

## LESSON 3: What is Prayer?



REFERENCE

Page 157 – 159 [KNOWLEDGE / UNDERSTANDING & INSIGHT]



### WHAT YOU NEED

- (1)(4)(5) LSM: 'Basic Prayers'
- (2) LSM: 'What Prayer Is'

### AIM

- To deepen the learners' understanding of prayer, to consider a number of 'everyday' prayers commonly used in the Catholic tradition, and to encourage regular participation in prayer during the course of everyday life

### OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners understand that prayer is a conversation with God.
- KUI Learners understand the purpose of various 'everyday' prayers.
- DAP Learners are inspired to make prayer a regular part of their daily lives.

### TEACHER'S NOTE

Recreate in your imagination the development of formal prayer: how formulae crystallised and came to be valued and used for expressing shared faith and presenting it to new Christians (e.g. the Gloria, the various Creeds, the Easter *Exsultet*); how memorisation was especially important during ages of widespread illiteracy; how prayers and hymns reflected changing emphases in the life of the Church down through the ages.

The Lesson Materials page, 'Basic Prayers', lists a number of prayers, many of which will be familiar to Catholic teachers and learners, but also some that will be known to learners from other Churches. Remember that the purpose of these prayers is to (1) remind one of the importance of prayer and (2) when widely known, or taken from the liturgy or divine office, they provide a common prayer language for groups of people to pray together. However, the worksheet also provides examples, recognized by the Church, such as the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, which are intended for use throughout the day, and the Act of Contrition, which may be used as a way of reviewing the day, or the Prayer to one's Guardian Angel, which is noticeably in a language intended for young children. But while these forms can be recited together, it's important to stress that they also provide exemplars of prayer. Individuals are welcome, and should be encouraged, to use their own words in prayer. This also allows those concerned with finding an inclusive language with respect to God, to privately substitute their own preferred forms of address for the more 'traditional' masculine ones.

It's worth noting that the 'Sign of the Cross' is common to Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches – even if there is a variant in the way the sign is done: When signing from shoulder to shoulder, Latin rite Catholics move from left to right while Eastern rite Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Churches from right to left. Further, the 'Glory be to the Father', sometimes with slight variants in language, is common to Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Churches, and Lutherans – it also appears in the Methodist hymnal. It is thus a prayer formulae that is sometimes used in

preference to the 'Sign of the Cross' in more ecumenical contexts. While the Prayer for Peace, often ascribed to St Francis, is also included, it is not at present a formally recognised prayer of the Catholic Church. However, it has become a well-known popular prayer among many Christians (through various arrangements in song, and its use in ecumenical contexts in situations of struggle against oppression, or where violence is a cause of concern).

Since prayer is a practice common to all religions, encourage those from faith traditions other than Christian to dialogue with these prayer forms, and to participate in the conversation around the purpose of prayer. As these lessons also deal with formulaic prayer, invite learners to bring examples of 'standard', 'common' prayer from their faith tradition to share with the class.

## LESSON OUTLINE

### 1 Introduction

Start the lesson by inviting the learners to join you in making the sign of the cross and praying. Use a SHORT 'formal' prayer e.g. 'Come, Holy Spirit', as provided on the Lesson Materials page, 'Basic Prayers'. Either write it up, or distribute copies of the Materials page, so that the learners will be able to participate correctly.

### 2 Group Work

- i Divide the class into small groups of about 5 learners.
- ii Each group discusses the following questions:
  - What is prayer?
  - Why do we pray?

*Here are some short descriptions: "Prayer is the raising of the mind and heart to God"; "Prayer is listening and talking to God - a conversation with God"; "Prayer is contact with God" (Michael Burke. 1991. 128 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 133)*

- iii Each group formulates a definition or description of prayer.
- iv Invite one group to give feedback to the class. Allow the class, from their own group work, to add any further detail that they feel should be included.
- v At this point you could distribute the Lesson Materials page, 'What Prayer Is'. You could read through it together with the learners. Ask them to underline important points. Then, if necessary, add these to the collective definition of prayer that arose out of the group work. You could ask the learners to write this collective, refined definition into their books.

