

The Jesus Way

Outdoor Ministry Curriculum 2016

*Sample**

*This sample of The Jesus Way includes a sampling of activities from the Bible studies and supplemental resources for a single day of the curriculum. It is only meant to be used as a sample and not as a complete Bible study or program.

Day 5: Praying

Bible Text: Matthew 6:5-15 (Jesus teaches his followers how to pray)

Bible Studies

Preschool & Special Needs

GATHER

Good morning!

Welcome each of the children by name as they arrive and commend those who welcome others. Now or at some point today when campers can hear you, mention each one's name and that you thank God that he or she has been part of your group this week. Note that today is the last day of the great week you have spent together learning about living Jesus' way. However, they will continue to grow as God's beloved children next week, next year, and forever! Exchange high-fives and begin the day!

WORD

Big picture, little picture matching game

Look again together at the Day 5 Bible story art and talk about the big picture. Ask: Who is there? Who is praying and what is he praying about? What question would you ask Jesus if you had the chance? Cup your hands around one disciple's folded hands and ask campers what they see there. That little part of the story picture is very important! It is a clue to one more thing about living the Jesus way: learning how to pray. Show campers the ten cards and wonder together one more time about the big and little pictures. Distribute copies of the Bible story line-art sheets (p. 00) for campers to color. While some campers add color to line-art story sheets, work with a few at a time to play the concentration game with the cards. Campers look for matches by turning over two at a time. Make sure non-matches are turned back to their respective places to help the next camper's concentration. Ten cards will be challenging so be ready to offer clues. Shout hooray for all winners and losers.

Distribute copies of the matching game sheet for campers to take home. Help them glue the sheet onto a piece of poster board.

SEND

Are you praying?

Continue the conversation about prayer by singing this variation on the familiar song, "Frère Jacques." Substitute glad, scared, excited, and worried for sad and continue singing.

Are you praying? Are you praying?
When you're sad? When you're sad?
God will always hear you. God will always hear you.
Trust God's love. Trust God's love.

Send campers off with an assurance that you will pray for them, and that God always loves them and listens to them when they pray.

Lower Elementary

GATHER

Show and share prayer

Ask campers how many of them have had "show and share" or "show and tell" at school. Give them time to share about a favorite "show and share" item they have taken to school.

Have campers choose one item they are wearing or holding. Have them take turns telling about who gave the item to them. (For example, a T-shirt from Grandma, a water bottle from Dad, a Bible from a Sunday school teacher, etc.) After each person has shared, go around the circle with each camper saying a short prayer for the person they named during "show and share."

WORD

Modeling prayer

The model for praying that Jesus teaches us in the Lord's Prayer follows this pattern:
Start by addressing God in a personal way.

Pray about what God wants for us.

Pray for specific needs.

Using this pattern, help campers work as a group to write their own version of the Lord's Prayer. With this younger age group, it may be easiest to have them take turns filling in the blanks for the prayer below:

Dear (a personal name for God),

You are so (an adjective to describe God). We love you more than (something the camper really loves)!

We know you want what is best for us. That is why Jesus taught us to (help campers fill in the blank with things they have learned throughout the week, including feed, forgive, love, and serve). Help us live the Jesus way every day.

As we get ready to go home from camp, we ask for (give each camper a chance to pray for a specific need). In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

After the prayer is written, pray it aloud together.

SEND

Peace be with you

This sending activity is based on Philippians 4:6-7. Everyone, no matter their age, has fears or anxieties about something. When we pray about our fears or anxieties, we find renewal and peace, which energizes us to love the Jesus way. Have campers name aloud some common fears for kids their age. Write down their responses. Now read the list back to the campers as a litany. Each time, begin with: "God is always with us and loves us." Then say: "Do not be anxious about (name fear)." After each fear is read, campers will respond with: "Peace be with you."

Upper Elementary

GATHER

What did you say?

Gather your group and have everyone sit in a circle. Tell the group that you have a message for the person on your left, but that you need the rest of the group's help to give them the message. Explain that you will whisper a message into the ear of the person on your right, and then they will whisper the message that they hear into the ear of the person on their right. Let the group know that this will continue until the message gets to the person on your left. Before you start, think of a fairly simple sentence, such as "Jesus loves us," and then send the message around the circle. When the camper on your left receives the message, have them tell the rest of the group what it is. Is it the message that you started in the beginning? If not, how did it change? Some campers may be interested in asking each person what message they heard. This can be fun, but to prevent hurt feelings you may need to keep mentioning that it is not always easy to hear when someone is whispering.

