

Prayer

Resources

Compiled by Barbara Pratt from submissions from members of:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fhe4children/>
September 2002

OUTLINE:

Prayer Song by Dennis L. Crockett (Ensign, Jan. 1976, 43)
See Children's Songbook and Hymns for additional songs.

LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES:

1. Sharing Time: Alma and Amulek Teach the Zoramites to Pray Flip chart of how to pray.
(“When I Pray” cards)
2. Prayer Helps My Testimony Grow Coloring Page and scripture
3. “Shh ... It's Time for Prayer” (Puppets to go with poem.)
4. Sharing Time: Ponder, Pray, and Listen
(“Morning” and “Evening” prayer reminder activity page)
5. Sharing Time: Juan Learns to Pray
(Coloring page for the steps of prayer)
6. Sharing Time: Choosing the Right through Study and Prayer
(Maze)
7. Sharing Time: I Can Receive Answers to Prayer
(Pictures to color for the ways to receive answers to your prayers according to D&C 9:8-9.)

Submission from Deborah Robb:

8. The Scriptures Teach Me That Heavenly Father Hears My Prayers
9. Unity through family prayer FHE (Lesson 18 from FHE Resource Book)

Submission by Sandie Jeserick

10. Prayer FHE Lesson

Using:

11. Idea List: Meaningful Prayer from The New Era
12. Special Issue: Prayer
13. Handbook for Families: Teaching Children about Prayer
14. Prayers Can Be Smothered by Blankets Shara Gardner
15. Prayer Train and Lesson submitted by Kim Pehrson
16. Receiving Answers to Prayer submitted by Christine Layton

OTHER RESOURCES:

These can be found online at: library.lds.org in the “Gospel Archives” in the magazine section or under “Curriculum” under “Primary”.

I Can Speak with Heavenly Father in Prayer: Primary 2, lesson 10 (See picture: “I Will Pray Reverently” at the end of this file.)

For Little Friends: DJ's Prayer; Friend, Aug. 1996, 30-31

See Daniel in the Lions' Den:

<http://www.fastq.com/~jbpratt/lds/resources/scriptures.html#daniellionsden>

There are other articles in the the January 1976 issue of the Ensign.

PRAYER

Dennis L. Crockett

Dennis L. Crockett

When the sun comes shin - ing through With each brand-new
Pray - ing for the Fath - er's help Starts the day out
Heav'n - ly Fa - ther bless - es us As we will o -

day,
right,
bey,
There's one thing that we should do,
Then we thank Him for his care,
Let us try to do his will

We should kneel and say, Thank you for this day.
When we pray at night, And we say good - night.
Ev - 'ry shin - ing day, And take time to pray.

Sharing Time: Alma and Amulek Teach the Zoramites to Pray

By Virginia Pearce Picture Illustrated by Paul Mann; Friend, Feb. 1992, 12

But behold, I say unto that ye must pray always (2 Ne. 32:9).

A long time ago there lived a man named Alma. He was the chief judge (ruler) over his people, the Nephites. He was also the high priest over the Church. Alma was worried because the Church members cared more about their fine clothes, gold, and silver, than they did about Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father. And they did not take care of those who were hungry, poor, or sick.

Alma wanted to preach to his people in hopes that they would repent, so he selected another man to take his place as chief judge. Then he traveled to towns and cities throughout the land and preached the gospel. In one city, the Lord called a righteous man, Amulek, to accompany Alma.

One day Alma and Amulek went to the Zoramites. Among other things, the Zoramites had forgotten how to pray reverently. They had built synagogues, or churches, and in the middle of each was a tall stand, the top of which was high above the congregation. The stand was called a Rameumptom, or holy stand. One day each week, the people took turns climbing to the top of the Rameumptom. As each person reached the top, he would raise his hands toward heaven and in a loud voice repeat a boastful prayer. Each person said exactly the same prayer, then climbed down, went home, and never prayed or thought about God during the rest of the week.

Alma and Amulek taught the Zoramites who would listen to them that they could pray anytime, anywhere, that they could pray silently in their hearts, or out loud, and that they should not wait until they went to church on Sunday to pray. Amulek told them that they should pray continually—in their fields, in their homes, alone in their closets. Amulek taught them that they could pray to Heavenly Father about everything and that they should not just repeat the same words over and over again. He said that they should thank Heavenly Father for all the good things He had given them, that they should ask for the help and strength they needed, and that they should pray for others. He knew that if they did this, they would feel more reverent toward Heavenly Father. (See Alma 4, Alma 8, Alma 31, Alma 34.)

Like the Zoramites who listened to Alma and Amulek, we need to learn how to pray reverently. We begin by addressing our Heavenly Father; we thank Him for the blessings He has given us. We may ask Him for help and guidance, for protection, and for other things that we need. We end our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, then say “Amen.”

Instructions

Cut the cards from this page and mount them on lightweight cardboard. Color the pictures on cards three and six. On card four, draw pictures of things you are grateful for. On card five, draw things you would like Heavenly Father to bless you with. To make a flip-chart to remind you of the basic parts of a prayer, punch holes in the cards where indicated, then fasten the cards together in order with string, ribbon, or metal rings.

WHEN I PRAY

1

Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening...

Ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness...

Let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.

(Alma 34:21, 26, 27.)

2

Heavenly Father, . . .



3

I thank Thee for . . .

4

I ask Thee for . . .

5

In the name
of Jesus Christ, Amen.



6

1 When I Pray

2 Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. ...

Ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness. ...

Let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.

(Alma 34:21, 26, 27.)

3 Heavenly Father, ...

4 I thank Thee for ...

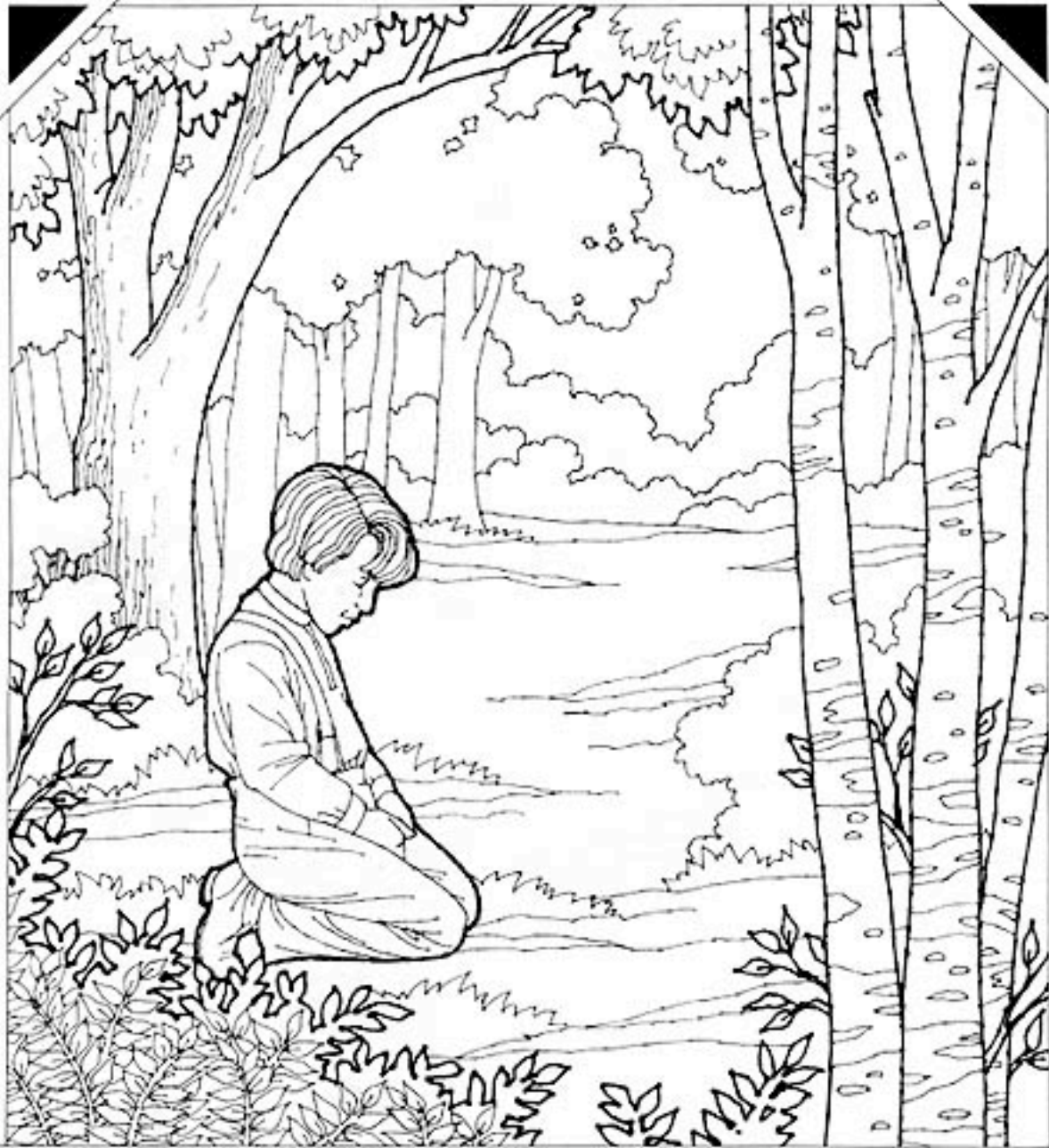
5 I ask Thee for ...

6 In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Divide the older children into small groups. Give each group one of the following scripture references: Luke 11:1-4; Col. 3:17; Enos 1:4; Enos 1:9; Enos 1:15-16; Alma 34:17-26; 3 Ne. 13:9-13; 3 Ne. 18:19-21; 3 Ne. 19:20-21; Moro. 7:26. Have each group read its scripture, looking for the four steps of prayer, and report on which steps are mentioned in its scripture. Demonstrate with one scripture before the children begin.
2. Ask the younger children to draw pictures of things they are thankful for and blessings they might ask for. Have the children cut out these pictures and paste them onto a large flip chart that the whole Primary can enjoy.
3. Find stories in Church manuals or magazines about children and prayer. Set up storytelling stations, using several leaders to tell stories. Rotate the children in groups so they get to hear each story.
4. Have the children dramatize stories from the Primary manuals or church magazines about prayer.
5. Ask several children to be on a panel. Tape questions about prayer to the other children's chairs. Let them ask the questions to the panel members. Let the other children help the panel answer questions. Questions might include: When can we pray? How do we close our prayers?
6. Invite several members of the ward to tell the children about specific times they have had their prayers answered.

Illustrated by Robyn S. Officer



PRAYER HELPS MY TESTIMONY GROW.

*I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart
to God (Joseph Smith—History 1:15).*

"Shh ... It's Time for Prayer"

By Tricia Ann Williams; Friend, Nov. 1984, 22

You can help your family get ready for prayer by having three people help you with these little finger puppets. Ask each person to hold a puppet behind his back until his animal's verse is recited. On the last line of each verse, have everyone hold his index finger to his lips and whisper, "Shhh ... it's time for prayer."

