

learning to pray

Children's Story

Cycle C, Proper 12

Title: Learning to Pray
Author: Michelle Dueck
and Elsie Rempel
Church: Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship
and Charleswood Mennonite
Church, Winnipeg MB
Text: Luke 11:1-13
Theme: Jesus shows us how to pray.

Needed:

A person who has practiced signing the Lord's Prayer enough to follow easily.

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder why some people just love being helpers.
- I wonder what it is like to need lots of help, like Mr. Martens did.
- I wonder what it is like to visit with people when it's hard to understand their words.
- I wonder how Jonathan and Mr. Martens became such good friends.
- I wonder how this story reminds us of spending time with Jesus.

Gathering Activity:

After warmly welcoming the children and helping them settle so that they'll have room for an activity where they spread their arms, open your Bible to Luke 11. Explain that in today's Bible reading, the disciples ask Jesus how they should pray. Even though they had learned many prayers, and prayed those prayers as they were growing up, they still wondered what was most important to pray about. Ask the children if they ever wonder about how to pray and explain that Jesus gave us a prayer that is about these most important things.

This Children's Story is part of a larger story archive available as a resource to teachers, ministers, and others of Mennonite Church Canada ©2010 Posted by permission of the author. Edited by Elsie Rempel, director of Christian Nurture for Mennonite Church Canada

Story:

The prayer in Luke 11 is the most famous Christian prayer. Many congregations pray it every Sunday. It is a very important prayer to learn. Often it is called the Lord's Prayer, because it was given to us by our Lord Jesus. Some people call it the "Our Father," because those are the words it starts with.

Like many short prayers, the Lord's Prayer is based on three parts: who, what, and why, in that order.

Who we are praying to is God, and that's where all prayer starts. This prayer starts with, "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name." Please repeat that after me.

What we are praying for comes next. We pray for many different things, but Jesus taught his disciples to pray about important things like having enough food, forgiving people who do bad things to us, and asking for help to not do the bad things that we often want to do, and for protection from evil. The next part of the prayer is, "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." I'll say that one part at a time and ask you to repeat it after me.

Why we pray comes last. We pray because God can really help us with all these important things. God has made the earth so it can grow enough food for everybody to eat. When we have enough to eat, it is much easier to show God's love to others. God has shown us how to forgive through Jesus and gives us the power to forgive through the Holy Spirit. When we live out this prayer by sharing and forgiving, we show how good God's plan for people really is. That gives glory to God and shows that God's way is what really matters, God's way rules.

Listen to and repeat the way this prayer ends: "For yours is the kingdom, the power and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

To help us remember this prayer, we will add some actions while we say it again. Sign language helps people who can't hear to pray this prayer, but it also helps people who learn with their bodies to

remember it. We'll use just a few simple signs for the most important parts. I'll say and show it and then you can do and say it again with me.

Signing instructions:

Father: Dominant hand held against forehead, non dominant hand close to but lower, both hands open while moving upwards.

Our daily bread: Place fingers of one hand together with thumb, as if you are holding a small piece of bread, and bring it to your lips, tapping them twice.

Forgive our sins: Hold both hands in front of body at chest level, with one stroking the other to show the forgiving process.

Temptation: Cross arms to touch the opposite elbow, and scratch the one elbow, to show how we are tempted to scratch when though it slows the healing of something like a mosquito bite.

Deliver us from evil: Extend dominant arm, fist down, from same shoulder in a strong forward motion, and hold out open hand, palm down, to symbolize Moses holding his staff over the Red Sea to deliver the Israelites.

Power: Clench one fist and raise that arm. Use the other hand to touch the clenched biceps to emphasize the power of that muscle.

Glory: Clench one hand in front of your stomach to resemble an altar. With the finger and thumb of the other hand, show smoke rising from the altar to remind us of God's glory.

Amen: Bring hands together at chest level with fingers pointing up.

While in this position add this final short prayer.

Prayer:

Thank you Jesus for teaching us how to pray about the really important stuff and that we can pray to you about everything else that is on our hearts, too. Amen.