Talk about the game as a group:

Was this game difficult or easy?

Why?

What could you have changed to make the game easier?

If you have time, you may want to use some of the campers' suggestions and change the game to make it easier.

Talk with the group about talking with others. What gets in the way when we talk with others? What can make us misunderstand what is being said? Point out to the group that it is usually easier to communicate with someone when you talk to them directly.

WORD

A Lord's Prayer collage

Write out the Lord's Prayer on a large piece of paper or poster board, leaving space after or under each verse or petition. Hand out an old magazine to each camper and explain that you would like each of them to find pictures that go with each petition. Have them cut out each picture that they find, and glue them in the appropriate place on the prayer. When you have covered the paper with pictures, talk about it. Are there pictures on the collage that they wouldn't have expected? Can they think of other things that they would have placed there if they had found them?

Have your campers go off by themselves for some quiet prayer time. Before you split up, remind them that just like other forms of communication, prayer is something that can be done silently. It is also important to listen while we pray. Sometimes we think so much about the things that we want or need, that we forget to listen when we pray.

Encourage your campers to take some time during their prayer to listen to God.

Give your campers some time alone to pray, but bring them back to the group before they start getting too antsy. How did they feel about listening to God? What did they hear? What gets in the way of listening to God? Tell your campers that just like with anything else, we need to practice listening to God. Encourage them to spend some time each day with God, listening as well as asking for help.

SEND

Praying with the newspaper headlines

For many of us, our prayers usually focus on ourselves. We pray for things that we think that we need or things that we want. When you think about it, we are talking a lot about ourselves when we talk to God! By showing us how to pray with the Lord's Prayer, Jesus is giving us an example of praying for others and not just for the things that we want. Sometimes we need to keep reminding ourselves to pray for others.

One way to do this is by using a newspaper. Get a newspaper and show it to your group. If you can, divide up the newspaper and give each person a page. Give them a few minutes to read the headlines on their page and ask them to find one or two people or situations from the page that could use their prayers. Sit in a circle and explain that you are going to pray as a group. Tell them that you will open the prayer and then when you are done, the person on your left will pray for one of the people or situations that they found in the newspaper. When they are done, the person on that person's left will pray for something that they found in the newspaper. Keep going until everyone has prayed. Close the prayer by asking God to keep reminding us to pray for others.

Remind your campers that they can pray in this way when they are back at home too. Whenever they see a newspaper or news online, they can pray for someone in need.

Junior High

GATHER

Prayer times and places

Share the following points with campers, in your own words. It is recorded in the gospels that Jesus often went away to a lonely place to pray. His disciples saw him doing this and asked him to teach them how to pray in this intimate way with God. He referred to God as his heavenly Father, and encouraged the disciples to do the same. To Jesus, prayer was more than just reciting religious phrases. It was a way of having a relationship with God. Jesus prayed at all times: on a mountain, before meals, when alone, for his disciples, at Passover/the Last Supper, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and as he was dying on the cross. Ask campers: What does this alone time for prayer tell us about Jesus and his relationship with God his Father? (Affirm their answers and reinforce these: It was personal, empowering, and vital for the ministry of Jesus.) If prayer was so important to Jesus, what does that say about the importance of prayer for us? (Affirm their answers.)

Invite the campers to consider the degree to which prayer is a part of their lives. Ask these questions: When do you like to pray? Where do you like to pray? What do you find yourself praying for most often?

WORD

The Lord's Prayer

Give campers a few minutes to find today's scripture passage, Matthew 6:5-15, then read the text. Explain to campers that Jesus and the disciples knew several Jewish prayers, psalms, and scriptures by heart. In this passage, however, the words of Jesus encourage the disciples to take prayer to a more personal level.

- Based on Jesus' teaching about prayer in verses 5-8 of the text, how would you describe prayer? (It's talking to God. It's part of an intimate relationship with God.) What is prayer not? (It's not for show, not just babbling words.)
- As Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray, he begins by addressing God in a very intimate and personal way ("Father"), including a reminder that God's name is holy (verse 9). What does this teach us about reality of prayer? (Affirm their answers and reinforce that prayer involves talking to God, who is real, not just talking to ourselves about the things we want.) What does this opening part of the prayer say about who Jesus is and how God wants to relate to us? (Jesus had an intimate and holy relationship with God, and that is what God wants to have with each of us as well.)
- Jesus goes on to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (verse 10). What does this prayer teach us about the priorities of Jesus and what he considers his mission in life? (Affirm their answers, reinforcing that Jesus is asking for God to become actively engaged in and through Jesus and his followers)

on earth.) As a follower of Jesus, what does this prayer say to you? (Various answers may be given.)