The bunny hops up in the air.

Please tell him, "Shhh ... it's time for prayer."

The small mouse squeaks behind the stair.

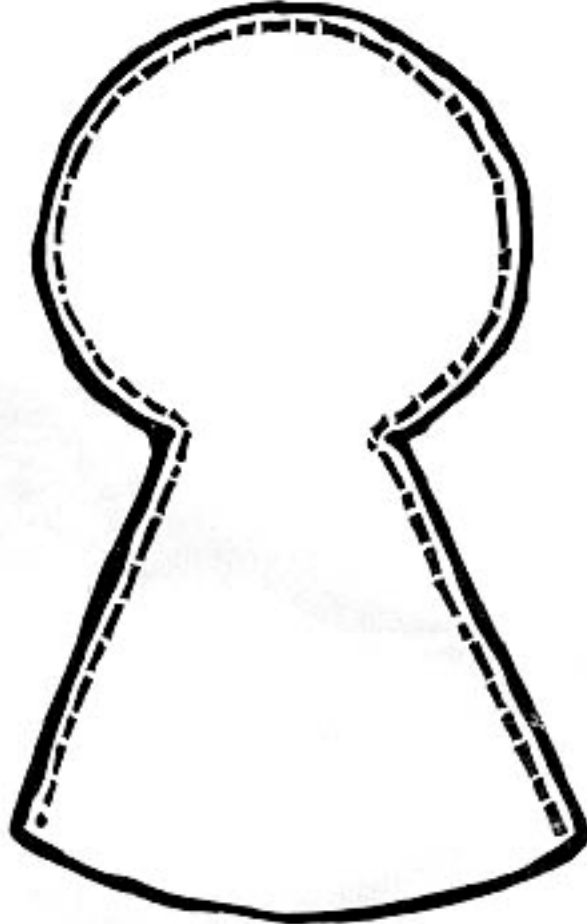
Please tell him, "Shhh ... It's time for prayer."

The young duck quacks without a care.

Please tell him, "Shhh ... it's time for prayer."

Instructions:

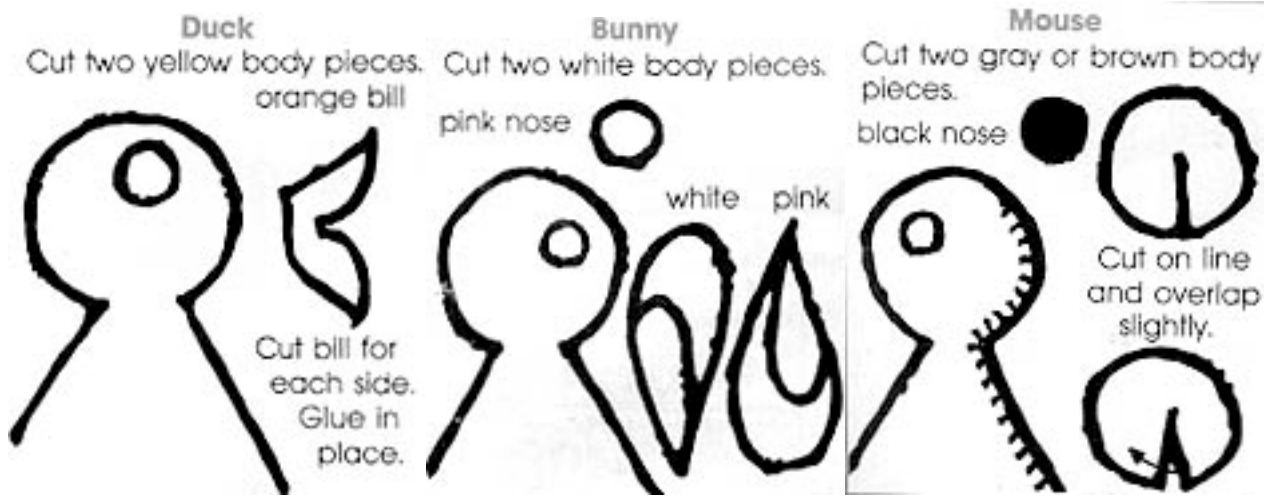
1. The two basic body pieces for each puppet can be cut from felt or paper (see illustration



Cut two basic pieces for each puppet body.

2. Cut two eyes for each puppet and glue them in place.

3. Attach bill and noses cut from felt or paper (see illustration).



4. Cut out ears and glue onto heads.

Felt or Paper Finger Puppets

(Make eyes for each side)



Illustrated by Shauna Mooney

Sharing Time: Ponder, Pray, and Listen

By Karen Ashton Picture Illustrated by Beth Whittaker; Friend, Apr. 1996, 4

Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. (Alma 5:46.)

“All over the world at the end of day,
Heavenly Father’s children kneel down and pray,
Each saying thank you in his own special way,
Saying thank you, thank you in his own special way.”
(Children’s Songbook, pages 16-17).

Heavenly Father hears and answers the prayers of His little children. You are His child. He loves you and will hear and answer your prayers.

Before you begin to pray, take a few moments to think carefully about the beautiful blessings Heavenly Father has given you. This careful thinking is called pondering. Pondering about Heavenly Father’s blessings to you will bring a feeling of thankfulness, or gratitude, into your heart, and this feeling will help you prepare to talk to Him.

As you begin your prayer, let the feelings of your heart come through your voice. Speak to Heavenly Father with love and reverence. When you speak from your heart, He will listen. Tell Him how much you love Him. Thank Him for your blessings. Ask Him for the blessings you need. Tell Heavenly Father how you feel about His Son, Jesus Christ. Share with Heavenly Father the things that make you happy and the things that make you sad or frightened. Ask for the Holy Ghost to be with you. You can talk to Heavenly Father about anything. When you pray to Him, take your time and do not hurry.

When you finish your prayer, sit quietly for a moment and “listen” by thinking about Heavenly Father. Praying can invite a sweet, peaceful feeling that comes from the Holy Ghost. Heavenly Father will answer your prayers in a way that is best for you. As you pray, you will feel His love for you, and your love for Him will grow.

Instructions

Color the “Morning” and “Evening” sides of Figure 1, and the faces in each box in Figure 2. Carefully cut out both figures, and the windows in Figure 1. Fold both pieces along the dotted lines, with the pictures on the outside. On Figure 1, glue Tab A to the base to form a three-sided holder. Then insert the two-sided piece (Figure 2) through the holder. This little prayer reminder can sit next to your bed or on your pillow. Each morning and evening as you slide the picture piece through the holder from right to left, it will remind you to ponder, pray, and then listen.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Explain to the children that the scriptures contain many stories of individuals who prayed for help from Heavenly Father and received answers to their prayers. Write the scripture references for several of these stories on separate slips of paper. Let each class select a slip of paper and prepare a skit to dramatize the story. Some of the following stories could be used: Hannah prays for a son (see 1 Sam. 1:8-20); Nephi makes tools to build a boat (see 1 Ne. 17:8-10); Abraham's servant chooses a wife for Isaac (see Gen. 24:10-20); Martin Harris wants to see the plates (see D&C 5:1-2, 11-12, 23-25; "Testimony of the Three Witnesses" in the introductory pages to the Book of Mormon); Enos prays for a remission of his sins (see Enos 1:1-6).
2. Invite two or three families from the ward or branch to share with the children a time when their prayers as a family were answered. Encourage the children to ask their families when their prayers have been answered. Provide opportunities for the children to share these experiences in Primary.
3. Explain to the children that the Lord has commanded us to pray every day (see 3 Ne. 18:18-21). Tell them that their prayers will be most effective if they ponder before praying and listen for an answer or a prompting after praying. Discuss with the children the meaning of the word ponder (to think deeply; to consider carefully). Pondering before we pray helps us prepare to lovingly speak to Heavenly Father. Explain that an important part of praying is listening to or feeling the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Write ponder, pray, and listen on the chalkboard, or place word strips on the wall. Have the children sing these songs from the Children's Songbook and decide which part of the prayer process each talks about: "I'm Thankful to Be Me," p. 11 (ponder); "I Thank Thee, Dear Father," p. 7 (pray); "I Know My Father Lives," p. 5 (listen); "I Pray in Faith," p. 14 (pray); "I Feel My Savior's Love," p. 74 (ponder); "I Love to See the Temple," p. 95 (listen); "Children All Over the World," p. 16 (pray); "My Heavenly Father Loves Me," p. 228 (ponder); "The Still Small Voice," p. 106 (listen).
4. Discuss with the children the importance of Joseph Smith's prayer in the Sacred Grove. Our Heavenly Father answered Joseph's prayer, and He restored the gospel to the earth. Show the segment "Joseph Smith's First Vision" from the video Moments in Church History (15 mins.—stock #53145).
5. Discuss with the children how thinking about (pondering) the many blessings the Lord has given us and about what we need the Lord's help for prepares us to offer a more careful, thoughtful prayer. Give each child a blank piece of paper and a pencil or crayon. Have the older children fold the paper twice in each direction to form 16 squares. Have the younger children fold the paper once in each direction to form four squares. In each square on one side of the paper, have them write the name, or draw a picture, of a blessing Heavenly Father has given them. On the other side, have them draw pictures of times when they might pray and of the things they might ask help for. Encourage them to share this activity with their families.
6. Younger children would enjoy making a small lunch-bag puppet. The eyes should be under the fold of the bag so that they will appear closed when the bag is folded. This will remind the children to close their eyes while praying. Glue eyelashes along the

corresponding parts of the fold. Draw a nose and smile below the fold of the bag, and eyelids and eyebrows on the top of the fold. A small heart could be drawn under the smile to remind the children that praying will make them feel good; ears could be placed on the sides of the bag to remind the children to listen for answers to their prayers. After they have assembled their puppets, have them use the puppets to show how a child closes his eyes before saying a prayer, then listens afterward for an answer. Remind the children that answers come in many ways.

7. Help the children prepare a kit for giving a family home evening lesson on prayer. The kit might include: (1) These words written on a card: JESUS CHRIST SAID (3 Ne. 18:18-21). (2) Two envelopes glued on a piece of paper. In the top envelope, place 14 beans, beads, kernels of corn, or pieces of paper. Each morning and evening when the family has family prayer, an object is moved from one envelope to the other; thus each week the family transfers the 14 objects from one envelope to the other. (This activity would work using any two containers.) (3) A prayer puppet as explained in Sharing Time Idea #6 for the child to use in explaining how to prepare to pray.

8. For additional Sharing Time help on the topic of prayer, please see these Sharing Time pages in the Friend: "When I Begin to Pray," Oct. 1982, p. 37; "What Shall I Say When I Pray?" June 1985, p. 45; "Seek Guidance Through Prayer," May 1988, pp. 38-39; "I Can Receive Answers to Prayer," Sep. 1989, pp. 44-45; "Prayer Language," Apr. 1991, pp. 36-37; "Alma and Amulek Teach the Zoramites to Pray," Feb. 1992, pp. 12-13.

