

All-age service starter

***Ideas to introduce the Light session theme
when all ages are together in church***

Series: How should we pray?

Session: 10

Bible passage: **Luke 11:1-4; Matthew 6:5-15**

Session aim: To pray knowing, from Jesus' example and teaching, that God wants us to talk to him

o Theme introduction

Announce that you want to learn a foreign language! You are sure that everyone else would like to learn it with you. Make up an imaginary reason why everyone should learn the language with you, such as, a church outing abroad or visiting a faraway member of the church family. The more unlikely the reason the funnier the situation will seem. Either use a recording (play it through your PA system) where the learner has to repeat phrases spoken by the expert, or have a real person speaking the language to teach a few helpful phrases. Everyone repeats the phrases aloud. Alternate sides of the congregation could compete to speak with the best accent.

Congratulate everyone on their new expertise. Explain that we have just been doing something that we all did when we first learned to speak. Small children copy what other people say. Talking to God can be similar, especially if we copy Jesus and the way he prayed. Jesus gave us a special prayer to use as a pattern. You will be using that prayer later on.

o Prayer idea

Divide the congregation into six groups. (You may need to subdivide these). Give each group one section of the Lord's Prayer as below, with the accompanying notes. Allow a few minutes for the groups to discuss and jot down thoughts for prayer, then ask for one person (warn them in advance) from each group to come forward. Invite everybody to say the line from the prayer before the representative briefly mentions the thoughts of the group. Allow a few moments of silence before going to the next phrase of the prayer.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. *Think of ways that God shows he is our Father and thank him for them.*

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. *Think of areas in our country or the world where God's will is not done and pray that things will change.*

Give us today our daily bread. *Think of places where people are hungry and pray for them, or thank God for your favourite foods.*

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. *Think of people who are enemies to each other and pray that they will be able to forgive.*

Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. *Think about places you will go to this week and ask God to keep you safe in every way.*

For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. *Think of some words of praise to God.*

o Extra idea

Consider setting up a prayer walk around the church or a prayer room for people of all ages to use in their own time. The prayer stations could follow the ideas in the prayer idea above. An item could be put at each station as a focus and the instructions shown in italics could be displayed. For example, a crown made of gold card could be used for 'Your kingdom come...', a loaf of bread for 'Give us this day...' and appropriate newspaper cuttings for 'Forgive us our sins...'

o Song suggestions

'Wow!'

Reach Up! CD

'So amazing God'

Light for Everyone CD

'Call to me'

Light for Everyone CD

'Prayer is like a telephone'

ks 286

The songs in bold are available at
www.scriptureunion.org.uk/music

All-age service starter

*Ideas to introduce the Light session theme
when all ages are together in church*

- Series:** How should we pray?
- Session:** 11
- Bible passage:** **Luke 11:5-13**
- Session aim:** To be inspired to talk with God in the way he wants us to

o Theme introduction

Today's Bible passage is about someone who needs something, so asks the person who can meet that need to help. Introduce this idea with a very silly drama. Wear a coat or jacket that has pockets big enough to accommodate a packet of breakfast cereal and a bottle of milk. Prime someone in advance to approach you with a bowl and spoon as you announce the first hymn or give out the notices. The conversation goes something like this:

'Excuse me, but am I right in thinking that you have some cereal and milk with you?'

'Well, yes, I have, [take them out of your pockets] but I'm a bit busy now.'

'I'm awfully hungry. [Produce the bowl and spoon] You see, I didn't have any breakfast.'

'I'm sorry to hear that, but I can't help you just now.'

'But I need some breakfast. My stomach's rumbling.'

'I'm too busy now. Perhaps after the service.'

'But nobody will hear the service. My stomach will rumble too loudly.'

And so on, until at last you give in and let him have some breakfast. Explain that however inconvenient it was for you, you gave in because you knew he really was hungry. You are glad he kept asking because it made it clear that you were the person who could help him. God wants us to keep talking to him to show that we know he wants to give us good things.

o Song suggestions

'So cool'	<i>Reach Up!</i> CD
'Call to me'	<i>Light for Everyone</i> CD
'Abba, Father, let me be'	ks 3
'Seek ye first the kingdom of God'	ks 292
'Father, I place into your hands'	ks 457

The songs in bold are available at www.scriptureunion.org.uk/music

o Prayer idea

Position a door at the front of the church. It can be any sort of door but if it has a knocker or a bell that works, so much the better. Make sure it is securely propped up and will not fall over if pushed. Give out Post-it notes and pens. Either announce topics for prayers or ask for some suggestions. Allow time for people to write or draw prayers and post them onto the door. They could knock or ring the bell as they do so. Draw the prayers together with the words: 'Lord Jesus, you say to us: Ask, seek and knock. We bring our prayers to you today.'

o Extra idea

Teach actions for 'ask', 'seek' and 'knock':

Ask: hands held out with cupped palms

Seek: flat hand covering eyebrows with head turning

Knock: one hand flat and upright, other fist knocks against it

Use the actions as a response during the sections of a prayer.

All-age service starter

*Ideas to introduce the Light session theme
when all ages are together in church*

Series: How should we pray?