### 3 Formal Prayer

- i Explain to the class that what they experienced at the start of the lesson is an instance of formal prayer. There are also spontaneous prayers, some of which they will be familiar with. However, the focus of the rest of this lesson is on formal prayer – more attention will be given to spontaneous prayer later.
- ii Ask learners for other examples of formal prayer. As the learners provided responses, categorise these prayers - praise, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession, petitions, body prayers, listening prayers, sung.
- iii Ask the learners why they think formal prayer arose.
- iv Ask the learners for their opinion on the value of formal prayer. If necessary, explain that no one gets tired of hearing 'I Love You' so we should repeat it – like formal prayer – many times, in times of illness and stress we may not feel able to find words to pray so we use formal prayer, it gives sense of solidarity with others.

#### 4 Memorising Prayers

- i Give each learner a copy of the Lesson Materials page 'Basic Prayers'.
- ii Read through the prayers briefly explaining any difficult words or concepts.
- iii Challenge the learners to learn a selection of the prayers by heart in a given period of time (a week / a fortnight) and to be able to say them with meaning and understanding. This means they will have to be able to paraphrase them in language which they understand

#### 5 Conclusion

Say or sing one of the 'formal' prayers e.g. the Creed or St Francis's Prayer for Peace. Ensure that the learners have a copy of the words.

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### OTHER IDEAS

#### 6 Prayer at Home

Ask the class to write up a short description of the role that prayer plays in their homes. Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist learners will have much to contribute since the home remains a significant locus of religious practice. Ask the learners to consider the setting of any particular worship or prayer, any arrangements that need to be made in preparation, and any postures or gestures used during the prayer. Ask them to write out key phrases of often used prayers, or to provide some examples of formulaic prayer in use in their individual or family devotional practice. Learners with experience of African customs may describe the ceremonies that accompany significant events and, in particular, the words used to call on the help of the family and clan ancestors.

#### MATERIALS

##### LEARNER

- Michael Pennock. 1985. 'What Prayer Is' in *Prayer and You*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 25-26, 28-29
- CIE. 2005. 'Basic Prayers'





## Lesson Materials

### What Prayer Is

#### Conversation with God

One of the most famous definitions of prayer comes from St Clement. He defined prayer as "conversation with God". This image aptly describes a developing relationship.

Think of the last time you had a good conversation with a close friend. If it was a good conversation you were totally involved and probably did not pay much attention to what was going on around you. Your attention was focused on your friend. You were engaged in dialogue, both talking to your friend and listening to what he or she had to say.

Prayer also requires that we be attentive. We recognise God's presence and engage in dialogue with him.

#### Talking to the Lord

Unlike friends, however, God is always present to us. God will always listen to us. St Teresa of Avila imagined the Lord was an ever-present companion walking next to her along the path of life. Prayer is turning to this companion and talking and listening to him.

Like any good friend, the Lord wants to hear about our dreams and hopes. He doesn't mind at all if we unload our fears and disappointments on him. It is alright with him if we complain. He's interested in how our day went. We can share our feelings with him when we get a low score on a test, win an athletic contest, find a new job. One of the real values of having a friend is being able to share everything with him or her. The Lord wants us to talk to him.

When we talk to our friends, we don't pay much attention to how we talk. We just talk. Many people who converse with the Lord use their own words, sharing in a way that is most natural to them. This is called *spontaneous prayer*.

Sometimes, though, friends use the words of another to express a deeply felt emotion. We may spend a lot of time selecting a Valentine or birthday card for someone we love. Even people who claim they don't like poetry will expend considerable energy finding a card that puts into beautiful words the feelings they have for their loved ones. It is like that in prayer. Sometimes we turn to *formal prayers* which express in the words of the Christian community what we feel about our God.

#### Listening to the Lord/...

**Lesson Materials**  
WHAT PRAYER IS (cont)

**Listening to the Lord**

True dialogue means listening as well as talking. A conversation with the Lord also requires silent moments of listening if we are to “hear” him speaking to us. This means we have to get away to a quiet place where we can just be, remain quiet and hear what the Lord is saying to us.

The Lord “speaks” to us in many ways but often we are too distracted to hear what he is saying. His words are all around us. He speaks to us in all created things – sunsets and sunrises, gentle rains, cooling breezes. The Lord addresses us in the events and the people who come to us in our everyday lives. He gives us events and people who continuously witness to the love he has for us; for example, this particular set of friends, these parents, and the opportunity to go to this school. Is the Lord speaking to you through a particular disappointment or special accomplishment? Is your best friend the Lord present to you on a daily basis telling you that you are worthwhile and that you are loved?