Gospel topics: scripture study, prayer

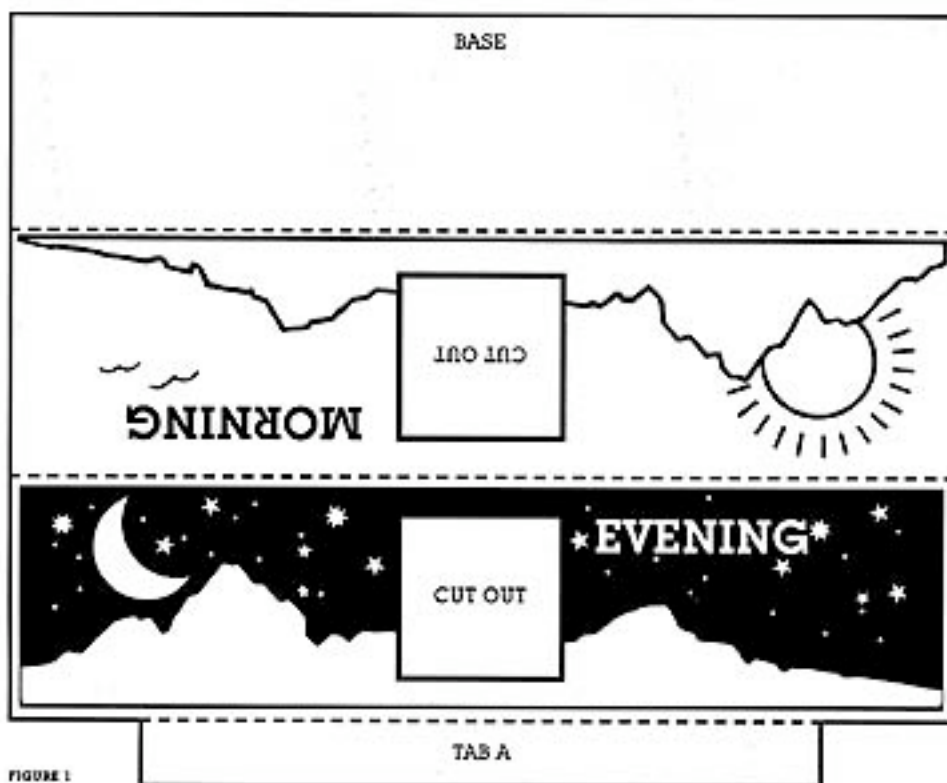


FIGURE 1

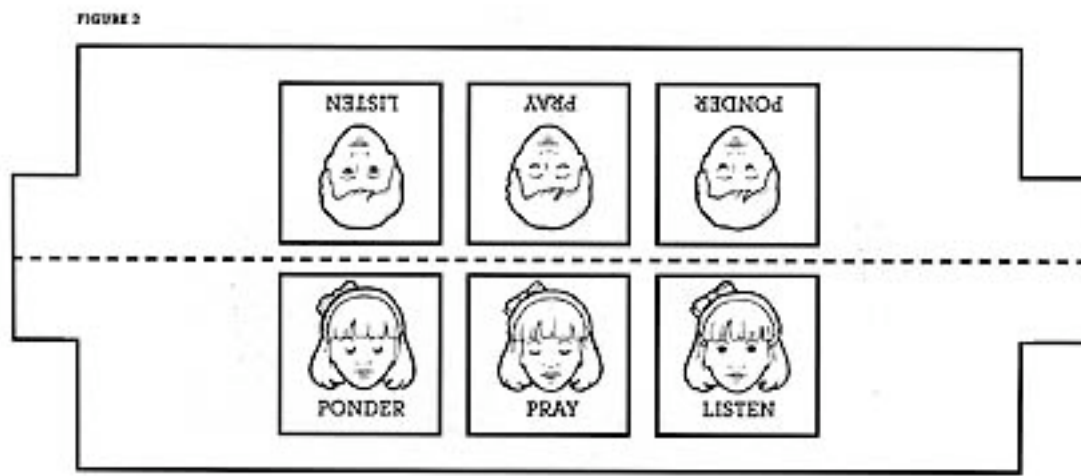


FIGURE 2

Sharing Time: Juan Learns to Pray

By Virginia Pearce Picture Illustrated by Lori Anderson; Tambulilit, Feb. 1992, 9
"Behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always" (2 Ne. 32:9).

When the missionaries came to Juan's house to teach his family about Jesus, Juan listened carefully. Each time they talked about Heavenly Father and Jesus, Juan felt quiet inside.

Before the missionaries left, they said they would like to teach Juan's family how to pray. They knelt down and prayed to Heavenly Father. They told Juan's family that prayer is a way of talking with Heavenly Father. Juan kept thinking about this. He thought about how much Heavenly Father and Jesus loved him. Each time Juan thought about these things, he had the same quiet, reverent feeling. He was happy that he could learn to pray as the missionaries did.

Juan and his family learned that they could pray anytime or in any place. They could pray silently in their hearts or out loud. They did not have to wait until they went to church on Sunday to pray.

The missionaries read scriptures to Juan's family. In the Book of Mormon Jesus said: "Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed" (3 Ne. 18:21).

Juan's family learned that they could pray quietly as they walked to market or when they were all alone. A Book of Mormon prophet said: "Ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and ... let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you" (Alma 34:26-27).

The missionaries taught Juan how to pray in the same way Jesus prayed: We begin by saying, "Our Heavenly Father." Then we thank him for the blessings he sends. We ask him for the things we need. Then we always close in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Juan knew how to pray! He would pray each morning and night. He would pray with his family. He would pray in his heart whenever he wanted to.

That night when Juan knelt down, he began by saying, "Dear Heavenly Father." Then Juan thanked Heavenly Father for sending the missionaries to his family. He thanked Heavenly Father for the quiet, reverent feelings he had in his heart.

Then he asked Heavenly Father to bless his family. Juan's father needed a job and Juan's little sister was sick. Juan asked Heavenly Father to help them. He asked Heavenly Father to help him know how he could help others.

Juan finished his prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

When Juan went to sleep that night, he had that same good, reverent feeling in his heart. At last, he knew how to talk with Heavenly Father. It is the way you can talk with Heavenly Father, too.

Instructions

Color the pictures below. Add your own ideas either in words or pictures of things you are thankful for and blessings you might ask for. Then mount the pages on heavy paper and cut them out on the dotted lines. Punch holes where shown. Fasten the pages together with yarn or string, and tie a bow or knot. You will have a flip chart to help you remember how to pray.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Divide the older children into small groups, giving each group one of the following scripture references: 3 Nephi 18:19-21 [3 Ne. 18:19-21]; 3 Nephi 19:20-21 [3 Ne. 19:20-21]; Enos 1:4; Enos 1:9; Enos 1:15-16; 3 Nephi 13:9-13 [3 Ne. 13:9-13]; Alma 34:17-26; Moroni 7:26 [Moro. 7:26]; Colossians 3:17 [Col. 3:17]; Luke 11:1-4. Ask them to look for any of the four steps of prayer in the scripture passage and then report to the group. The leader should give an example with one scripture before the children begin.
2. Ask the younger children to draw pictures of things they are thankful for and blessings they might ask for. Have the children cut out these pictures and paste them onto a large chart.
3. Ask several children to be a “panel of experts.” Tape questions about prayer to the other children’s chairs. For example, When can we pray? How do we close our prayers? Let them ask these questions to the panel members. Let the audience help the panel answer the questions.
4. Invite several older members of the ward to tell the children about specific times they have had their prayers answered.



DEAR HEAVENLY FATHER



I THANK YOU FOR



I ASK YOU FOR



IN THE NAME OF
JESUS CHRIST, AMEN

Sharing Time: Choosing the Right through Study and Prayer

By Karen Ashton and Photo by Jed Clark; Photo by Welden Andersen; Friend, June 1997, 4

Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God (Alma 37:37).

You will make many important choices in your life. You will be able to choose to keep the commandments. You can choose to obey your parents. You will choose your friends and the activities you participate in. It will be your choice to accept a call to go on a mission. You decide how to treat others, and whether or not to obey the law. All these choices are important, and you are accountable for them.

Heavenly Father loves you and wants you to make right choices because they will bless your life and help you be happy. He wants to help, but He will never choose for you or force you to make a choice. He has given you the precious gift of agency, which is the power to make your own choices.

When you have an important choice to make, you can study it out in your mind. (See D&C 9:8.) Think carefully about your options. You might ask your parents and other leaders for their help and guidance. Find out what Heavenly Father has already told you about this choice in the scriptures. Study what the prophets have said about it. Imagine what the consequences of each option might be and make a list of all the good and bad consequences.

When you feel that you understand what the best choice is, pray to Heavenly Father. Explain to Him why this choice is important to you. Tell Him the feelings of your heart and the reasons for your choice. Ask Him to help you understand if your choice is a good one for you.

After sincerely praying, think about how you feel. You may have a warm peaceful feeling come into your heart. You may feel as though you should go forward with your choice. If you feel confused or uneasy about it, you should consider your choice again. These kinds of feelings come to you from your Father in Heaven. (See D&C 9:8-9.)

Instructions

In the starting box of the maze on the following page, write a choice you have to make. Follow the instructions as you go through the maze. Then, in the finish box, write the choice you have made.

START

The choice I must make:

Go back
and see what
the prophets
have said!

Go back and ask your
parents about your
choice!



I will pray about
my choice.



What my parents say about
the choice:

Go back
and pray
about your
choice!



What the
prophets have
said about the
choice:

Go back
and see what
the scriptures
say about your
choice!



What the scriptures say
about the choice:

I have made this choice:

FINISH

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Prepare these eight word strips: "Thee," "Thy," "Thine," "Thou," "Heavenly Father," "I thank Thee," "I ask Thee," and "In the name of Jesus Christ, amen." Review "The Language of Prayer," (Ensign, May 1993, pp. 15-18). Place the word strips on the walls around the room. Show the children a picture of the Savior praying and tell them that He is our example in all things. Explain to them that Jesus Christ taught us how to pray. Review Matthew 6:6-13 and discuss the pattern of prayer. Have the children help you find the appropriate word strips and place them in their correct order. Explain that when we address Heavenly Father, we use language that shows our love, honor, and respect for Him. Display together "Thee," "Thy," "Thine," and "Thou," and have the children practice using them in sentences instead of you, your, and yours.

2. Place pictures of different types of prayers (personal, family, congregational, blessing on the food, special needs, and sacramental) around the room. Clear the chairs from the room and allow the children to sit on the floor. As you discuss each type of prayer, let them move to sit under that picture. Encourage them to respond and to discover for themselves the differences, similarities, and importance of each type of prayer by asking these questions: "What type of prayer is this?" "What are some of the reasons for offering this kind of prayer?" "Have you ever offered this type of prayer? When?" "What things would you express gratitude for in this type of prayer?" "What are some of the blessings you might ask for in this type of prayer?" "Why is this type of prayer important?" "How is this type of prayer different from and the same as other types of prayer?"