- It is interesting to note how Jesus uses the plural pronouns (Our Father, give us, forgive us as we forgive) rather than singular pronouns (My Father, give me, forgive me as I forgive). Why do you think Jesus does this? (Prayer and faith are about living in relationship with each other as well as in relationship with God.) Which of the phrases in verses 11-13 are most meaningful to you? Why?
- Finally, discuss how the passage ends (verses 14-15) and how this is different from the version of the Lord's Prayer we say in Christian worship. Here, Jesus ends the prayer with a statement about forgiveness. Ask if anyone knows the other conclusion of the prayer and can recite it. It proclaims God's eternal power and glory. Talk about why it might have been added to the prayer in Matthew. Why do you think this addition might be an important part of the prayer? (It gives us comfort and hope. It reminds us to have faith in the power of God no matter what the circumstance.)

SEND

Prayer pie

Talk about the kinds of prayers you send to God, such as before a meal, at bedtime, or in an emergency. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he emphasized how prayer was to be a regular part of life, not limited to mealtimes, bedtimes, or emergencies. Jesus taught his followers that prayer is essential to maintaining an open and vibrant relationship with God.

Ask the campers to think about ways they can expand the use of prayer in their lives. (Guidance, temptation, forgiveness, praise.) Draw a large circle on a piece of paper and place it where the whole group can see it. Ask campers to share the kinds of prayers they pray. (Prayers of thanks, confession, petitions for others, guidance, personal requests, etc.) As they share their ideas, begin to divide the circle into sections and label each with the different kinds of prayer the campers are sharing. Encourage them to keep slicing the pie chart into smaller and smaller pieces of more specific types of prayer. (Prayers of faith, tearful prayers of sorrow, prayers for those who have mistreated us, times of listening to God.) Afterward, tell the campers to examine the pie chart and identify one kind of prayer that they would like to add to their prayer life. If you wish, close the time in silent prayer, letting the group use the pie chart as a guide for silent prayer.

Senior High

GATHER

Bridge building

Divide campers into pairs. Each pair will work with another pair to build a minibridge out of the toothpicks and marshmallows. To begin the activity, have each pair sit facing another pair. Place a cardboard box between the pairs so that they will be unable to see

what the other person is working on. The goal is for each group to make half a bridge that looks identical to the other pair's half. They may construct it any way they like, as long as it resembles a bridge. The two pairs can talk to each other about what they are doing, but their hands cannot reach above the box and they cannot look over to the other pair's side. Once each group has completed their half, the box can be removed and they should connect the two halves together. Once each group is done, judge which group has the bridge with the most identical looking halves.

After, discuss the following:

What was challenging about this activity?

What was necessary in order to succeed? (Several things, but the most important was two-way communication: both talking and listening.)

Why is two-way communication important? What happens if we only talk and don't listen (or vice versa)?

Can we have two-way communication in our relationship with God?

Note that in our gospel story for today, Jesus shows us that prayer is a two-way street: God wants us to not only talk, but also allow space for God to talk to us.

WORD

Community story

Read today's story, Matthew 6:5-15, using the following method, which is based on the South American Bible study described in Thomas H. Groome's book *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (Jossey-Bass, 1999).

Each camper is asked to share something going on in his or her life that is important and difficult, and how they are responding to the situation. No comment is to be made by other participants.

Read Matthew 6:5-15, inviting each camper to think about how the passage may be addressing their situation.

Each person is asked to address the question, "Based on this passage, what is calling me to respond to my situation?"

Each person is asked to address the question, "Based on this passage, what are some things I can do to live out the gospel when I go home?"

SEND

Prayers of affirmation

A powerful way to conclude a week at camp together is through affirmation. After getting to know each person in the group a little better throughout the week, it is important that individuals affirm each other.

Begin by reading Psalm 139:1-6. Make the following points using your own words: God has uniquely made each one of us with various gifts and characteristics. We can trust God to understand our individual needs and desires. Sometimes, however, we have

trouble understanding what is unique about us, and we need to rely on other people we trust to affirm those things for us.

Lead campers in a time of affirmation by having them share with each other what unique qualities they see in each other. These could be any of the following:

a special gift or characteristic someone has

a quality highlighted by a way in which they have been served or supported by another person during the week

a quality highlighted by something that someone else has done for them that they are thankful for

There are many ways in which to share affirmations, but two good ones follow:

Have the campers lie on their backs with their heads pointing towards the middle of the circle. This allows the group members to feel close, but eliminates the eye contact that can make people feel shy while sharing. Begin by calling out the name of a camper.