Prayer can also be seen as *living with the Lord*. When we remind ourselves of his presence, his constant companionship and friendship, we are truly living with him. Think of the author who dedicates a book to a friend. This dedication is a constant reminder during the lonely hours of writing that the book is given as a gift to the friend. Or take the example of the football team that dedicates the game to an injured team-mate. Throughout the effort and pain of the game, the players are aware of their ailing friend. Prayer is like this kind of dedication. It is a continuous reminder that we are in the presence of a friend who loves us very much.

St Paul reminds us to pray always, to live in the presence of the Lord. He writes:

*Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects us to do in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

A steady diet of conversing with the Lord – talking and listening to him – leads to meeting and living with him. This is the goal of Christian prayer.



## Lesson Materials

### Basic Prayers

#### *The Sign of the Cross*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### **Glory be to the Father**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

#### **An Act of Faith**

O my God, I firmly believe that you are One in Three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that your Son became man and died for us, and that he comes again to judge the living and the dead. I believe what the Church teaches, because it is you who have revealed it.

#### **An Act of Hope**

O my God, relying on your measureless goodness and your gracious promises, I hope to obtain pardon and healing for the hurt I've done to myself, to others, and to all your creatures, to reach the fullness of life, and to see your Kingdom come on Earth in justice and peace, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

#### **An Act of Love**

O my God, I love you beyond all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of my love. I love my neighbour as I do myself. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

#### **An Act of Contrition**

My God, I am sorry with all my heart. When I choose to do wrong and fail to do good, I sin against you whom I should love above all things, and against those you love. I firmly intend, with your help, to repair the damage I may have done, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for our well-being: in his name, have mercy.

#### **Hail Mary**

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

## Lesson Materials

### BASIC PRAYERS (cont)

#### **Memorare**

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen. (St Bernard of Clairvaux)

#### **Prayer to one's Guardian Angel**

Angel sent by God to guide me,  
be my light and walk beside me;  
Be my guardian and protect me;  
on the path of life direct me.

#### **Prayer for Generosity**

Teach us, Lord, to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (St Ignatius of Loyola)

#### **Prayer for Peace**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may seek not so much to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. (St Francis of Assisi)

#### **Come, Holy Spirit**

LEADER: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

RESPONSE: And enkindle in us the fire of your love.

LEADER: Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created.

RESPONSE: And you shall renew the face of the earth.

LEADER: Let us pray

ALL: O God, you have instructed the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit. Grant that through the same Holy Spirit we may always be truly wise and rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## LESSON 4: Kinds of Prayer



REFERENCE

Page 157 – 159 [KNOWLEDGE / UNDERSTANDING &amp; INSIGHT]



### WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) A plant, crucifix, candle, cloth
- (2) Recorded song, cassette/CD player
- (2) LSM: 'Basic Prayers' (Lesson 1)
- (2) Poster: morning offering
- (2) Printed hymn

### AIM

- To help learners understand that there are many forms of prayer

### OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners know and understand different kinds of prayer.
- DAP Learners use different forms in their daily prayers.

### TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson is designed to help learners know different forms of prayer. You have to introduce them to the following prayers: formal prayers of the Church, aspiration prayers, spontaneous prayer, 'lightning' prayers, silent prayer, 'body' prayer, sung prayer, etc, and also introduce them to the prayer objects which stimulate prayer and reflection.

Make it clear to the learners that there is no *one* correct way to pray. Each individual needs to decide what suits him/her at any particular time. In this lesson, you will mention various types of spontaneous prayers which learners will study in more detail especially in later grades. But again, as in Lesson 1, the emphasis should be on formal prayer. Ensure that the words of all the prayers and hymns to be used in a prayer experience are visible to all learners – either on the board, the overhead projection, or a leaflet

Make sure that the learners understand that prayers of petition are never wasted, but God's response is not necessarily what we expect or recognise – for God never grants what is not for our ultimate good.

This lesson has been designed to start with a prayer experience. Notice that it follows the ACTS (Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, Supplication /Petitions) formula. However, you may choose to have a discussion about prayer types and then put them into practice. Choose a theme that is relevant to the learners. The prayer experience should contain several prayer types to which you can refer later in the lesson. If the suggested prayer session is too long, choose elements of it keeping in mind a balance of different types of prayer.

### LESSON OUTLINE

#### I Preparation

- i Set up a focal point containing 'traditional' items (a crucifix, candle) and 'spontaneous' items (a plant, some other symbols e.g. pictures of a theme relevant to the learners).