3. Explain that many of the songs we sing in Primary are actually prayers. In these songs, we ask Heavenly Father to bless us and help us. Have the pianist play a few measures from one or more of the following songs. Let the children guess what the title of the song is, have them sing it, then mention the blessings they asked for in the song. Draw attention to the use of the words "Thee," "Thy," "Thou," and "Thine." Examples: "I Thank Thee, Dear Father," p. 7 ("Help me to be good, kind, and gentle today, And mind what my father and mother shall say. Bless me and keep me thy child"); "Heavenly Father, Now I Pray," p. 19 ("Guide and guard me ev'ry day. Help me feel thy love for me"); "Father Up Above," p. 23 ("Bless us with thy love"); "Reverently, Quietly," p. 26 ("Let thy Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts today"); "Help Me, Dear Father," p. 99 (Help me forgive, repent, and live nearer to Him).

4. Display different kinds of telephones and communication equipment. Mention how the equipment has changed over your lifetime. Tell the children that Heavenly Father has provided a way of communicating with Him anywhere at any time: prayer. Point to the phrase "I can pray to Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere" on the front of My Achievement Days booklet. Discuss the attitudes that are important as they pray: faith (see James 1:5-6); love of God and all mankind (see Matt. 15:8; Alma 34:28); humility, sincerity, repentance, and thanksgiving (see Alma 7:23-24; Moro. 10:4). Give each child a piece of paper and have him or her write prayer in the middle of it, then use brightly colored crayons to circle prayer over and over until the paper is filled with a colored "rainbow" surrounding the word.

5. Invite an adult to share times when prayer has helped him/her make correct choices. Prepare a slip of paper for each child to give to his/her parents. On each slip write: "In Primary we are learning about prayer. Share with me a time when prayer has helped you make a difficult choice correctly."

6. Explain that through prayer, Heavenly Father helps His children make correct choices. Show a picture of the First Vision. Discuss Joseph Smith's desire to join the right church and how Heavenly Father answered his prayer. Divide the children into three groups. Give each group a slip of paper with the name of a prophet and a scripture reference. Have each group read and discuss its story to find out what difficult choice or problem the prophet had, and God's answer through prayer. Each group's spokesman shares with all the children what his/her group found out. Examples: Alma—Mosiah 26:1-15, 29, 36-37; Mosiah—Mosiah 28:1-8; Captain Moroni (through Alma)—Alma 43:15-17, 23-24.

7. For additional help on the topic of prayer, see the following from the Friend: "Alma and Amulek Teach the Zoramites to Pray," Feb. 1992, p. 12; "Inner Compass," Mar. 1994, p. 40; "The Choice," July 1994, p. 8; "Fire on the Mountain," Nov. 1995, p. 8; "Marty's Muddy Shoes," Apr. 1996, p. 32. See also: Attention Activity in "Jesus Christ Teaches about Prayer," Primary 7 manual, p. 37; "Heavenly Father Answers Our Prayers," Family Home Evening Resource Book, pp. 27-30.

Gospel topics: agency, prayer

Sharing Time: I Can Receive Answers to Prayer

By Laurel Rohlfing; Friend, Sept. 1989, 44

Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers (D&C 112:10).

It is a wonderful blessing to know that you can pray to Heavenly Father and that He will always answer your prayers. Sometimes He will answer yes, sometimes He will answer no, and sometimes the answer might not come for a long time. But prayers asked in faith will always be answered.

Answers from Heavenly Father usually come very quietly. You will seldom hear them with your ears. They come as warm, peaceful feelings in your heart or as thoughts in your mind. (See D&C 8:2.)

To help you prepare to receive answers to your prayers, Heavenly Father has given you these steps to follow (see D&C 9:8-9):

1. Study the situation and think about your choices.
2. Decide which choice you think is best.
3. Ask Heavenly Father if your choice is right.
4. Listen with your heart and mind. If the choice is right, you will feel good inside.
5. If the choice is wrong, you won't feel good and you should make a different choice.

You can make a mobile to help you remember the steps for receiving answers to prayers. Instructions: Cut out the shapes, mount each on heavy paper, and trim. Punch a hole in the top of each shape, then thread yarn or string of different lengths through the holes. Tie the strings in different places on a wire coat hanger, bent as desired. Hang the mobile in your room.

The people in the following stories used these steps to receive answers to their prayers. In each blank, write the number of the step that was used. Then read the sentences in their correct order.

Sammy wanted to know if the Book of Mormon was true.

_____ Sammy decided that the Book of Mormon must be true.

_____ He read the book and thought about it. He liked the stories and the things that he learned.

_____ He prayed to know if his decision was right.

_____ “My chest felt like it was burning, so I knew that it was true. I felt it in my heart,” Sammy said.

The brother of Jared was told to prepare barges to take his people across the great water to a promised land. He wondered what his people would do for light inside the dark boats. (See Ether 2:19, 22-25; Ether 3:1-6.)

_____ He decided to prepare sixteen stones as clear as glass. If the Lord touched them, they would shine forth in the darkness.

_____ The brother of Jared studied the problem. He knew that he couldn’t have windows or fire because the barges would be underwater some of the time.

_____ The Lord stretched forth His hand and touched the stones with His finger. The brother of Jared knew that he had made a good choice.

_____ The brother of Jared prayed to know if his plan was a good one.

Amanda had many friends who watched videos after school. Some of the videos had scenes that Amanda wasn’t sure Heavenly Father or her parents would like, and she wondered if she should watch them.

_____ Being with her friends was fun. The videos weren’t that bad, and she would be a part of the group. If she didn’t watch the videos, she might not have anything at all to do after school.

_____ Amanda chose to watch the videos with her friends.

_____ She prayed to know if her decision was right.

_____ Amanda felt uneasy about her decision to watch the videos.

President Spencer W. Kimball was concerned because not all men in the Church could receive the priesthood.

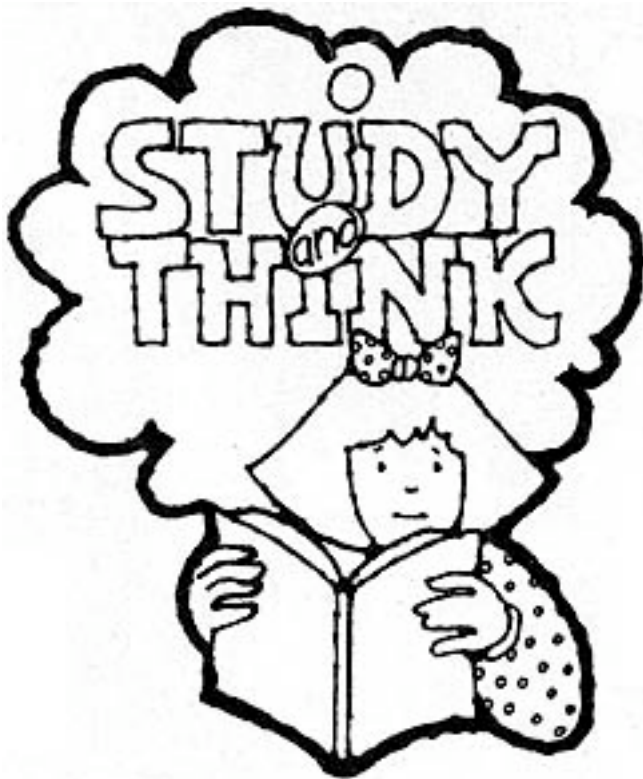
_____ One of the Brethren said that there was a sacred feeling in the room. The Spirit of God was there. The Holy Ghost gave President Kimball a special feeling that what he had prayed for was right. Everyone there knew the same thing by the power of the Holy Ghost. They didn’t hear a voice with their ears, but the Spirit whispered to their minds and hearts that the choice was right. (See Ensign, October 1988, pages 69-70.)

_____ He spent many hours and days praying and thinking about the situation. In the temple, he asked the Brethren what they thought.

_____ President Kimball decided to ask Heavenly Father whether the time was right for all worthy men to hold the priesthood, and he led the Brethren in prayer.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. Ask children to share experiences in which their prayers have been answered. These could be recorded and compiled into prayer journal.
2. Have children draw and label sequence pictures depicting scenes from stories.
3. In Braille (see encyclopedia for Braille alphabet), write steps to receive answers to prayer, and have children decipher them.
4. Discuss proper prayer language and how to pray.
5. Sing "The Still Small Voice" (Children's Songbook, page 106, or Sing with Me, B-92), "Listen, Listen" (Children's Songbook, page 107, or Sing with Me, B-3), "I Pray in Faith" (Children's Songbook, page 14).





The Scriptures Teach Me That Heavenly Father Hears My Prayers

There are many examples of people who prayed because they were in need of help or guidance.

Joseph Smith was reading our scripture for this month, James 1:5, when he and his family were struggling to decide which church they should join. He pondered the words: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him." (Gospel Art Picture #402)

He finally decided to ask God which church to join. He went to a grove of trees and knelt in prayer. The Father and the Son appeared to him, and the Savior told him that the true Church of Jesus Christ was not on the earth and had to be restored.

There are many examples in the scriptures of people who prayed to receive help or guidance.

_____ prayed for help/guidance when _____ (fill in with following scripture stories):

- Esther (GAP #125)
- Daniel (GAP #117)
- Enos (GAP #305)
- Jesus in Gethsemane (GAP #227)

Ask the children for some examples of when we pray...(show the pictures that go with their comments. Show the rest of the pictures if no one mentions them as other examples)

- Baptism (GAP #601)
- Gift of the Holy Ghost (GAP #602)
- Blessing the Sacrament (GAP #603)
- Family prayer (GAP #606)
- To open a meeting or to say our personal prayers (GAP #605)
- Blessing the sick (GAP #613)

One day after watching Jesus pray, one of his disciples said, "Lord teach us to pray." Jesus gave them the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4)

(You may have a child read either of the above scriptures that "show" us how to pray)

There are four parts to our prayers:

1. Our Father in heaven...
2. We thank thee...
3. We ask thee...
4. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Does anyone know what the word "thee" means?

President Spencer W. Kimball said, "In all our prayers, it is well to use the pronouns thee, thou, thy, and thine instead of you, your, and yours inasmuch as they have come to indicate respect.

So, instead of saying, Our Father in Heaven, We thank "you" for "your" spirit which has been in Primary.

What should we say instead? (We thank "thee" for "thy" spirit...)

Have children fill in the blanks for "I Thank Thee, Dear Father." Children's Songbook, page 7.

"I thank (you), dear Father in heaven above,
For (your) goodness and mercy, (your) kindness and love.
I thank (you) for home, friends, and parents so dear,
And for ev'ry blessing that I enjoy here."

(NOTE: I typed the words thee and thy twice in the same font and size and printed them on a colored piece of paper. I cut them out and placed them on top of the words, you and your to make the sentences correct. If you have time, have the sentences and "thee" and "thy" words laminated so you can use for Jr. and Sr. Primary).

Conclusion:

Elder Dallin H Oaks mentioned in a conference talk that we are 75% of the way in using respectful language in our prayers if we delete you and your and substitute thee and thy.

