**Topic: Prayer**

**Bible Passage: Philippians 4:6-7; 1 John 5:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**

**Activity: Telephone**

Have preteens sit in a circle around the room. If your group is larger to 20 students, you may want to divide preteens into multiple circles. Before the activity, write down several sentences of separate notecards.

To play the game, give the note card to a preteen and have them whisper the sentence to the person on their right. That person will whisper the sentence to person on their right and so on. *The sentence can only be said once!* If the receiver does not understand or hear the sentence, they must repeat what they

Once the last person has heard the sentence, ask them to say the sentence aloud for the group. Play several rounds and enjoy the humor of the distorted phrases that come at the end of the circle!

**After the activity, say:** That was a fun game called *telephone.* The telephone was one of the greatest inventions ever because it changed the way people communicate with one another. The telephone allowed people miles apart to talk like they were standing face to face.

The idea of the telephone has now been modified to the cell phone. The cell phone was actually invented in 1973. The first one was available for purchase in 1983. If you wanted to buy a cell phone in 1983, it would’ve cost you $3,500. At the time, less than 1% of the world owned a cell phone, but in 2010 73% of the world owned a cell phone. That means 5,000,000,000 people have one of these. By now, those numbers are even higher. The evolution of the smartphone has taken the idea of the cell phone to new heights.

It has become such a necessity to our lives. The major reason for its popularity is the ease of use and convenience of being able to use it virtually anywhere. It is a great and easy way for 2 people to communicate and interact with one another.

Today, we’re going to be talking about prayer and what it is. A lot of people shy away from praying because they don’t understand it. We think that it’s too complicated, and so we just decide that we can’t do it. But just as easy as it is to connect with another person by using a cell phone, it is easy to connect with God through prayer.

*Prayer is communication between us and God*

What does the Bible have to say about prayer? It says A LOT.

Boys, open your Bibles to Philippians 4:6-7

*Have 1 Boy stand to read their verse.*

*“6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

This is a great promise about what happens when we pray. We can divide this verse into two parts and see how God responds to our communication with Him. The first part says, “Don’t be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” This statement tells us that when we are fearful or worried about a situation; when we’re lost and don’t really know what to do next; or when we feel alone—IN EVERY SITUATION—present your requests to God. This is awesome because it reminds me that nothing is too big or too small to take to God. He wants to hear from me. He already knows my needs, but yet he wants me to be come to him and talk to him about it.

God hears every single one of our prayers. It doesn’t matter if you think it’s big or small, it’s very important to God. He wants to hear from you.

Let’s look at the second part of Philippians 4:6-7.

The second part of this verse explains what happens when we communicate with God. It starts with the statement AND, which seems small but is really important. This is important because it connects the first part of the verse to the second part of the verse. This and is a promise that says if in any situation, you’ll present your requests to God—here’s what He’ll do. The second part says that, “*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* This is an awesome promise that says God’s peace will guide us through those times when we’re worried, lost, or alone. His peace will comfort us and allow us to make it through the toughest of times. Prayer is our opportunity to connect with God. It is our chance to show that we love Him and trust Him to be our guide through tough times.

Girls, open your Bibles to 1 John 5:14-15

*“14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”*

*Have 1 Girl stand to read their verse.*

Again, this verse is an awesome promise of what happens when we pray. We are told that we can have confidence in taking our requests to God, but why? Because he loves us and has a plan for us that he has already written out and put into action. When we go to Him with prayer, he already knows what’s next for us. And because He loves us, he is going to provide everything we need. Even if we don’t know how, what, when, where, or why—we can have confidence when we communicate with God because he has made this promise and Scripture shows that He always keeps his promise.

God knows our needs, but He still wants to hear from us. We can be confident that we have a God, who is all-knowing and all-powerful, listening to us when we speak to him. He wants to hear from us, so when we speak He is surely listening. He wants prayer to be a BIG part of our lives. Prayer is how we grow closer to God and how we understand all that He wants us to know.

Think of it this way. What if you and your closest friend only talked once or twice a week? What if, every time you saw them, you just gave a small wave and said “hi.” If you talked any more than that, it was just about who won the football game or how much chicken nuggets cost at McDonalds. You never talked for more than a minute, and you never said more than a few words. Pretty soon, you would not be close friends at all, would you? No, because you haven’t really talked. You haven’t spent time with one another. To remain as close friends, you have to find time to really talk about what’s happening in their life. You find opportunities to spend time together—invite them to sleep over, go to dinner, and hang out after school. Close relationships take time and effort, and the same is true for our connection with God. Because He loves us so much and wants to be close to us, and this is why He gave us prayer.

So, here is the Main Point for today: We need to remember that Prayer is communication between us and God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing” or “Pray Continually”

Pray continually means that we should be communicating with God at all times. We can ask him about every decision, every move, and every thought. Nothing is too big or too small.

**Small Group Discussion**

**Use the following questions to discuss the lesson:**

1. How would you rate your prayer life on a scale from 1-10? (1= I have never prayed; 10= I pray every second of the day. I’m a Prayer Pro!)
2. Describe your prayer life: When do you pray? Where do you pray? How long do you pray? What are some things that you usually talk with God about during your prayers?
3. Is praying easy for you? Why or why not? What keeps you from praying more?
4. If the point of prayer is to build our relationship with God—and not just to ask Him to give us things or protect us from things—how does that change the way you think about prayer?
5. How does spending time with someone strengthen your relationship? Is it easier to get to know that person in a setting where you are alone or when a lot of others are around? How does this change the way you pray? Is it important to get alone and still with God?
6. What is the most memorable thing that you learned from the lesson this week?

**Small Group Activity: Write Band Reminders**

*Supplies: extra-wide rubber bands, fine-point Sharpies*

Instruct preteens to open their Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and give each preteen an extra-wide rubber band. Have preteens use the fine-point Sharpies to write the verse on the rubber bands. Explain that preteens can wear the rubber bands as wrist bands as a reminder to “pray continually.”