## GRADE 8 Prayer

- ii Introduce the lesson so that the learners have an idea of what they will be doing and why. The statements of Aim and Outcomes above will help you in this.

### 2 Prayer Session

- i Start the prayer session by inviting the learners to sit quietly and listen to a recording of a Gospel song or a popular song with appropriate words.
- ii Initiate the Sign of the Cross. Then, as you light the candle, invoke the Holy Spirit's presence with 'Come, Holy Spirit' which can be found on the Lesson Materials page 'Basic Prayers' from Lesson 1.
- iii All say together the 'Glory be to the Father'.
- iv Lead a short reflection on our sinfulness, calling to mind the things we want to ask God to forgive, reflecting on sins against: our parents and educators (i.e. people in authority); ourselves (that which harms us: smoking, drinking, loose moral behaviour); our friends, peers, and others (our selfishness, rudeness, lack of respect for and kindness towards others); against nature (our contribution to pollution).
- v Continue by reciting together the Act of Contrition, or sing a version of the 'Lord have mercy' from the Mass.
- vi Make a morning offering in the following words:

*Almighty God, I thank you for your past blessings. Today I offer myself – whatever I do, say or think – to your loving care. Continue to bless me, Lord. I make this morning offering in union with Jesus who offers himself daily to you, and in union with Mary, your ever-faithful handmaid.*

- vii Lead a series Petitions or Intercessions by praying for the Church, the leaders of the country and the schools, the sick and then invite the learners to offer spontaneous prayers for their needs and the needs of their friends and families.
- viii Conclude with the singing of an appropriate hymn.

### 3 Debriefing

Ask the learners to tell you which formal and which spontaneous prayer types they recognise from the session they have just experienced. Remind them of the previous lesson where they looked at the category of formal prayer. When they name a prayer type, ask them to describe it. Here are a few notes to guide you in the debriefing:

- Ones we pray together from traditional prayer books - prayers of praise, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession, petition (e.g. Glory be to the Father, Act of Contrition)
- Traditional objects seen as prayer objects (prayer candles crucifix)
- Body prayer – what is it? Did we do it? (Sign of the Cross,)
- Sung prayers (Lord have mercy ...hymn)
- Although not used in this experience, ask the learners if they know what aspiration prayers are: short extracts from Scripture (Father, not my will but your will be done; Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner...) Challenge the learners to select a favourite aspiration from Scripture to use in their daily lives
- Remind the learners that they experienced some spontaneous prayer in the prayer experience. When they name a type, ask them to describe it

### 4 Input

Ask: the learners for examples of formal prayer that are too long for use in a lesson like this one. When they name an example, ask them to describe it. If they don't know the following prayer forms, explain to them what they are:

- The Eucharist /Mass
- Novena

- Vigil
- Rosary
- Stations of the Cross

## I 5 Conclusion

Inform the learners that they will be taking a closer look at the Eucharist during the course of the year.

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## OTHER IDEAS

### 6 Prayer Formulae

Explain how the prayer experience in the lesson was based on the prayer formula ACTS:

A – Adoration/praise/love

C – Contrition/sorrow

T – Thanksgiving

S – Supplication/petition

(Michael Burke. 1991. 129 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 133)

### 7 The Novena Prayer

Explain to the learners what a novena is and start one for a special intention of the learners. A novena is a prayer that is repeat every day for nine days. Its name comes from the Latin word *novem*, which means 'nine'.

## MATERIALS

- There are no further materials provided for this lesson.



## LESSON 5: The Lord's Prayer



REFERENCE

Page 158 [KUI], 160 [EXP]



### WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) Blank paper or workbooks
- (3) LSM: 'Praying Is Dangerous'

### AIMS

- To help learners have a more in-depth understanding of the Lord's Prayer and therefore be able to pray it with understanding and awareness
- To suggest formulae for creating one's own prayers

### OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners deepen their understanding of the Lord's Prayer.
- DAP Learners pray the Lord's prayer with understanding and awareness.
- SKL Learner use prayer formulae when creating their own prayers.

### TEACHER'S NOTE

The purpose of the lesson is to introduce to learners a prayer formula that will help them pray, and to ensure that they pray with understanding and meaning - not just rattling off prayers. If the learners already have a good understanding of the Lord's Prayer, use it only to show the formula and then 'tear up' or 'break down' into meaningful phrases another prayer or a well-known hymn. Prepare those learners who are going to present the play about The Lord's Prayer a day before the lesson.