Session: 12

Bible passage: **Luke 18:1-8**

Session aim: To pray, understanding that God is listening and wants us to keep talking to him

o Theme introduction

In advance, make recordings of various sounds such as a doorbell, a telephone, a siren, an alarm clock, a car horn and a bicycle bell. They should all be sounds that demand our attention. (Alternatively, someone out of sight can use the appropriate objects to make the sounds.) Ask everyone to listen carefully to decide what each sound is and what it means. People could be put into teams or write down their answers. At the end ask what the sounds all had in common: they were all sounds that we need to take notice of. When sounds like these occur we need to be listening and ready to act, to open the door or get out of the way of the car and so on.

Explain that listening is very important to us and it is important to God too. He does a lot of it! He is always listening out for us, hoping that we will be talking to him. When he does hear us he is ready to take notice of what we say and act on our behalf.

o Prayer idea

You are going to ask the congregation for some ideas for prayer and write them down. Get out a slip of paper and ask for the first suggestion. Begin to write and then say 'This isn't big enough! Has anyone got more paper?' Someone should be primed in advance to produce a roll of lining [wall] paper. Agree that this is much better and proceed to write up the prayer topics in large letters. You will need something like a flip chart stand on which to rest the paper. Make sure your helper stays to unroll the paper as you need more.

When you have covered a long length of the paper with topics, use them in extempore prayer or read them out with pauses in between for people to pray silently.

At the end of your prayer time point out that there is still a huge amount of space on the roll, so you could all keep talking to God for a very long time. In fact, that is what God wants. He is always listening and loves us to keep talking to him. We will never get to the end of God's roll!

Song suggestions

'Leave all your worries' **Bitesize Bible Songs CD**

'Call to me' **Light for Everyone CD**

'Love, joy and peace' **Light for Everyone CD**

'You need to natter to God' ks 798

'On my bed I remember you' ks 276

The songs in bold are available at
www.scriptureunion.org.uk/music

o Extra idea

Suggest that people make a 'prayer chart' (each family could make a joint one). Use a basic grid with seven spaces across and write the days of the week in the first line - each square representing one day.

Give out various types of stickers and let people choose what they stand for, for example, a star for some exciting thing happening, a dark spot for something worrying, or a bright spot for a birthday. Encourage everyone to take the charts and spare stickers home to use to help them to keep talking to God this week. They could bring them back at the next session to chat with someone else of what they talked to God about.

All-age service starter

*Ideas to introduce the Light session theme
when all ages are together in church*

Series: How should we pray?

Session: 13

Bible passage: **Luke 18:9-14**

Session aim: To pray, knowing that God wants us to be honest with him

o Theme introduction

Display two boxes, one looking special and in a prominent position and the other rather tatty and partially hidden. The tatty box contains something special or precious, such as something very sparkly or some old coins. The special box is either empty or contains something plain or uninteresting.

Tell everyone that you have brought some treasure or a precious object to show them. Ask if someone would like to come and open the box to show everyone the contents. Do not indicate which box to open. Hopefully the person who comes up will go straight for the special box. When the contents are a disappointment indicate the tatty box saying something like 'Oh, sorry, this is the box that has the treasure in it.'

Admire the treasure but do not dwell on it for too long. (People could look at it properly after the service.) Focus everyone's attention back on the boxes, reminding people that it wasn't the outside that was important, but what was inside. Similarly, it's not what we look like or how we behave on the outside that's important. God knows that it is the real person who is inside us who is important. He knows what we are really like and we don't need to pretend we are something else. The children will hear a story about this today.

o Song suggestions

'Leave all your worries' *Bitesize Bible Songs CD*

'Call to me' *Light for Everyone CD*

'Father, I place into your hands' ks 457

'Prayer is like a telephone' ks 286

The songs in bold are available at www.scriptureunion.org.uk/music

o Prayer idea

Teach the response: 'Lord, forgive me and help me to be honest with you and with others.' Lead a time of confession, using the following prayer (or one of your choice) where everyone joins in the response.

'Lord, I haven't always been honest in the things I have said. Sometimes I add a little to the truth, or I pretend to forget things when it is convenient. But you know the truth about me... [Response]

Lord, I haven't always been honest in the things I have done. It is easy to do something wrong when I think no one will get hurt or no one will find out. But you know the truth about me... [Response]

Lord, I haven't always been honest in my dealings with other people. Sometimes I have tried to prove how important I am or that I'm cleverer than the person I am talking to. But you know the truth about me... [Response]

End by reminding everyone that God forgives us when we are truly sorry.

o Extra idea

Encourage everyone to make a badge from card circles, safety pins and sticky tape. On the pin side write 'I'm praying for you' plus their own name. Decorate the front of the badges but don't add a name. Remind people that prayer is never easy and it is always good to know that someone is praying for us. Suggest that people think carefully about whom they would like to encourage and pray for by giving them a badge to wear. The wearer knows the message about being prayed for is there but everyone else just sees a smart badge. Remind everyone that they have now promised to pray for someone, so they should remember to pray! (Some people may receive more than one badge, especially if they have a particular known need so make extra badges to ensure no one feels left out.