A right understanding of God's will for his world will fiercely fuel prayer. Help the children to realize that it is through reading God's Word that we understand God's character and mission.

Paul prays that God would help the Ephesian Christians grow in their Christian life, that they would become mature believers. He prays that Jesus would be allowed to rule the hearts of the believers and that he would strengthen them for a lifetime in God's service. It is worth noting to the children that Paul prays to the Father, for the power of the Spirit, and for the sake of the Son.

Paul also prays that the Christians would know the great love that Jesus has for them. Paul wants the Ephesians to know the love of Jesus deep, deep down in their hearts—not just in their heads. And Paul is asking for God's power to help believers understand how wide and long and high and deep the love of Jesus is, because without God's help understanding is limited.

Paul approached God fully trusting that he would hear and answer his prayers (which is the kind of attitude last week's lesson addressed).

Ask the children what this passage teaches us about the content of our prayers.

**Recite:** Finish the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 40 and the answer to memory.