

Growing in Christ: Reaching In

Unit Three, Session 1

What Is Prayer?



Pray Together

Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokevooyin Surpo, Amen. Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.

Psalm 86:11-12

Chapter Checkup

Write the correct answer.

1. The first marriage took place in what book of the Bible? _____
2. In whose image did God make humankind? _____
3. In I Corinthians 13:4-8, God talks about fifteen qualities of _____.
4. List three of the things God tells us about love in I Corinthians 13:4-8
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
5. Name one of the books of the Bible from which the deacon reads at an Armenian wedding ceremony. _____

God's Line Is Never Busy

What makes a close friend? Most people report that a close friend is one who will *really* listen to what they say. Prayer is our way of becoming closer friends with God. Through prayer, we grow closer to him as we share our lives with him. As we speak with God in prayer and study his Word, he becomes closer to us as we learn his plan for our lives. He loves to hear from us anytime, anywhere.



Answer the following questions about your prayer life:

How often do you pray? _____

Where do you pray? _____

What do you pray for most often? _____

How do you hold your hands when you pray? _____

Do you make up your own prayers? _____

What is your favorite prayer? _____

The Four Kinds of Prayer

Prayer may be seen as falling into the following four basic categories: supplication, thanksgiving, adoration, and confession. Prayers of supplication ask God for something for yourself or another person. An example of a prayer of supplication is “Lord Jesus, please help Grandma and Grandpa arrive home safely after their visit.”

We offer prayers of thanksgiving when we are thanking God for something. A prayer of thanksgiving would be, “Father, thank you for helping me remember everything I studied so I could do well on the math test.”

Prayers of adoration offer praise to God. They tell him how much we love him, and how wonderful and amazing he is. “Lord, everything looks so beautiful after the snowstorm. You make so many wonderful things,” is an example of a prayer of adoration.

We say prayers of confession when we have done something wrong and we want to tell Jesus we are sorry. “Lord, I’m sorry I took so long getting out of bed this morning that I made everyone late,” is a prayer of confession.

Place the following prayers into their categories by writing the letters S (supplication), T (thanksgiving), A (adoration), or C (confession) in the space provided.



Faith Word *Supplication*

A humble petition or request.

1. _____ “I’m sorry I didn’t study for that test, Lord. If I had listened to the teacher and studied, I would have done better.”
2. _____ “Thank you that nobody got hurt during our game today, Jesus.”
3. _____ “Jesus, please forgive me for fighting with my sister.”
4. _____ “Lord, please steer that storm away from land so nobody is harmed.”
5. _____ “The ocean is such a great creation, Father! It’s so big and powerful.”
6. _____ “Jesus, I really appreciate that you gave us such a nice time at the picnic.”
7. _____ “You are so wonderful and I love you so much.”
8. _____ “Please, Father, help my friend Sarkis get out of the hospital soon.”
9. _____ “Lord, I’m sorry I was lazy and didn’t clean my room.”
10. _____ “Thank you for helping me with my basketball tryouts.”

Bothering the Lord

Did you ever not pray because you just didn’t feel like you could put the words together? Read I Thessalonians 5:17.

How often does the Bible tell us to pray?

Philippians 4:6-7 tells us, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Long after even your best friend is sick of talking to you, God will still be there!



God's Will vs Our Will

Did you ever pray very hard for something important, and God seemed to not answer you, at least not in the way you wanted? Sometimes this can be terribly painful, but we need to understand that what we were asking for is not always within the boundaries of prayer! Asking for an A on a test or for a bike for Christmas or even for a loved one to get well may not be what prayer is about. There's a beautiful verse in 1 Corinthians that tells us that now we understand God's ways as if looking in a cloudy mirror; someday we will see clearly and understand. One thing we can be sure of, though: like talking with a best friend, prayer keeps us in touch with God, helps us grow closer and understand his ways more and more. In Romans 8:28 God tells us, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

God also wants us to never give up on him. Read the Parable of the Persistent Widow in Luke 18:1-8. The difference between the powerful judge and the humble widow paints a picture of where we stand in relation to God. God is all-powerful, and we are weak before him, but, unlike the judge, God wants us to come to him.

God wants us to be like that widow, to never give up hope. He tells us to come before him as many times as it takes, so that we will learn patience and grow in our closeness with him. He may not remove the problems we take to him in prayer, but he will support us through our trials.



Our Armenian Way

*Shnorhya, Der
Der Voghormya*

**Ընորհեա Տէր
Տէր ողորմեա**



During the Badarak, there are prayers said in the form of litanies – the deacon says the prayer line and we respond with a “Lord have mercy” or “Grant it, Lord” - during which we pray for many things: for peace in the world, for the stability of the Armenian Church, for our Catholicos, for our bishops and priests, for the people that govern us, for travelers, for prisoners, for captives, for the sick and suffering, for normal weather and enough food, for those who help the poor, for all the living and for all the dead.