(NOTE: I also mentioned that Heavenly Father listens and answers our prayers even if we have not perfected the use of proper prayer language).

Elder Oaks concluded his conference talk by saying that the special language of prayer reminds us of what a great privilege it is to be able to pray.

I pray that we will all try to be respectful as we say our prayers and that we will pray often--and I do so in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Unity through family prayer FHE (Lesson 18 from FHE Resource Book)

Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings. [Alma 37:37]

PURPOSE

Help family members draw closer to each other and to the Lord through family prayer.

FOR THE PARENT

For those who take their real feelings and concerns to the Lord, family prayer can be one of the most unifying and strengthening parts of the day. This lesson is designed to help your family understand the rich blessings available through praying together and to help you discuss how you can reap these blessings more abundantly.

Consider the following story as you prepare for this lesson:

"One father, a quiet, unassuming man, found it hard to express his love for his family. At his wife's prompting they began holding family prayer, and it became an opportunity to voice what was in his heart. To their daughter, who had misinterpreted her father's manner as indifference, the experience was a revelation. His prayers were simple and sometimes clumsily worded, but to hear him say, 'Bless my lovely daughter to do good' thrilled her.

"A timid boy who thought of himself as a 'scaredy cat' felt new pride and self-esteem when his father and mother thanked God for their 'kind, gentle son.' And the boy's self-confidence continued to grow through prayer when even his little brother thanked Heavenly Father for his 'big, strong brother.'

"In preparation for a family outing in our own family, my husband asked the Lord to bless our family to get along and to enjoy each other's company. The preaching we had done had gone unheard, but that reverent prayer brought cooperation.

"Our teenage son was tense and sullen whenever we tried to discuss any problem with him. We decided it was important to plan the discussion when he would be most receptive, and that seemed to be at family prayer time in the mornings. It was then that the house was quiet and we shared a humble, sincere feeling. We found the tenseness eased when prayer preceded our discussions.

"During these quiet moments of family prayer, we are keeping in touch with each other and with our Father in heaven." (Ann H. Banks, "The Extra Blessings of Family Prayer," Ensign, Jan. 1976, p. 37.)

PREPARATION

1. Bring a piece of paper and a pencil for each family member.
2. Draw a large version of the bridge shown in the lesson, and cut out the stones of the bridge so that the bridge can be put together like a puzzle. Have a sheet of colored paper and glue ready to put the bridge together at the end of the lesson. See the section "Family Prayer Can Strengthen Us" for instructions on using the bridge.

[Scan in picture on p. 81]

3. Have a colored pen or crayon.
4. Bring crayons and paper for younger children.

SUGGESTED HYMN AND SONG

"Sweet Hour of Prayer" [Hymns, no. 142].

"Family Prayer" [The Children's Songbook, 189].

SUGGESTED LESSON

How Close Do We Feel to Each Other?

Begin by briefly discussing the following questions and ideas:

- Have you ever felt alone in a big crowd?

Relate an experience you have had—at a ball game, on a subway or bus, or in a large city—when you felt alone among a group of strangers or casual acquaintances. Let one or two family members relate their experiences.

- Why did you feel alone even though there were other people around?

- What makes you feel close to other people ?

Conclude that knowing that someone else is interested in our problems, successes, and concerns makes us feel close to them.

Tell about a time when you have been among friends or loved ones and still felt alone. Perhaps you had a problem that you felt no one could help you with or a concern no one seemed to care about. Point out that even the members of your own —those who love you most—it is possible to feel alone. Express your desire that this lesson will help them find one important way to draw closer to each other and to Heavenly Father so that none of them will feel that they face life alone. (See D&C 88:62-64.)

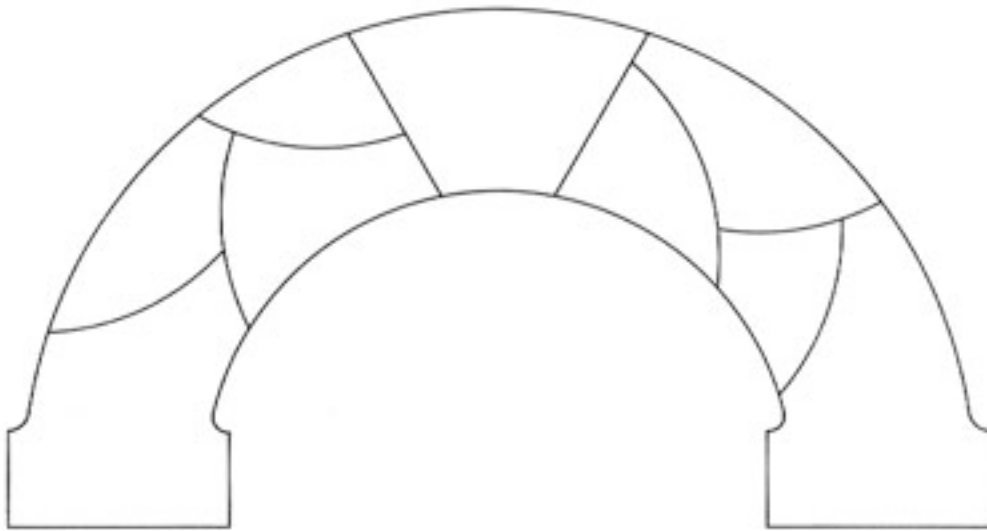
Hand out a piece of paper and a pencil to each person. Ask each person to make two columns. In the first column, have them list at least five things they have been concerned or worried

about during last week. Give them examples if necessary to get them started, such as taking a test, making friends at school, or starting a new job. In the second column, have them list at least five things that made them happy during the week. Collect the lists, and put them aside for use later in the lesson.

Family Prayer Can Strengthen Us

Place the stones of the bridge that you have drawn and cut apart, except for the keystone (the stone in the center of the bridge), in a pile on the table or floor. Ask everyone to imagine that they are standing on the banks of a deep, fast-flowing river with this pile of stones.

- How could we use these stones to get across the river? (By building a bridge with them.)



Have someone try to put together the of a bridge on the table or floor.

- Would this kind of bridge be strong and stable? Could we cross the dangerous river safely?

Point out that there are gaps between the stones and that a bridge like this would collapse.

- What is missing from the bridge that would make it stronger?

Hold up the keystone. Explain that without this one piece, the other pieces of the bridge will not hold together, however strong they are individually. With the keystone, all the pieces can work together and support each other.

Write the phrase "family prayer" on the keystone with a colored pen or crayon. Then on each stone write the name of one of your family members.

- How can praying together in our family be compared to the keystone in a bridge?

Read 3 Nephi 18:21.

- When has family prayer helped us and made our family stronger?

After your family has discussed these questions, have them think about family prayer being a keystone as you, or someone else, tell Brent's story:

The Love of an Older Brother

"One of the greatest joys of my life came when my family was spiritually united in seeking the Lord's aid in my behalf, supporting me through a time of intense struggle. I learned by experience why the Lord placed us in sacred groups called families.

"When I was a junior in high school I contracted a kidney disease. Over the next few years my health gradually declined until my condition became critical. Despite the best medical care, the disease eventually destroyed both of my kidneys. . . .

"I learned a great deal during those three years on a kidney machine. My faith in the Lord grew as I watched his hand guiding my life. I was close to my family, and in spite of the machine I loved life more than ever before. I had never been so free, nor as happy. Yet, I yearned to be free of my mechanical companion.

"This goal, like so many others, became a family project. We often spent family home evenings and family interviews discussing alternatives to dialysis and the justifications for a transplant.

"I recall one memorable week when the family was all together. . . .

"During that week we spent a great deal of time talking about my health. We had all researched the possibility of a transplant, and each member of the family had personally volunteered to be my donor. . . .

"Then one evening a marvelous and unexpected event occurred during family prayers. My father was voice, and when the prayer was completed we all knew what was to transpire. With tears in our eyes we discussed our feelings. Yes, each had felt the same confirmation. We should go ahead with the transplant."

Explain that Brent's brother Craig gave him one of his kidneys. After the operation, Craig was very ill, and Brent's body was trying to reject the new kidney. Then continue with Brent's story:

"The medical reports indicated that I was rejecting the new kidney. It appeared that we had failed. Drastic medical measures were taken, but with little success. As it turned out, the most powerful aid of all was prayer. Etched deeply into my soul is the memory of many nights when family members knelt around my bed and one by one prayed to our Father in Heaven. I listened as my brothers wept, praying that I might live. Then, silently, none of us able to speak, we'd touch hands to say good-night. And they were good nights, for we each experienced the pure love of Christ.

"The kidney rejection was finally overcome; Craig, too, rapidly regained his health and strength. Today, my doctors report that I am one of the healthiest kidney recipients in history.
...

"I can testify that one of the greatest joys of mortality comes when a family is spiritually united in seeking the Lord's aid and comfort." (D. Brent Collette, Ensign, Oct. 1981, pp. 42-44.)

- In what way was family prayer like a keystone to Brent and his family?
- Do you think Brent could have faced his long struggle with illness, no matter what the outcome, without the united prayers of his family?
- Why was Brent able to feel such support from his family?

Point out that—

1. The whole family knew about Brent's problem.
2. They loved each other and wanted to help.
3. They prayed together.
4. They did all they could. Explain that this helped to bring Heavenly Father's blessings.

- Do you feel that other family members know and care about the concerns and joys you wrote down?

Show the lists you collected. Read one or two items from each person's list. Have the family guess who wrote each item you mentioned. Choose items that might not be easy to match with the person who wrote them. You might ask, "During the week, which one of us was concerned about this problem?" or "Who was happy about this during the week?"

A Two-Part Process

Suggest that effective family prayer is a two-part process:

1. We must be aware of each other's feelings and concerns (see 1 Peter 3:8-9).
2. We must talk to Heavenly Father about specific problems that are on our minds (see Alma 34:18-27).

- What if Brent's family had not prayed specifically about his problem during the time of his illness? Do you think they would have known what to do and how they could help?

- What difference did the family's prayers make?

- Why can we get help by praying together as a family that we could get in no other way?

Point out that when we pray together about specific problems, Heavenly Father can show us ways to help each other that we might never have seen. Have someone tell the following story:

Sue Helps

Sue Crandall was concerned about her younger brother, Tim. Every morning they got on a small yellow bus that took them to school a few miles from their home. This was Sue's fourth year, so she was used to riding the bus. She even looked forward to the ride as a time to talk to her friends each morning.

But Tim felt differently. So far, after one week of school, he had cried every morning on the way to the bus stop. Sue's mother had been firm. "You'll get used to it, Tim," she'd say. "Soon you'll have lots of friends on the bus." But Sue could see her mother getting more worried each day as Tim got on the bus sniffing and wiping his red eyes.

Saturday morning, as the Crandall family knelt around the breakfast table, Sue's father said something that made Sue stop and think. Right after he thanked Heavenly Father for his beautiful children, he said, "Bless Tim that he will be able to make friends on the bus this week. And help us find a way to help him."

