



Communicating with God

Goal:
There's
power in
prayer

Scripture:
Hebrews 4:15

Prayer often seems like an empty exercise, especially to young Christians. Prayer is simply sharing heartfelt feelings with a Friend who understands. The power of prayer comes with understanding and experience. As we learn that Jesus has been where we are, we gain confidence in prayer and increase our communication with God.



IT'S GAMETIME
GAMETIME
GAMETIME

Follow the Bouncing Prayers

Game Set Up: For this activity, you'll need to pin a roll of adding machine tape (or string of crepe paper) to the ceiling across the middle of the room and get two small, bouncy balls.

Form teams. Each team form single-file line facing the center of the room on each side of the line pinned to the ceiling. Give a bouncy ball to the first person in each line on one side of the room.

Say: The ones with the bouncy balls must bounce the balls on the floor and attempt to make them hit the paper that's attached to the ceiling on the first bounce. Keep track of the number of hits your team gets. The team with the most hits wins the game.

Ask: What was it like to try to hit the line on the ceiling? How is this like or unlike the way you feel when you try to pray to God? Sometimes it seems that prayer is a hit-or-miss activity. But if we see prayer as a "sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't" proposition, we lose confidence in prayer. Today we're going to build our confidence in the power of prayer.



Approach With Confidence

Read aloud Hebrews 4:15-16.

Say: The Bible tells us we can approach God any time with anything and do so with confidence because Jesus understands our feelings and our weaknesses. God knows how tough it is to live in this world because he's lived here as one of us.

Make sure everyone has their own Bible and a concordance if possible.

Say: Think of a feeling you've tried to express or would like to express in your prayers. Then we'll explore the Scriptures to see if we can find a time Jesus experienced that feeling. For example, Jesus experienced sadness when his friend Lazarus died.

Go around the circle, and each person name an emotion. Brainstorm with the group about a time Jesus might have felt that emotion. Then find that passage in the Bible. You might want to have kids look up the emotion words in the concordances (focusing on the Gospels) to discover passages about Jesus' feelings. Remind kids that while the Bible is a record of Jesus' ministry years on earth, it doesn't include every detail because Jesus was fully human. He knew all the feelings and insecurities we know.

After you've gone around the circle, have the kids discuss the following questions:

- * What surprised you about this activity?
- * What difference does it make to know that Jesus experienced the same emotions we experience?
- * What power is there in knowing that God knows our every thought, feeling, and deed?
- * How can we access that power through prayer?



Reflection and Application

String Prayers

(For this activity, place a hardbacked Bible at the center of your room and give each child a long piece of string)

Say: We have a direct line to God through prayer. And because God became like us through Jesus, we can be assured God understands our needs, concerns, and joys. But God's answers to our prayers aren't always what we hope. Fortunately, God knows what we need. Let's put what we've learned into action by talking to God about the thoughts on our minds and the feelings we're experiencing in our lives.

We are each going to pray, silently or out loud—that's your choice. As you are praying, come forward and place one end of your string into our Bible. Hold onto the other end as you go back and sit in the circle.

After everyone has prayed, the Bible will have strings in it, held by each child.

Say: Just as we're connected to this Bible by these strings, we're all connected to God through prayer. Let's commit to building our relationships with God by talking with him often.

Choose Your Closing

Option 1: Like Best Friends

(For this activity, find a wastebasket and a ball that will fit inside it.)

Place the wastebasket in the middle of the room. Give one volunteer five chances to throw a ball into the basket from 15' away. Give another volunteer five chances from 10' away. Then give a third volunteer five chances from 2' away.

Ask: *What was the key to success in this activity?

* How is that like the key to success in prayer?

Say: Prayer may sometimes appear to be hit-or-miss, like tossing this ball. However, the closer we get to God, the more we understand that prayer works! And through we may not always receive the answers we want, growing closer to God helps us see that God is indeed listening to our prayers.

Have kids close the meeting by telling one thing each will do to grow closer to God in the coming week.

Option 2: Prayer Address-Book

(For this activity, you'll need a small address book and a pencil for each child)

Give address books and pencils to kids, and have them write their names in the front of the address book.

Say: One of the ways we can become more confident in the power of our prayers is to think about what we want to share with God. Each of us is going to start a prayer address-book so we can keep an alphabetical record of the things we want to pray about.

Starting with the letter A, ask kids to say aloud subjects of prayer beginning with that letter. Move on through the alphabet until kids have listed at least one subject of prayer for almost every letter. Have the kids write these subjects in their prayer address-books. Encourage your kids to keep track of answers to prayer and to continue using their books to help them pray with more power and confidence.