Invite the campers to travel around the circle, with each one sharing an affirmation about that person.

Have each camper tape a full sheet of paper to their back. Invite the campers to travel around to each other, writing an affirmation for each person on their back. This is good for groups that are shyer, as it allows for a more anonymous opportunity to share.

After the time of affirmation, have the group sit in a circle for a time of prayer. Invite them each to pray for the person on their right. Ask them to give thanks to God for the ways that person has been affirmed. Then ask God to give all of them strength to use their unique qualities and gifts when they return home.

Adult

GATHER

Breakfast prayer

Some families have prayers they recite before every meal. Camps have prayers they sing or say (or shout). Congregations have prayers they teach members to sing or say when they gather for a meal or a meeting.

This is an opportunity for your campers to teach, or even create, a prayer to share with the rest of the group before breakfast is eaten.

Invite campers to take a few minutes alone to either create—or to recall and write down, if needed—a prayer they can share with the rest of the group as a breakfast prayer. It doesn't need to be complicated. It can be a bit silly. (Camp prayers often are.)

Once everyone has a prayer written, proceed to breakfast. Sit together as a group.

Invite each person to share the prayer he or she brought.

WORD

Their cries rose

God cannot hear our cries if we do not cry. This is not about emotional, teary-eyed crying (although it could be that). This is about making known our suffering. The Israelites made their suffering known to God (Exodus 2:23-25). Their cry for help rose up.

Ask: Is it difficult to ask God for help or does asking come naturally or spontaneously for you? Could it be the more serious the suffering, the easier it is to groan? Or is it the opposite?

We live in a culture that values self-sufficiency. Perhaps our cultural norms make it difficult for us to ask for help. Discuss this with your campers. Is it difficult to cry out to God because we think we ought to be taking care of ourselves and our loved ones? Is it difficult to be open and vulnerable with God? Or is it easy? Does our crying out to God strengthen the relationship we share? Or does it weaken it?

SEND

Petitioning

When we “petition” God, we are asking God for something: making a need or concern known. The Lord’s Prayer is a series of petitions.

The task for campers is to map out the petitions, and then add a second or even third branch of petitions. Campers can do this individually or in pairs.

Provide each camper or pair with a piece of paper and a set of colored pencils or markers. Each person or pair begins at the center of the page, creating an image of their choice representing what prayer means to them (for example, a heart).

Then draw nine lines (curved or straight) radiating outward from the central image.

Label each line using one of the following phrases: God’s name, God’s kingdom, God’s will, daily bread, forgiveness, trials, evil, power and glory.

Draw a second layer of branches from some of the main branches: To the “God’s kingdom” and “God’s will” branches, add “heaven” and “earth” branches. To the “forgiveness” branch, add “self” and “others” branches.

Now the drawing represents all the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer—and the fun begins. Campers or duos begin adding more sub-branches to both the first and second set of branches, creating their own petitions on each of the main branches. For example, for “God’s name,” campers could add branches “Father” and/or “Creator” and/or “Mother.” For “daily bread,” they could add branches “assistance in Haiti” or “support for those living in drought.” They aren’t rewriting the prayer; they are adding new layers of depth.

Supplemental Resources

Large Group Worship

“The Jesus way” rap

Refrain

We wanna walk the Jesus way.

We wanna walk the Jesus way.
We wanna talk like Jesus talked.
We wanna talk like Jesus talked.
We wanna do like Jesus did.
We wanna do like Jesus did.
We're gonna walk the Jesus way.
We're gonna walk the Jesus way.

Rapper 1:
When you pray
do not say like the
hypocrites do:

Rapper 2:

"O

God you're great, out of
ten an eight, and
I am grate-ful
that you made me
great, so great like
you!"

Rapper 1:

But

when you pray here's
all you need to say: Our
Father in heav'n

All:

Our

Father in heav'n

Rapper 2:

Hallowed be your name.

All:

Hallowed be your name.

Rapper 1:

Your

kingdom come.

All:

Your

kingdom come.

Rapper 2:

Your

will be done

All:

Your

will be done

Rapper 1:

On

earth as in heav'n.

All:

On

earth as in heav'n.

Rapper 2:

Give

us today our

daily bread.

All:

Give

us today our

daily bread.

Rapper 1:

For-

give our sins as

we forgive.