As the family ate their eggs and toast that morning, Sue thought long and hard. She realized that she had felt sorry for Tim all week, but she hadn't done anything to help. She'd sat with her own friends every morning as her little brother slumped silently on the first row of seats.

By Saturday afternoon, Sue had a plan. She asked her mother if they could pick up her friend Karen and her second-grade brother, Todd, on their way to the bus stop Monday morning.

Sure enough, by the time the children reached the bus stop on Monday, the two boys were so busy talking that Tim hardly noticed his mother drive away.

- How did the prayer Sue's father offered help Tim?

- Can we support each other if we are not aware of each other's concerns and problems?

Suggest that your family could be stronger and feel closer if your prayers together were more specific—if you prayed about the real feelings and concerns of each family member, as well as about group concerns.

Glue the bridge pieces together on a sheet of colored paper. Write the scripture from the beginning of the lesson under the bridge. Post it where your family can see it during the week. Suggest that during the week they make a special effort to pray about family member's concerns. Before each family prayer, you could have a discussion to find out needs and concerns. You might find that mealtime is a good time for this kind of discussion. During the next family home evening, discuss whether this has made your family feel closer.

Be sure to close this family home evening with family prayer.

ADAPTING FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Tell the family about a time when each of your children was sick or had a special problem. Tell them how you prayed for that child, how much you love him, and how thankful you were when your prayer was answered. Explain that Heavenly Father has great love for each of us. He always wants us to tell him about our problems and concerns so that he can help us.

Tell the story of Sue and Tim. Talk about how we can help each other better when we pray about our problems.

Pass out a piece of paper to each person. Have everyone draw a picture that will remind him of the lesson, such as a family praying or Sue and Tim on the bus. Have each person tell about his picture.

Close your family home evening with family prayer. In your prayer, express your love for each member of the family, and mention a special concern or need each has.

ADAPTING FOR TEENAGERS AND ADULTS

Most teenagers and adults will understand the feeling of being alone in a crowd. Let them discuss this feeling. Contrast it with the feeling of being with people who love them and are interested in them. Many people—teenagers especially—are not always willing to tell others what their concerns are. As you introduce the activity of making two lists, you may want to discuss how you can overcome this embarrassment about sharing personal problems through keeping confidences and never violating a trust.

Use the bridge activity.

You may want to discuss in greater depth your own family's experiences with prayer. Recall how your prayers for each other have been answered. Help the family understand that some of the richest and most unifying experiences come when the family together seeks the Lord's help and blessing.

Use the story of Brent, and discuss it.

Accept your family's suggestions as to when, each day, they can spend a few minutes discussing each other's needs and concerns. Encourage them to be aware of these problems when it is their turn to offer family prayer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE HOME EVENINGS

Making Prayer More Meaningful

Give each family member a paper on which the letters f, a, m, i, l, y, p, r, a, y, e, r are listed down the left-hand margin.

Challenge the family to think of things beginning with these letters that they might do to make family prayer more meaningful. The combined lists will give your family a picture of their

responsibilities for effective family prayers. For example, the lists might include f, feel humble and sincere; a, ask in faith; m, make a commitment to live as you pray; i, invite the Lord's Spirit to be with you; or l, love the Lord, family members, friends, and enemies.

Conclude by discussing other ways you can make family prayers more spiritual and rewarding, such as preparing by reading short scriptural passages or singing a hymn. Plan ways to make family prayer a highlight of the day rather than something family members want to hurry through so they can do other things.

The Essential Steps of Prayer

Teach family members the basic steps in proper prayer, using your own words:

1. Address Heavenly Father in hallowed terms, such as "Our Father in Heaven."
2. Express gratitude for past blessings.
3. Ask for needed blessings, both temporal and spiritual. (Include the needs and problems of others, and seek protection from evil influences.)
4. Close by saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ, amen." Each person adds a sincere "amen" as an indication of agreement and rededication.

Family members might add other ideas. Refer to the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-13) as you discuss these steps. Ask family members to watch for these steps in prayer at home and in church.

Praying for Others

Family members should be concerned for each other's welfare in their prayers. Review with the family the story of Alma's conversion (Mosiah 27). Discuss the importance and power of his father's faithful prayers in Alma's behalf. Stress that we should never give up on a loved one who needs our encouragement and support.

If a member of your family is facing some challenge, such as inactivity in the Church, a medical problem, an examination at school, going on a mission, going away to college, or facing a new job, help family members put Alma's example into practice.

To remind family members, you can post the following on a family bulletin board: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"(James 5:16).

Encouraging Regular Family Prayers

If you do not have regular family prayers, discuss family prayer and what it can do to increase family unity, love, and strength. You may wish to use one of the other suggested family home evenings on prayer to motivate your family to pray together. When they are properly prepared and want to have family prayers, make a plan for holding family prayer regularly.

If family members' schedules seem to interfere, read and discuss Luke 10:38-42. Discuss

what our proper priorities should be. You may wish to appoint one family member to remind the others or to call them to prayer at the proper time. Or you may wish to have them post the scheduled time and place on cards in mirror frames or on bedroom doors as reminders. Plan ways to make your family prayers spiritual experiences.

Appreciating Family Prayer

Share the experience of Elder John H. Groberg during his three-month journey from Salt Lake City to Tonga as a young missionary (see Conference Report, Apr. 1982, pp. 75-79; or Ensign, May 1982, pp. 50-52). (If you do not have a copy of this address, check with your meetinghouse library.) Discuss how his family's prayers sustained him in a distant land when he felt frightened and alone. If family members have had experiences when family prayer has strengthened someone, have family members relate them. Explain how family prayer can be more effective through love and unity among family members. Have family members suggest ways that family prayer can increase family unity.

You may wish to conclude with excerpts from Elder Groberg's conference address:

"No matter what other inheritance you leave your family, give them the inheritance of knowing through experience that, forever, you will be praying for them and they for you. . . .

"I testify that time and space are no barriers to these righteous influences, no matter where we are or what our situation is—even in the depths of discouragement, far from our loved ones—we too can feel and be strengthened by those soul-stirring words, 'and bless John or Jane or whomever on his or her mission,' for indeed life is a mission. We are all here on assignment to learn to love and serve one another; and we can't do this as well as we should unless we have consistent, fervent family prayer." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1982, pp. 78-79; or Ensign, May 1982, p. 52.)

Prayer FHE Lesson

Submission by Sandie Jeserick

My daughter (age 10) was disturbed that her prayers were more like a daily rote checklist than a personal communication. So I used the following articles last week to do a FHE on "meaningful prayer" for my 10 and 12 year old children.

HOWEVER, during the FHE, I challenged them to try to spend at least 10 minutes on their knees during their morning and evening prayers for one week. The idea was to get them thinking of what they could be praying for (and actually result in prayerful meditation). The negative result was that the first night, the 12 year old said an 8 minute prayer and the 10 year old said a 30 second prayer and then the 10 year old spent the night crying because her "prayer wasn't good enough" and she felt like "Heavenly Father was disappointed". So I guess I negatively associated long prayers with good prayers and that didn't work out too well. But I did get the opportunity to talk to the 10 year old for a long time about Heavenly Father's love. I also told her that the 12 year old's prayer was so long because she had so much to REPENT of! :) That lightened the mood a bit. But I'd be more careful next time about not making a personal challenge into a competition.

1971-2001 Magazines/New Era/2001/New Era January 2001/Idea List: Meaningful Prayer

1971-2001 Magazines/Ensign/1976/Ensign January 1976/Teaching Our Children to Pray

1971-2001 Magazines/Ensign/1989/Ensign January 1989/Teaching Children about Prayer

Idea List: Meaningful Prayer

New Era, Jan. 2001, 29

We read in the scriptures that we are to cry unto the Lord, to pour out our souls to Him, and to let our hearts be drawn out in prayer to the Lord (see Alma 34:26-27). But making prayers meaningful all the time can be difficult. So how do we open the doors to spiritual power through real prayer and not merely “say our prayers”? Some New Era readers share how they make their own prayers more heartfelt and effective:

- Pray in faith and sincerity. God answers faithful prayers (see D&C 5:24).
- Ponder your day, your needs, and what you are grateful for before you begin to pray (see D&C 9:8). Your thoughts will be more collected, your prayer more focused.
- As you ponder, think of the things you need to repent of, and ask the Lord’s forgiveness. Ask Him to help you know what you need to repent of.
- Ask Heavenly Father if there is anything specific you should pray about, and be sensitive to the guidance of the Spirit in your prayers (see Matt. 6:8).
- Give thanks for all your blessings. Ask the Lord to help you remember them.
- Be sure that you allow two-way communication when you pray. Listen for answers and be worthy of the guidance of the Holy Ghost.
- Try to use appropriate prayer language. Use the pronouns Thee, Thou, and Thine instead of You and Yours.
- Pray out loud. Vocalize your prayers as if Heavenly Father were sitting beside you.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to be with you, and express your love for your Heavenly Father and His Son (see 2 Ne. 32:8).
- Try to find a clean, quiet place to pray.
- Read about prayer in the scriptures. The Savior taught us the pattern for prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 [Matt. 6:9-13], and His own prayer in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39-44) teaches that our prayers should be in accordance with God’s will.
- Take time to pray. Don’t rush. Make prayer a part of your life and not an afterthought.
- Instead of being completely absorbed with your own problems and needs, lay your desires at the Lord’s feet and pray for others who need the Lord’s help.

Special Issue: Prayer

First Presidency Message

Prayer Is the Key By President Marion G. Romney; Ensign, Jan. 1976, 2

We should pray for our flocks, for our families, and for the Kingdom so that we may be guided by Him who is perfect in our efforts to reach perfection.

Recently someone posed the question , Why should we pray?

We should pray because prayer is indispensable to the accomplishment of the real purpose of our lives. We are children of God. As such, we have the potentiality to rise to his perfection. The Savior himself inspired us with this aspiration when he said:

“I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.” (3 Ne. 12:48.)

No one shall ever reach such perfection unless he is guided to it by Him who is perfect. And guidance from Him is to be had only through prayer. In our upward climb, this mortal experience through which we are now passing is a necessary step. To obtain perfection, we had to leave our pre-earth home and come to earth. During the transfer, a veil was drawn over our spiritual eyes, and the memory of our premortal experiences was suspended. In the Garden of Eden, God endowed us with moral agency and, as it were, left us here on our own between the forces of good and evil to be proved—to see if, walking by faith, we would rise to our high potentiality by doing “all things whatsoever the Lord [our] God shall command [us].” (Abr. 3:25.)

The first instruction the Lord gave Adam and Eve, following their expulsion from Eden, was to pray. (See Moses 5:5.)

During his mortal ministry, Jesus taught “that men ought always to pray.” (Luke 18:1.)

To the Nephite multitude he said, “Ye must always pray unto the Father in my name.” (3 Ne. 18:19.)

In this last dispensation, two years before the Church was organized, the Lord, in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph, said:

“Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work.” (D&C 10:5.)

Later he added:

“What I say unto one I say unto all; pray always lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place.” (D&C 93:49.)

