

Current

Worship

SEEKING GOD
TOGETHER



Seeking God Together

Worship Resources

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Brethren Press
Elgin, Illinois

MennoMedia
Harrisonburg, Virginia

www.ShineCurriculum.com

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These Worship Resources are produced for pastors, worship leaders, and congregations. *Current: Seeking God Together* is published by Brethren Press and MennoMedia for *Shine: Living in God's Light* Curriculum. Joan L. Daggett, project director.

Credits for *Current: Seeking God Together* Worship Resources:

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Design: Images not otherwise credited are from Getty Images.

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Seeking God Together

	Session Title	Scripture Text	Faith Link
GOD WITHIN US			
1	Praying	Luke 11:1–13	We can talk to God anytime and anywhere.
2	Making Time	Daniel 6:1–23	We can make time for God each day.
3	Making Room	Matthew 6:16–18; Acts 13:1–3; 14:21–28	We can focus our minds on God.
4	Honoring Our Bodies	Psalm 139:13–16; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20	We can care for our minds and bodies.
GOD ABOVE US			
5	Marveling	Psalm 104	We can sense God all around us.
6	Saying Thanks	Luke 17:11–19; Colossians 3:14–17	We can give thanks to God.
7	Crying Out	Psalm 130; Book of Job	We can tell God when we are sad or hurting.
8	Confessing	Psalm 32:1–8 (CEV)	We can say we are sorry.
9	Celebrating!	Psalm 100, 150	We can celebrate God's love for us!
GOD BESIDE US			
10	Supporting Each Other	Ruth 1; John 15:12–17	We grow in faith together.
11	Studying the Word	Deuteronomy 6:4–12; Nehemiah 8	We are guided by God's word.
12	Welcoming All	Luke 14:15–24	We can all gather at God's table.
13	Serving	Acts 9:36–43	We can find joy in serving others.

Praying

Luke 11:1–13

Prepare Essay

by Joan L. Daggett

Have you ever been caught with an unexpected guest? Perhaps your living room has toys strewn about the floor or there is, heaven forbid, unfolded laundry on the couch. Or maybe you haven't had a chance to get groceries this week, and there's nothing in the fridge that you can prepare quickly for dinner. Such is the predicament of the man in Jesus' parable in today's text.

Luke sets this parable near the beginning of Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem. Seeing Jesus take time apart to pray, his disciples ask him to teach them how to pray. He shares a simple prayer and follows it with a story about a man who receives a guest late in the evening and has no bread to give him. To not provide an adequate meal to a guest was unthinkable in that society. So of course the man heads out to his neighbor's house and knocks on the door to ask for three loaves of bread. The neighbor first responds, "Don't bother me! We are already in bed!" Jesus tells his disciples that the neighbor will relent and give his friend what he needs, not because of their friendship, but because of the friend's "brashness" (v. 8 CEB).

So what is Jesus' point? Is God like the grumpy neighbor who responds only to pestering? No, just the opposite! Jesus employs a familiar teaching pattern where a negative example is followed by a positive one. If this cranky neighbor will eventually get out of bed and give you what you need, how much more will our generous God respond to your requests! Jesus tells the disciples to "ask, seek, knock," for God will surely answer their prayers if they but ask.

Jesus drives the point home with a couple of outrageous questions. What parent would give their child a snake when they asked for a fish? Or a scorpion when they asked for an egg? Just as a loving parent gives good things to their children, so will God give the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

Jesus' parable and teaching on prayer begin a series of sessions that help us attend to God within us. Our lives are busy. It's easy to fill our time with work, school, hobbies, meetings, and other responsibilities while neglecting matters of the heart. These four sessions include personal practices that invite us to intentionally turn heart, mind, body, and spirit toward God. As you prepare to teach, you are invited to set aside time each day to connect with God, pay attention to your physical and spiritual needs, and bring them to God.

CENTERING PRAYER

Choose a word to invite God into your heart, soul, and mind.