All:

For-

give our sins as

we forgive.

Rapper 2:

Save

us from the time of

trial

All:

Save

us from the time of

trial

Rapper 1:

And de-

liver us from evil.

All:

And de-

liver us from evil.

Rapper 2:

A-

men, amen, a-

men, amen, amen.

All:

A-

men, amen, a-

men, amen, amen.

Refrain

Rappers 1 and 2:

And

that's the Jesus
way, y'all....

Small Group Devotions

Prayer stations

Materials: One stick for each camper, a cross, several fist-sized rocks

Set up the following prayer stations for your campers. Spread them out so campers can travel from station and station at their own pace. As they travel, ask them to remain silent. At each station, invite your campers to take their time to reflect and pray.

Station 1: The stick. Have your campers pick up a stick and reflect on the things they want to confess to God. As they pray, they should break the stick for each confession, representing the broken lives we live.

Station 2: The cross. Have the campers bring their broken pieces of stick and place them at the foot of the cross. Have them pray and thank God for Jesus' sacrifice to heal our brokenness.

Station 3: The rock. Have the campers pick up a rock and hold it as they reflect, remembering that Christ is our rock and the living stone. Have them pray that Christ would go with them to give them strength and protect them.

Challenge Course Activities

Tangles

From Cavert and friends, *Affordable Portables*

This variation of the human knot is an oldie but a goodie. It reminds us that prayer is about connection: our connection to God and to the community around us that is praying with us and for us.

Processing questions include the following:

What was it like to be close together?

How did each person contribute to the group?

What was it like to wait while others were active?

Has anyone experienced being prayed for by a community? What did that feel like?

When you know others are praying for you, how does that make you feel?

Why is it important to pray for others as well as for yourself?

Crafts

Prayer beads

L U J S A I

Materials and preparation: Colored string, beads of any size, shape, and color, scissors

Make a prayer bracelet or prayer string using colored string and beads as reminders of different things for which to pray. Choose one large bead to represent the Lord's Prayer. Add a variety of colored beads to represent different kinds of prayer—for example, red for prayers of praise, blue for family members and friends, yellow for prayers of thanks, purple for people who are suffering or hurt, green for the earth and the environment, orange for personal petitions, gray and gold for the confession and forgiveness of sins, and clear for a time of listening for God's voice and direction. Allow campers to include more shades of colored beads or charms to represent other special prayers they would like to include. They can make their strings as long or as short as they wish. The goal is to establish a practice of praying daily, using the prayer beads to give direction to their prayers. The beads can be left as a single dangling string or they can be tied into a circle as a bracelet or necklace.

Environmental Activities

The Lord's Prayer in nature

As one of your camper group's final moments together, gather in a special place outside that your group has enjoyed this week. If you adopted a tree on Day 3, you could gather there. Otherwise find another place of joy or significance.

Ask everyone to consider the words from the Lord's Prayer, as the words act as a summary for the major themes of each day this week. Ask campers the following about the listed petitions:

"Hallowed be your name." What is holy (or sacred) to you in nature?

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as in heaven." In what ways does nature show or model the idea of God's "kingdom," God's reign here and now, as well as through all time?

"Give us this day our daily bread." How do we see God providing for all of God's creatures?

"Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." How does nature demonstrate renewal (something made new or better)? What do we see in nature that teaches us how to love our neighbors?

Encourage everyone to think about how the words of the Lord's Prayer are reflected in nature as you pray it together.

Games

Sentence to draw

Materials: Printer paper, pencil or pen

Good communication involves both talking and listening, but sometimes we are more willing to talk than to listen. This can be true in our prayer life with God. This game will help campers better understand good communication. Start by giving each camper a sheet of paper and having them sit in a circle. Instruct them to write any sentence they would like at the top of the page; it is helpful if it is a good descriptive sentence with adjectives, nouns, and verbs. When everyone is done with their sentence, they will pass the paper to the person directly to their right. They will then have 3 minutes to draw a picture of that sentence on the paper immediately below the sentence. Once the 3 minutes are up, they need to fold the paper so the image they just drew is visible, but the initial sentence is not. Once they have done this, they should pass the paper to the right. Again, each person will have 3 minutes, but this time they will write a sentence that describes what they see in the image. After the 3 minutes, they should fold the paper so the sentence is visible and the drawing is not. The game continues in this pattern until the papers have gone around the circle one complete time. Once it has been completed, have your campers unfold their papers and share how their initial sentence changed throughout the activity. It may have changed a little, or it may have changed a lot!