We can enjoy praying this and other prayers, both official and personal, during the Badarak. It is a special time with other believers, when we know we are among those who also love Jesus. The lovely fragrance of the incense rises throughout the church and reminds us that our prayers rise to the ear of God.

FAMILY FOCUS: For Parents



Lesson Roundup

In today's session, your child studied prayer. The class made observations about their own prayer lives, then learned about the four types of prayer: supplication, thanksgiving, adoration, and confession. Your son or daughter learned about balancing our will with God's, and read about praying together during the Badarak. The students made a paper chain with prayers from every class member – encourage your child to pray these every night!

Family Faith Activity

Time spent in prayer leads to a richer relationship with our Lord. Try to complete at least one of the following activities with your family.

1. Say "Jshagestsook" before meals this week:

Let us in peace eat this meal which has been provided for us by the Lord.

Blessed is the Lord in his gifts. Amen.

*Jshagestsook khaghaghootyamp uzgeragoorus, vor barkevyal eh mez ee Dyarneh
Orhnyal eh Der ee barkevus yoor, Amen.*

2. As a family, memorize this prayer of St. Nersess Shnorhali:

O Jesus, Wisdom of the Father, grant me wisdom

That I may always think, speak, and do that which is good in your sight.

Save me from evil thoughts, words, and deeds.

And have mercy upon me, a sinner.

3. Put up a chart with the four types of prayer. Have each family member write their name in the appropriate category each time they pray.

9. Read and discuss *Our Armenian Way*, studying the photos together. Remind the students to share the Family Focus section at home.

Dismiss the class.

10 min.

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What Is Prayer?

Key Concepts

1. Prayer is our way of communicating with God and growing closer to him.
2. Persistence and frequency are important for our prayer life.

Objectives

During the session the students will

1. Evaluate their own prayer style.
2. Explore the four types of prayer.
3. See from I Thessalonians 5:17 that God wants to pray continually.
4. Read the Parable of the Persistent Widow in Luke 18:1-8 to see that we are not to give up – in some way God will respond.
5. Read about the prayer petitions called litanies from the Badarak.
6. Make a prayer chain with the class.

Materials Needed

1. Pens
2. Brightly colored markers for writing prayer chain
3. Precut strips of paper long enough to write on and link together
4. Tape, glue, or staplers to attach the paper links

Procedure

1. Welcome students and say the opening prayer together.
2. Invite students to share any of the activities they may have done from the family page.
3. Have the class complete the *Chapter Checkup*. Review answers with them. The correct responses are Genesis, his own image, love, any of the items listed in I Corinthians 13:4-8, Ephesians or Matthew.

5 min.

4. Have a student be class recorder and come to the board. Then ask this question to students and have recorder write responses on the board. Think of your best friend, or someone very dear to you. What do you do for this person? What are some of the qualities of being a friend?" (Answers might include: Spend time with them/do things you like together/buy them gifts/talk with them/listen to them, *really* listen/think of them/ etc.) Then say: "Interesting, one of the important things about a best friend is that we spend time, and talk with and really listen to that person. It's not that different with God." Have students read *God's Line Is Never Busy* and answer the questions. Discuss. If they have no favorite prayer, suggest that you will work together to find one by the end of the year (From Armenian prayers, the Bible, perhaps one they write themselves!). 10 min.
5. Break the children into groups of two or three. Read *The Four Kinds of Prayer*. Have the groups decide what type of prayer each statement is. The answers are C, T, C, S, A, T, A, S, C, T. 10 min.
6. Have the students read *Bothering the Lord*. Ask them to read I Thessalonians 5:17 and answer the question. The correct response is "continually."
7. Take the students out of their groups. Read and discuss *God's Will vs Our Will* and the Parable of the Persistent Widow in Luke 18:1-8.
8. Read *Our Armenian Way*. Turn to page 20 of the *Badarak* book so they see an actual example. 10 min.
9. As a segue for the prayer chain activity, say: "Right now, our family members and other parishioners are in church at prayer, perhaps praying a litany together. We're going to do something together now that is sort of similar – an exercise in praying together for all the concerns we have as a Sunday School class." Distribute prayer chain slips to each student in the exact number of those present. Have the students write a one or two line prayer of their own – as personal as they would like to be – on each of these strips of paper (the same prayer). The idea is for each student to have a chain of their own and their classmates' prayers. Have the children give their prayer strip to each member of the class and then everyone can staple or tape the links together and take the chain home. Encourage them to pray the prayers on the chain each day of the upcoming week. 20 min.
10. Invite students to share the Family Focus section at home.
Dismiss the class. 5 min.



Unit Three, Session 2

Praying With Our Church Family: Liturgy

Key Concepts

1. The Divine Liturgy unifies the prayers of the believers into one voice of public prayer.