The experience of the brother of Jared dramatizes the seriousness of disobeying the commandment to pray.

From the tower of Babel the Lord led the Jaredite colony to the seashore where they “dwelt in tents ... for the space of four years.

“And ... at the end of four years ... the Lord came again unto the brother of Jared, and stood in a cloud and talked with him. And for the space of three hours did the Lord talk with the brother of Jared, and chastened him because he remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord.

“And the brother of Jared repented of the evil which he had done, and did call upon the name of the Lord for his brethren who were with him. And the Lord said unto him: I will forgive thee and try brethren of their sins; but thou shalt not sin any more, for ye shall remember that my Spirit will not always strive with man; wherefore, if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.” (Ether 2:13-15.)

The sin of which he was guilty was neglecting his prayers.

The foregoing scriptures give adequate reasons why we should pray.

There seems to be no limitation as to when, where, and what we should pray about.

“... in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” (Philip. 4:6.)

“Cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save. ...

“Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks.

“Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening.

“Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies.

“Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness.

“Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. ...

“But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.

“Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.” (Alma 34:18, 20-24, 26-27.)

“Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name,” said the Savior, “that your wives and your children may be blessed.” (3 Ne. 18:21.)

“Pray vocally as well as in thy heart; yea, before the world as well as in secret, in public as well as in private.” (D&C 19:28.)

“Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth.

“Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, that thine enemies may be subdued; for thine is the honor, power and glory, forever and ever. Amen.” (D&C 65:5-6.)

Prayer is the key that unlocks the door to communion with Deity.

“Behold,” said the Lord, “I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Rev. 3:20.)

A similar promise, as Jesus gave it to the Nephites, is:

“Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.” (3 Ne. 18:20; italics added.)

To us of this last dispensation, the promise is thus stated:

“Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you.” (D&C 88:64; italics added.)

The sacred records are replete with proof that such promises are fulfilled.

Prayer brought forgiveness of sins to Enos. (See Enos 1:4-5.)

The prayers of Alma senior sent an angel to bring his son Alma to repentance. (See Mosiah 27:14.)

Prayer brought the Father and the Son to visit the Prophet Joseph Smith. (See JS—H 1:14-17.)

Prayer brought the sea gulls from the lake to help save the crops of the pioneers.

Not every prayer brings a spectacular response, but every sincere and earnest prayer is heard and responded to by the Spirit of the Lord.

The manner in which answers to prayer most frequently come was indicated by the Lord when he said to Oliver Cowdery:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

“Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (D&C 6:22-23.)

To all of us in this last dispensation, the Lord has given the promise “if you will ask of me you shall receive; if you will knock it shall be opened unto you.” In seven different revelations, the Lord repeats this promise verbatim—D&C 6:5, D&C 11:5, D&C 12:5, D&C 14:5, D&C 49:26, D&C 66:9, D&C 75:27.

In D&C 88:62-64, he further says:

“I say unto you, my friends, I leave these sayings with you to ponder in your hearts, with this commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall call upon me while I am near—

“Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

“Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you.”

To the truth of these promises, I bear my own testimony; I know they are true.

I know that prayers are answered. Like Nephi and Enos of old, I was born of “just” and “goodly” parents. Early in my childhood I was trained to kneel at my bedside morning and evening each day and thank my Heavenly Father for his blessings and petition him for his continued guidance and protection. This procedure has remained with me through the years.

In answer to prayer as a child, I found my lost toys; as a youth, in answer to prayer, I was led to find the cows in a thicket. I am familiar with the feeling spoken of by the Lord when, to Oliver Cowdery, he said:

“Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?” (D&C 6:23.)

And when he further said:

“Behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

“But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought.” (D&C 9:8-9.)

I know what Enos meant when he said, “the voice of the Lord came into my mind again.” (Enos 1:10.) By this means I have received in sentences answers to my prayers.

I have witnessed the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise that “whoso shall ask ... in my name in faith, they shall cast out devils; they shall heal the sick; they shall cause the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk.” (D&C 35:9.) I have put Moroni’s promise to the test and in answer to my prayers I have received a divine witness that the Book of Mormon is true. I further know that by praying “with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ,” one may “by the power of the Holy Ghost” receive a

knowledge of “the truth of all things.” (See Moro. 10:4-5.)

I bear my personal solemn testimony that prayer is the key that unlocks the door to communion with Deity.

Handbook for Families: Teaching Children about Prayer

Ensign, Jan. 1989, 60

At some time, nearly every child asks the question, “Why does Heavenly Father want us to pray to him?” As parents lead their children in prayerful respect and appreciation, they model for them a way of life that will bring gratitude, blessings, comfort, guidance, faith, and love.

Spirituality begins with prayer. In one way or another, how we live every commandment is affected by how we have regular, sincere communion with Father in Heaven. It is impossible to measure the blessings that come to those families who have learned to make earnest, humble, continual prayer a part of their everyday lives.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, “I know of nothing that will ease family tensions [better] than will praying together, confessing weaknesses together before the Lord, and invoking the blessings of the Lord upon the home and those who dwell there.” (Improvement Era, June 1963, p. 531.)

As we explain prayer to our children, we may include (1) expressing gratitude, (2) pleading for unity and love, (3) asking for help in time of need, and (4) seeking strength to resist or overcome.

Gratitude. Through prayer we can express our gratitude to our Father in Heaven for his kindness and blessings. As we express thanks for each other, our home, and our special times together, our children will not only feel our appreciation but will also learn to express theirs. We can also thank our Heavenly Father for the Restoration, for the beauties of nature, for a safe journey, and for particular blessings given to our family.

Unity. One of the great blessings received in a prayerful home is added family strength. Great bonds of love develop as we sincerely seek the Lord through prayer in behalf of ourselves and our children. Praying as families brings us together both physically and spiritually in a way that can help us handle difficult times.

A father who found it hard to express his love for his family was able to communicate his feelings through prayer. His daughter, who had misinterpreted her father’s manner as indifference, was thrilled as her father prayed, “Bless my lovely daughter to do good.” A shy young man who saw himself as weak and afraid felt pride and self-esteem when his father and mother thanked God for their “kind, gentle son.” (See Ensign, Jan. 1976, p. 37.)

In turn, it is comforting to know that we as parents can receive guidance and understanding from an all-wise, all-loving Father in Heaven. Through prayer, we can better understand our children and their individual needs. We can receive insights to help us teach and discipline

them.

Prayer unites family members with each other and with the powers and influence of heaven. It can also enable us to feel a continued closeness to children who have married or who are away serving missions or attending school. We can also experience this closeness with our extended family as we pray for our relatives.

Need. Prayer can also be a great source of comfort when we have a special need or a problem to solve. We can pray for family members who have lost faith or testimony. The Apostle James wrote, "Pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16.) We can pray about choice of employment, large purchases, how to help a neighbor or serve well in our Church callings, and about the best way to approach family history or temple work.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that as our needs vary, so does the intensity of our prayers, and he referred to the Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane: " 'And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' (Luke 22:44.)

"Now here is a marvelous thing," continued Elder McConkie. "Note it well. The Son of God 'prayed more earnestly'! He who did all things well ... teaching us, his brethren, that all prayers, his included, are not alike, and that a greater need calls forth more earnest and faith-filled pleadings before the throne of him to whom the prayers of the saints are a sweet savor." (Ensign, Jan. 1976, p. 8.)

Resistance. Through prayer we arm ourselves and our families with great power against the influence and temptations of Satan. As we pray devoutly for the ability to discern good from evil, our homes will become places of peace and love, fortified against the adversary. We will also receive spiritual strength to overcome temptation.

When Should We Pray?

We have been commanded to pray in secret, in our families, and in public. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord gives his disciples instruction on praying—in secret and with motives that are pure. (See Matt. 6:5-15.)

As we withdraw each day to speak in private with the Lord, we have an opportunity to gain the strength and insight necessary to best fulfill our role as parents. Our children in turn learn the value of spending time alone each day in prayer as we share some of our spiritual experiences with them.

Church leaders have counseled us to have family prayer twice daily, in the morning and in the evening. The head of the family designates who is to be voice. On special occasions it may be appropriate for each member of the family to pray vocally in turn until everyone has had a chance to say a prayer.

"When we kneel in family prayer, our children at our side and on their knees are learning habits that will stay with them all through their lives," said President Spencer W. Kimball. "If we do not take time for prayers, what we are actually saying to our children is, 'Well, it isn't

very important, anyway. We won't worry about it. ...' Unless planned for, [prayer] never seems to be convenient. On the other hand, what a joyous thing it is to establish such customs and habits in the home that when parents visit their children in the latter's homes after they are married they just naturally kneel with them in the usual, established manner of prayer!" (The Miracle of Forgiveness, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969, p. 253.)

Our attitude before and after we pray is important. To act as if prayer were merely a necessary interruption of our daily activities and to approach it with a "let's get it over with" attitude is to greatly minimize its meaning in our lives. To fail to prepare to speak with the Lord will often result in mechanical, lifeless prayers that accomplish nothing. Likewise, to rush from our prayers, never giving them another thought, will make them far less effective and meaningful in our lives.

One family tries to make family prayer a calm, worthwhile experience by having a transition time before they pray. "When we call for prayer, we are interrupting the lives of many people involved in various tasks and projects. Everyone has his mind focused on what he was doing, and we need to take a few minutes to prepare ourselves for prayer. [We] may say to [our] children, 'Let's take a few moments to think about who we are praying to and why. Let's quietly think about what ... we are grateful for. ...'

"Often we go around the prayer circle and ask each family member if he has any special needs or blessings he would like remembered in the prayer.

"Cynthia may ask for a clear, alert mind in preparing for an exam in school; Maria might request that she be blessed to play well at a piano recital that evening; Stephen may need help in passing off a merit badge for Scouting ... Sandra might need guidance in preparing her Relief Society lesson. ... This process helps us to be aware of everyone's needs and to pray specifically." (Ensign, Jan. 1976, p. 61.)

Sometimes, too, family prayer time helps establish an atmosphere in which we can do things together that don't seem to happen at other times. Ann Banks wrote, "Our teenage son was tense and sullen whenever we tried to discuss any problem with him. We decided it was important to plan the discussion when he would be most receptive, and that seemed to be at family prayer time in the mornings. It was then that the house was quiet and we shared a humble, sincere feeling. We found the tenseness eased when prayer preceded our discussions." (Ensign, Jan. 1976, p. 37.)

How Should We Pray?

The most important way to teach children to pray is through example. As they hear us pray, so they will learn to pray. Besides family prayer, we can pray with each child alone at various times.

Small children can repeat the words of a prayer after an older member of the family. If we are careful to pray specifically about things that are meaningful to them, and to avoid pat phrases, they will not get a mechanical view of prayer.

Primary children learn the four steps of prayer:

“Our Father in Heaven ...

“We thank thee ...

“We ask thee ...

“In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”

This basic structure helps a child remember the essentials of prayer and introduces the formal “thee, thou, thy, thine” references that should be used in approaching Deity.