It could be a word like *Jesus, love, trust, peace*, or whatever is meaningful to you.

Sit comfortably, with a straight back, and close your eyes.

Settle your body and mind and silently begin to repeat your chosen word, allowing it to focus your thoughts.

Stay with the one word you've chosen and don't introduce a new one.

When you become aware of thoughts that draw you away, return gently to repeating your word.

At the end of your prayer time, remain still with your eyes closed for a few minutes.

Order of Worship

Suggested Songs

- “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying” by Ken Medema
- “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” by Joseph M. Scriven
- “Oh Worship the King” by Robert H. Grant
- “Sweet Hour of Prayer” by William B. Bradbury
- “As It Is in Heaven” by Matt Maher
- “Lord, I Need You” by Matt Maher
- “When We Pray” by Tauren Wells
- “I Will Pray” by Yancy
- “Build Your Kingdom Here” by Rend Collective

Everybody Sing: Worship Songs for Children

- “Circle Song” (track 6)
- “Som’landela” (We Will Follow) (track 11)
- “Spirit of God” (track 14)
- Everybody Sing: Songs for the Seasons
- “You Are with Me” (track 1)

Call to Worship

One: We gather together to worship God our creator,

Many: the one who makes all things new.

One: We worship Jesus our redeemer,

Many: the one who sets us free from our sins and failures.

One: We worship the Holy Spirit our sustainer,

Many: the one who gives us strength each day.

One: This God is within us, leading and guiding and transforming us to be God’s holy people.

Many: God who is within us, give us ears to hear and hearts that are open as we seek you together.

Prayer

God our creator, redeemer, and sustainer,
the Bible says that when we seek you
we will find you.

We trust that today
you will speak to each of us,
inspiring us and challenging us
to become more like you.

Amen.

Readers Theater or Presentation of Scripture

See the Readers Theater on page 1.5 of this guide. Encourage children to listen carefully so they can participate as fully as possible during Children’s Time.

Children’s Time

See the Children’s Time materials on pages 1.4 of this guide.

Sermon Seeds

For additional reflection, see the Prepare Essay on page 1.1 of this guide.

Throughout Jesus' ministry, he modeled the importance of prayer. Praying was so important to Jesus that his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray. Jesus told a parable about a persistent friend who shows up at midnight, needing bread. Hospitality was essential. People in Jesus' day would recognize that the friend's obligation to provide hospitality requires him to go and ask for bread. The neighbor finally gives the man bread because he knows that the community would frown on him if he didn't help his friend meet his obligation to provide hospitality. Jesus then went on to invite us into an intimate relationship with God, just as intimate as a relationship between parent and child.

This parable expresses the importance of relationship. We can have a relationship with God. The good news of this story is that we can talk to God anytime and anywhere. God wants to hear from us. How is your church doing at praying? God wants a relationship with us, through prayer. Share some different examples of how prayer is used in the life of your congregation.

Offering Prayer

Giving God,

anything we offer to you is simply a reflection
of all you have given to us.

Whenever we give, you multiply our offering.

You take a gift of some bread and fish and feed multitudes.

So today, we give this offering to you.

We offer you our prayers.

Take these gifts, and use them for your kingdom.

Amen.

Prayers of the People

Lead the congregation in the lines of the Lord's Prayer. Print each line spoken by "Many" in the bulletin. Before the group says the next line, the leader will say, "Lord, hear our prayer."

One: Lord, hear our prayer.

Many: Great and mighty God in heaven, holy be your name.

One: God, you are holy. We thank you for your goodness, your kindness. You are loving and gracious and holy. You are over everything and in everything. Lord, hear our prayer.

Many: Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

One: God, we want to trust your plan for us. Help us see the world that you desire—a world of wholeness and justice for all creation. Lord, hear our prayer.

Many: Give us this day our daily bread.

One: God, we know that there are many who are hungry in the world and in our own communities. Give us eyes to see how you want us to be part of your provision in the world. Give us hands that share generously. Lord, hear our prayer.