### LESSON OUTLINE

#### I A Handy Prayer Guide

- i Ask learners if they know their hands can help to guide them in prayer. Ask for suggestions about this. Accept all reasonable suggestions, such as gestures, caressing touch, etc.
- ii Ask learners to place their left hand (right hand for left-handed people) flat on a blank sheet of paper towards the top or on a blank page in their workbooks and draw an outline around their hand.
- iii Learners label each finger with the words in Capitals, explain why each finger is labelled as it is:
  - (1) Shortest finger, shortest time: PETITIONS (Help me, Lord, ... I need ...)
  - (2) The ring finger: links with others: INTERCESSION (Help them, Lord ...)
  - (3) The longest finger: spend the longest at: THANKSGIVING (Thank you, Lord, ...)
  - (4) The pointing finger: accusing: SORROW (I'm sorry, Lord ...)
  - (5) The thumb: most important finger: PRAISE / LOVE (I love you Lord...)
  - (6) The palm: the centre of the hand: QUIET (I'm just happy to be with you, Lord)
- iv Each learner uses the formula to write their own prayer, choosing one or two of the six labels. They then spend a few minutes praying it.

## 2 The Lord's Prayer

Lead the learners through the following questions, noting their responses so that all can see.

- How many times have you said the Lord's Prayer?
- How many of those times have you thought seriously about what you were saying?
- Why do we not think about what we are praying? (Familiarity breeds contempt, bored, distracted)
- Where did the Lord's Prayer come from?
- Take note that we pray in the plural: Our ... us... Can you give a reason for this?

## 3 Praying Is Dangerous

- i Invite two learners you have prepared a day before to come and present the play 'Praying is Dangerous' to the class. The play is found on the Lesson Materials page 'Praying Is Dangerous'.
- ii Ask the learners for feedback on the play. What did they feel? What did they learn?

## 4 Conclusion

- i Challenge the learners to apply the 'Handy Prayer Guide' to the Lord's Prayer. Which 'fingers' do they recognise in Jesus' prayer? The prayer can be broken down as follows:
  - praise the holy name of the Lord,
  - praying for God's will to be done on earth,
  - prayers of petition for forgiveness and our needs,
  - praying that we will be able to forgive those who sin against us,
  - praying that we will be kept away from occasions of sin.
- ii Invite the learners to keep the 'breaking down' or 'tearing up' of the Lord's Prayer in mind while they say the prayer together, slowly, each trying their best to concentrate on the meaning of each word and thought. Some might like to use gesture to express their feelings.

## OTHER IDEAS

### 5 A Collective Commentary on the 'Lord's Prayer'

Write up the 'Lord's Prayer' on the board and go through it phrase by phrase. Elicit commentary from the learners on their understanding of the meaning of each phrase. Allow some discussion, but try to keep the lesson moving. Note the most helpful comments on the board. If some learners find a word or phrase difficult, it helps to begin by trying to paraphrase it (i.e. putting it into one's own words while trying to express the meaning of the original words). Asking learners for examples of what they mean can also help to develop the commentary.

### 6 Key Prayers in Other Religious Traditions

The 'Lord's Prayer' could be seen as the central prayer in Christianity. Ask learners from other religious traditions to bring examples of essential prayers to class. These could be written up and displayed for the duration of this unit.

### 7 Hymns as Prayer

In a similar way to 5 above, you could collectively analyse a well-known hymn.

#### MATERIALS

#### LEARNER

- Elk Richardson. 1999. 'Praying is Dangerous'. *The Southern Cross*, Youth Page July 11



## Lesson Materials



### Praying Is Dangerous

Our Father who art in Heaven.

*Yes?*

Don't interrupt me, I'm praying.

*But you called Me.*

Called you? I didn't call you. I'm praying ... Our Father who art in Heaven.

*There you did it again.*

Did what?

*Called Me. You said, Our Father who art in Heaven. Here I am. What's on your mind?*

But I didn't mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like getting my duty done.

*All right. Go on.*

Hallowed be thy name.

*Hold it. What do you mean by that?*

By what?

*By 'Hallowed be thy name'*

It means... it means... good grief, I don't know what it means. How should I know? It's just part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?

*It means 'honored', 'holy', 'wonderful'.*

Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what 'hallowed' meant before. Thy Kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

*Do you really mean that?*

Sure, why not.

