Small Group Time: What’s So Special About the Lord’s Prayer?

**October 21st, 2020 @7:15-8 pm**

*Instructions*

*Be sure to start on a positive note. Welcome each learner by name. Let them know you're glad they're here! If anyone is absent, mention you'll be praying for that person together. Small Group Time is for give-and-take discussion. Your main job is to draw learners out and get them talking about the theme. Ask open-ended questions that will provoke responses. Once the conversation begins, intervene only to bring it back on track or to stimulate more talk.*

Bible Text: Matthew 6:5-15

Lesson Focus: When we say the prayer Jesus taught us, we connect with God.

Big Question: What’s the big deal about the Lord’s Prayer?

Key Words: RELATIONSHIP, PETITION, EXAMPLE, ACCESS, HOLY

Discussion Time

*Use the following questions to kick off a conversation about the theme:*

1. Help students dive into the Key Words by asking for definitions and/or providing these definitions:

-RELATIONSHIP: what bonds people with each other and with God.

-PETITION: a request one person makes of another.

-EXAMPLE: something that serves as a pattern we can imitate.

-ACCESS: the ability to gain entry to something or communicate with someone.

-HOLY: a characteristic of a person or thing related to God.

2. Who is one of your role models? Why? Share a memory of something important they have said or done.

3. How are you different than your role model? How are you the same?

4. Why can someone be a role model for one person but not for another?

5. How was Jesus a role model for the disciples? For you?

6. How does the Lord’s Prayer work as a model for prayer? Is anything missing from the model?

7. Why does prayer work?

8. What can we learn from Jesus teaching this prayer?

9. How does it feel to know you have direct access to God?

10. Do you think the Lord’s Prayer is mostly about the words, or mostly about the comfort it gives us because we know it so well?

11. How are people to pray to God as “parent” if they don’t feel close to their parents?

12. Why is praying so difficult sometimes?

**Open the Bible**

1. Have students open their Bibles to Matthew 6, and ask for a volunteer to read verses 5-15 aloud. Assemble “Do” and “Don’t” lists, citing Jesus’ specific instructions to the disciples regarding prayer. Invite a student to pick an item on either list and demonstrate it for the class.

-Why did men pray in public in Jesus’ time?

-Name some commonly used terms for “father.” Which of these names can you imagine using for God? Which would you not use for God?

2. What language do you find archaic or old-fashioned in the Lord’s Prayer? Do you like the more formal language, or does formal language make it harder for you to connect with the prayer? Have pairs of kids read Matthew 6:9-13 and then rewrite the Lord’s Prayer in their own words. Pressed for time? Assign 1-2 petitions to each pair. Share their translations.

Questions for conversation while you work:

-Is God’s Kingdom in the future? Could it be here now?

-Is it important to know the Lord’s Prayer by heart? Why? Why not?

-Why do people say they know something “by heart” when they’re talking about memorization?

**Open the Catechism**

1. Read the introduction to the Lord’s Prayer in the Small Catechism.

***The Introduction:* Our Father who art in heaven.**

When Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray, he encourages them to ask God for what they want (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). How we ask depends on how we view our relationship with God. Demonstrate an appropriate prayer posture if God is so awesome and powerful that you would die if you saw God. What posture might you take if God is a wrathful judge just waiting for the opportunity to punish you?

2. Look at Luther’s explanation of the introduction to the Lord’s Prayer.

***What does this mean?* God encourages us to believe that he is truly our Father, and that we are truly his children, so that we may boldly and confidently pray to him, just as beloved children speak to their dear father.**

3. How does Luther suggest we view our relationship with God? How should we ask God for what we desire? Create and demonstrate an appropriate prayer posture for a child approaching a loving heavenly Father. Consider how viewing God as Father helps us understand who God is and how we can approach God. What doesn’t work for you about this image? Brainstorm a list of things you could ask God to do that would benefit others. Write a prayer in which you ask these things with courage and confidence.

4. Why is it such a big deal to call God something as personal as “Father” rather than “Your Highness” or “Most Mysterious and Important Ruler”? Notice, too, that it is “Our Father,” not “My Father.” The voices you hear praying with you are those of your family, your church family, a world full of God’s children.

5. Luther points out that God’s name is already holy—there is nothing we can do to change that. However, we do have the power to make God’s name holy in all that we say or do. Think of situations from the last week. In which situations was God’s holy name honored? Dishonored? (Use Luther’s explanation to help you in this task.)