Many: Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those who sin against us.

One: We confess that we are sinners in need of your grace. We recognize that every day we also encounter people who have wronged us or those we love. Give us the grace to seek your forgiveness and to forgive others. Lord, hear our prayer.

Many: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

One: God, we pray for protection in the coming week. Lead us and guide us along the right paths. Be with individuals and families in places all around the world where there is violence and conflict. Protect and guide them. Lord, hear our prayer.

Many: For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Benediction

We have gathered in this place, seeking God together.

As you leave here, know that you can talk to God anytime and anywhere.

May you feel God within you—God's love, peace, and hope.

Children's Time

Week 1: Praying

Luke 11:1–13

Prior to worship, make copies of hearts for the children. One extra heart will be added to the worship center. Have one child light the candle and one child add a heart when indicated. Every child will get a heart to hold during your prayer time. After the prayer, collect the hearts and keep them in a basket for the next three weeks.

Welcome the children warmly and gather near the worship center.

Raise your hand if you have ever played a game of hide-and-seek. People hide, and one person tries to find them. So when we're seeking God, we're looking for God. And the great news is that God is not hiding from us! We can always find God.

If we look at this worship center, we see three colors of fabric. We'll be learning more about three specific places where we find God. For this week, we're going to hear more about how we can find God within us. So I need a volunteer to light our candle that is on the (*name color*) fabric. And I need a volunteer to place one of these hearts on the fabric.

In today's story, some of Jesus' friends asked Jesus to teach them to pray. Did you know that when we pray, we

can tell God whatever is on our hearts? Prayer is talking and listening to God. And God cares about the things you care about. What's even more amazing is that we can pray to God anytime we want and in any place. Remember how we said God doesn't hide from us? God is always listening, ready to hear the things in your heart.

Hand out one heart to each child.

I want you to hold this heart as we pray together. During the prayer, whenever I say, "So we say . . .," we'll all respond with "Thank you, God."

Let's pray:

God, we are so happy that we can pray to you and that you care about the things on our hearts. When we pray, we know you care about the happy things in our hearts. So we say, "**Thank you, God!**"

When we pray, we know you care about the sad things in our hearts. So we say, "**Thank you, God!**"

We can pray to you anytime and anywhere. So we say, "**Thank you, God!**"

This week, help us remember that you care about the things in our hearts, and that we can pray to you. Amen

Praying

Characters: Narrator, Disciple, Jesus, Friend 1, Friend 2, Child, Parent

Stage Notes: Set three areas, one for Jesus and disciple, one for two friends, and one for child and parent. Jesus can gesture toward each "story" as it happens.

Narrator: One time, after Jesus was praying, one of his disciples said to him,

Disciple: Lord, will you teach us to pray?

Jesus: When you pray, say:

God, holy be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Keep us from temptation.

Narrator: Then Jesus told them a story about two friends.

Friend 1: (*knocking on the door*) Hi friend! Please give me three loaves of bread. I had a visitor show up and I have nothing to feed them!

Friend 2: What?! It's midnight! Don't bother me.

Friend 1: (*knocking again*) But I really need some bread!

Friend 2: No. I locked the door. My family is in bed. I'm not getting up.

Friend 1: (*keeps knocking on the door*) Please? Please? Please!

Friend 2: (*grumbling and annoyed*) Oh fine! Stop pounding on the door. I'll get you some bread.

Jesus: The person at the door did not give up! That's why the friend got out of bed to help.

Narrator: Jesus finished his teaching on prayer by saying,

Jesus: Ask and you will receive. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and everyone who knocks will get an open door. Imagine this . . .

Child: I'm hungry. Can I have a fish?

Parent: Sure. Here you go.

Child: That's a snake! No thank you! How about an egg instead?

Parent: Alright.

Child: A scorpion?! Yikes!

Jesus: Would a loving parent give their child something bad or dangerous or even just wrong? Of course not! You know how to give good things to your children. God knows even better how to give good gifts to those who ask! God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.