*What are you going to do about it?*

Do? Nothing, I guess. I just think it would be neat if you got control of everything down here like you have up there.

*Have I got control of you?*

Well, I go to church.

*That isn't what I asked you. What about that habit of lust you have? And your bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know. And then there's the way you spend your money... all on yourself. And what about the kinds of books you read?*

Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of those phonies at the church.

*Excuse me. I thought you were praying for my will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you, for example.*

Oh, all right! I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

*So could I.*

I haven't thought about it/...

## Lesson Materials

### PRAYING IS DANGEROUS (cont)

I haven't thought about it until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I'd like to, you know, be really free.

*Good, now we're getting somewhere. You and I can have some victories that can truly be won. I'm proud of you.*

Look, Lord, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does. Give us this day our daily bread.

*You need to cut down on the bread, too. You're overweight as it is.*

Hey, wait a minute! What is this, Criticise Me Day? Here I was doing my religious duty, and all of a sudden You break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.

*Praying is a dangerous thing. You could wind up changed, you know. That's what I'm trying to get across to you. You called me, and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep on praying. I'm interested in the next part of your prayer. Well, go on.*

I'm scared to.

*Scared? Of what?*

I know what you'll say.

*Try me and see.*

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

*What about Sally?*

See, I knew it! I knew you would bring her up! She's told lies about me, cheated me out of money. She's never paid back that debt she owes me. I've sworn to get even.

*But your prayer. . . what about your prayer?*

I didn't mean it.

*Well, at least you're honest. But it's not much fun carrying the load of bitterness around inside, is it?*

No, But I'll feel better as soon as I get even. Boy, have I made some plans for old Sally! She'll wish she never did me any harm.

*You won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. Think of how unhappy you are already. But I can change all that.*

You can? How?

*Forgive Sally. Then I'll forgive you, then the hate and sin will be Sally's problem and not yours. You may lose the money, but you will settle your heart.*

But Lord, I can't forgive Sally.

*Then I can't forgive you.*

Oh, you're right! You always are. And more than I want revenge on Sally, I want to be right with you. All right! I forgive her. Help her to find the right road in life, Lord. She's bound to be awfully miserable, now that I think about it. Some way, some how, show her the right way.

*There now! How do you feel?*

Hmmm, not bad. Not bad at all. In fact, I feel pretty great. You know, I don't think I'll have to go to bed uptight tonight for the first time since I can't remember. Maybe I won't be so tired from now on because I'm not getting enough rest.

*You're not through/...*

## Lesson Materials

### PRAYING IS DANGEROUS (cont)

*You're not through with your prayer. Go on.*

Oh, all right. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

*Good! Good! I'll do that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.*

What do you mean by that?

*Quit hanging around the wrong places, watching inappropriate movies and television, listening to sinful conversations, getting into compromising situations. Change some of your friendships. Some of your so-called-friends are beginning to get to you. They'll have you completely involved in wrong things before long. Don't be fooled. They advertise they're having fun, but for you it would be ruin. Don't use me for an escape hatch.*

I don't understand.

*Sure you do. You've done it lots of times. You get caught in a bad situation, you get into trouble and then you come running to me. 'Lord, help me out of this mess, and promise you'll never do it again'. You remember some of those bargains you tried to make with me?*

Yes, and I'm ashamed, Lord. I really am.

*Which bargains are you remembering?*

Well, when the woman from next door saw me backing away from the pub, I'd told my folks I was going to the store. I remember telling you, Lord, don't let her tell my parents where I've been. I promise I'll be in church every Sunday.

*She didn't tell your parents, but you didn't keep your promise, did you?*

I'm sorry. Lord, I really am. Up until now I thought if I just prayed the Our Father every day, then I could do what I liked. I didn't expect anything to happen like it did.

*Go ahead. Finish your prayer.*

Oh yes . . . For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.  
Amen.

*Do you know what would bring me glory? What would make me really happy?*

No, but I'd like to know. I want to please you. I can see what a mess I've made out of my life, and I can see how great it would be to really be one of your followers.

*You just answered the question.*

I did?

*Yes, the one thing that would bring me glory is to have people like you truly love me. And I can see that happening between us. Now that some of those old sins are exposed and out of the way, well, there's no telling what we can do together.*

Lord, let's see what we can make of me, OK?

*Yes, let's see...*