A mother made the following comment after a memorable experience with her child: “One evening I was listening to our two-and-a-half-year-old daughter as she was praying. She was asking Heavenly Father to bless her blanket, her kitty, the trees, and other things that made up her world at that time. I began to wonder if the Lord heard such insignificant little prayers and instantly received a very strong witness through the Spirit that our Father in Heaven was very aware of my daughter and her prayers and that he loved her and knew her well. That spirit stayed with me through the rest of her prayer and gave me a greater feeling of reverence for prayer and for this child that was mine to rear.”

In addition to teaching children how to pray, we need to teach them how to recognize answers to prayers. We can tell them how we have received answers to prayers and show them examples from the scriptures. We can explain that answers may come in an impression, a feeling, a sense of warmth or peace, or a still, small voice. They may come as we read the scriptures.

As we model for our children the proper attitude of prayer, we need to be more willing to be taught as we approach our own prayers. We must close off the “noise, the confusion, and the cares of the world” so we can “be still, and know that [He is] God” (Ps. 46:10), explains Arthur Bassett. Once we have established that stillness, we must draw upon our own powers of concentration to exert ourselves to the utmost, “[focusing] deeper and deeper into the recesses of the soul. ...

“Vital prayer is never a three-minute pause on the way to a good night’s sleep. Rather, we need to invite the Lord into our thoughts and, in the light of his guidance, subject our life-style to our most penetrating scrutiny. At such moments of total concentration on our part new thoughts may flow into our minds.” (Ensign, Jan. 1976, pp. 32-33.)

Once children have been introduced to the basic elements of prayer and its importance in spiritual growth, we will want to continue learning about this marvelous gift together and perfecting our prayers as we perfect our lives in obedience, praying together that His “will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10.)

Submission by Shara Gardner

Prayers Can Be Smothered by Blankets

By Gary Dee Jones; Friend, Nov. 1987, 42

Click! Thud! Thud! Thud! Wham! Squeak! That was my nightly routine for getting into bed. First I clicked off the light, then took three giant steps, and whammed into bed with such force that it caused my bedsprings to squeak. As soon as I hit the bed, I pulled the covers over my head so that I'd feel as safe as an eight-year-old can.

At night a snake I called Slither lived under my bed. His head was as big as an elephant's ear, and his body was as round as a telephone pole. Sometimes Slither was visited by Crocky Crocodile. He was all mouth and teeth, with a short, squatty body. They didn't make much noise, and my mom said that they weren't really real, but I just knew that they were lying under my bed, waiting to snap at me the minute I put my foot or hand over the edge of the bed. That's why I always slept in the middle of the bed and pulled the covers over my head.

I used to say my prayers kneeling beside my bed, but that was before Slither moved in. I was sure that he'd gobble me up if I knelt beside my bed, so I started to say them while lying under my blankets.

One Sunday morning my Primary teacher gave the best lesson on prayer. She said, "Always remember to pray to your Father in Heaven and talk to Him as if He were your best friend. Tell Him about all the good things that you are grateful for, and ask Him to help you when you need help. Don't forget to pray each morning and night. It's best to kneel by your bed and say your prayer out loud."

I raised my hand and asked, "Is it OK to say our prayers while lying in bed?"

"It's better to kneel," she explained, "because it shows that we're humble. That's the way Jesus did it."

That night as I lay curled up in the middle of my bed and began saying my prayer, I didn't feel good about it. It was as though my prayer was being smothered by my blankets.

Then the image of my Primary teacher came into mind, and I remembered what she had taught us. I knew that I had to kneel, so I knelt in bed, pulled the covers over my head, and began to pray. But I didn't feel any better. I let the covers slip from my head as I peeked at the floor, watching for Slither and Crocky.

I knew that no matter how frightened I was, I had to kneel by my bed. Slowly I slipped over the side of the bed and knelt beside it. I closed my eyes tightly so that I couldn't see Slither and Crocky if they came out to bite me. Then I remembered my teacher telling us to pray for the Lord's help, so I prayed that Slither and Crocky would go away and never return.

I finished my prayer and jumped back into bed and pulled the covers over my head. Then a peaceful feeling came over me, and I didn't feel scared anymore. I pulled the covers off my head and leaned over the side of the bed. As I looked under it, for the first time the blackness seemed to be peaceful and calm. There was nothing to be frightened of—Slither and Crocky were gone forever!

Activity to go with this story:

To go along with the story there is an activity in which you make a prayer rug. You need a small rug, about the size of a welcome mat; fabric paint; a label that says:

"This is a prayer rug to be put by your bed

for to kneel upon when prayers are said

It will help your love grow as the days go by

and have peace in your home and continually try

to become one in purpose in all that you do

And to those covenants always stay true"

On each rug paint "pray every day" in the center. Place the label in the corner and then let everyone decorate.

This is supposed to help reinforce the importance of kneeling to pray.

Submission from Kim Pehrson

I received this lesson as part of a FHE exchange.
Suitable for young children.

PRAYER TRAIN

Preparation and Materials Needed:

Tape, wall or board to tape train on, scriptures, a sample letter, an outline of a train engine, 3 cars and a caboose (die cuts work well or you can draw your own). On the engine write "Heavenly Father", and on the caboose write "Amen". On the cars write one of the following phrases on each "Thank thee", "Ask thee", "Name of Jesus Christ"

Lesson:

Discuss how when we write letters to people we have a particular way of doing it.

- start out with "Dear..."
- Write down what you want to say to them
- Close with "Sincerely"
- Sign your name

Show them the sample letter and point out each part

When you pray there is a special way of doing it (as you say each part, tape up the corresponding train piece). Discuss examples of what could be said for the ask thee and thank thee parts.

- Open with "Dear Heavenly Father"
- Then thank Him for all of the things he has given you or done for you
- Then ask Him for things that you need.
- Close by saying "in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

Read Phil 4:6 and Col 3:17

Reminder:

Hang up the train by the kitchen table or your children's beds to remind them of how to say their prayers.

Submission from Christine Layton

RECEIVING ANSWERS TO PRAYER

OPENING SONG: "A Child's Prayer" CS, p. 12

SCRIPTURE: Matt 7:7-8

LESSON: Begin with an object lesson. Invite a family member to come to the front. Talk to the family member very quickly telling them all about your day, and asking them questions, but never giving them a chance to respond to anything. Then ask for advice and walk away before they have a chance to respond.

Discuss the feelings of the family member who wasn't given opportunity to speak. Did they feel wanted or needed? Did they feel you really wanted to talk to them or were you just going through the motions of a conversation? Ask if any family member has spoken like this to Heavenly Father. How do they think he felt when they treated Him this way?

Explain that Heavenly Father wants to know everything we are going through. He wants to know about our lives. He especially wants to help us with our problems or concerns. The only way He can do this is if we give Him a chance to hear us and respond. Christ taught us in the New Testament that whenever we have a question or a problem, if we ask He will tell us what we need to know. Read and discuss the scripture Matthew 7:7-8. In our prayers we need to be concerned about having a conversation with our Heavenly Father, not just saying our prayers. Tell the following story asking each family member to pay attention to how Heavenly Father answered Thomas's prayer.

STORY: Thomas's Prayer for Peace

"Everyone out to the car," Mr. Johnson called to his family as he opened the front door. "Church begins soon."

There was a bustle of last minute activity as scriptures were gathered up, hair ribbons tied, and sweaters donned. Mrs. Johnson came hurrying from the bedroom, with baby Alice in one arm and her bag of Primary materials in the other.

"Wait for me," four-year-old Thomas called as he headed to his bedroom to put on his socks and shoes. When he came out of the bedroom, he heard the sound of the car backing out of the driveway. He threw down his shoes and ran to the door, but by the time he got there, the car was rounding the bend in the road. No one saw Thomas slump down in the doorway. Tears filled the corners of his eyes until they spilled down his cheeks. "I was coming," he cried softly.

When his feet started to get cold, Thomas went inside, shut the door, and locked it. He remembered Mom telling them that they should keep the door locked when she and Dad weren't home. He kicked one of his shoes angrily as he walked to the couch and threw himself onto it. "I wish I had put my shoes on when Mom told me to," he thought sadly. "Then I would have been ready when Dad called."

After crying for a few minutes, Thomas began to get frightened. He'd never been at home by himself before. He tried to think about another time when he'd felt frightened and about what he'd done then. A few nights earlier he had had a scary dream. When his mother came into his bedroom to comfort him, she had helped him offer a prayer to Heavenly Father. "You can ask Heavenly Father to give you a feeling of peace anytime you are frightened," she had told him.

He knelt down now by the couch and wiped the tears from his eyes. He folded his arms, closed his eyes, and bowed his head. "Dear Heavenly Father," he began, "I'm sorry I didn't put on my shoes and socks when I was told to. Please help Dad come back to get me, and help me not to be afraid. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

He still felt a little nervous as he sat on the couch and looked around the living room. Then he saw the photograph on the piano. He quickly climbed onto the piano bench and picked up the photograph. He sat on the couch and studied it carefully. Then he hugged it close to him. Peace filled his heart.

A few minutes later he heard the sound of a car pulling into the driveway. He knelt on the couch and looked out the big window. It was Dad! His father ran up the steps, unlocked the door, and called out, "Thomas? Where are you, Buddy?"

"I'm right here, Dad."

"I'm so sorry we left you!" Dad gave him a big hug. "Were you scared?"

"At first," Thomas admitted. "Then I said a prayer. And then I saw this." He showed Dad the picture of the family dressed in white, standing in front of the St. Louis Temple. "I remembered that our family is forever, so I knew you'd be back for me."

"You weren't the only one praying, Son," Dad said with tears in his eyes. "I had a prayer in my heart that Heavenly Father would comfort you until I could get home. And now I see how He did."

"You put the picture back, and I'll put on my shoes," Thomas suggested. "Then we can go to church together."

"Together forever," Dad said with a wink.

ACTIVITY: Have a treasure hunt finding clues that tell different ways Heavenly Father can answer our prayers. Tell the family there are five clues hidden around the house. Each clue will tell them one way that Heavenly Father answers prayers. To find the clues they must go to all the places where family members could normally pray. (Hide the clues in places like the dinner table, by the bedside, in a location where the family has family prayer, etc.)

CLUES: Heavenly Father answers our prayers through the scriptures.
Heavenly Father can answer our prayers through lessons and other meetings at church.
Heavenly Father can answer our prayers through other people.
Heavenly Father can answer our prayers through feelings in our hearts.
Heavenly Father can answer our prayers by thoughts in our minds.

LESSON: At the end of this activity, invite each family member to share an experience of how they have received an answer to their prayers in one of the five ways. Ask them if they have received an answer in a different way than the clues suggested. Bear testimony of Heavenly Father hearing and answering your prayers.

TREATS: Make heart-shaped sugar cookies. Remind each family member that Heavenly Father can answer prayers through feelings in our hearts.

WEEKLY REMINDER: Post the treasure hunt clues on the fridge to remind the family.

CLOSING SONG: "If With All Your Hearts" CS p. 15

I Will Pray Reverently

