

Year 4

God is Love

5 Weeks



Outcomes:

At the completion of the module students will understand that:

- God loves us and wants us to talk to Him through prayer
- Never give up praying
- God loves us and knows what we need
- Listening to others shows that we love and care for them.
- Speak kindly to others is showing the love of God to others.

Related classroom topics for Science, Social Studies and Health:

Special Communities: the elderly and the disabled

Link between “God is Love” and classroom topics:

God loves us and wants us to show love and care towards those who have difficulties. We can communicate with these people in a special and caring way.

Values

compassion; cultural understanding, sense of family and community, kindness, forgiveness

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God is Love

Week 1

God is a loving Father. We can talk to our Heavenly Father through prayer.

Bible references

Matthew 6:7-13 Jesus told us to say, "Our Father".

1 John 5:14-15 God hears us when pray the things that God wants us to pray.

Discussion

Think about the good things that God provides...things like rain and sunshine, food and clothes. There is another gift that God expects us to ask of Him. The gift of the Holy Spirit is available to all those who choose to invite Jesus into their life.

When we are a child of God we can talk to our Heavenly Father and tell Him whatever is on our heart. When we ask our Father for something, and if He knows that it is something good for us, He will give it to us. (Read 1 John 5:14- 15.)

Bible Lesson: The Lord's prayer

Matthew 6:1-13

Jesus' friends often heard Jesus pray to His Heavenly Father. They wished they could pray as He did. "Lord, teach us to pray," they asked.

And Jesus said, "When you pray, don't try to show off. Don't think about who is listening and how good your prayer is. God is listening, whether you pray out loud or just to yourself. He knows what you need even before you ask.

Pray in this way:

"Our Father in heaven,"

God is our Father. He loves and cares for us like the best father in the whole world. We call Him Father because we are God's child when we receive Jesus as our Saviour.

"Holy be your name."

Since God is holy, people should honour Him. Think about how great God is and begin your prayer by saying "Dear God" or "Dear Heavenly Father" We can also pray to Jesus, who is God.

"Your Kingdom come"

God is the ruler of all the world. But right now, because of His big plan for the history of the world, God is allowing Satan to do some work on earth. But one day Satan will be defeated completely. Then God's kingdom will come. For us living in the world now, we can defeat Satan by asking Jesus to rule in our life. If Jesus is king, (the boss) of your life, then the Kingdom of God on earth is within you. When you obey Jesus by doing what is right at home, at school and when you are playing with your friends, then you are making God's kingdom come.

“Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

In Heaven, the angels always do God’s will. God’s people on earth should obey Him too. We know what God’s will is by reading and learning from the Bible.

“Give us today our daily bread.”

Only God can give us each day the things we need. He provides for us through His creation. God sends sunshine and rain so that food can grow. Crops need protection from storms, droughts and insects. God wants us to pray to Him to provide the things we need.

“Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.”

When we do wrong we should ask God to forgive us. And He wants us to forgive others when they hurt us. When you find it hard to forgive someone, think about all the wrong things that God has forgiven you for., and ask Him to help you to forgive others.

“Do not bring us to the test, but keep us safe from evil.”

We can expect Satan to give us hard times. Maybe Satan will try to make us do things that God would not be pleased with. This is why we have to pray that God will keep us safe from the Evil One, and when we have wrong thoughts we can say ‘no’ to those wrong thoughts by thinking about God.

“For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours forever, Amen.”

This is a wonderful way to end a prayer. God alone has the power to help us every day. And He will! Whatever happens, we know that God is in charge! We can give Him all the praise and honour.

Just as a good father wants to give his children good gifts, so our Heavenly Father wants to give us good things too.

Story: God gives special things

Luke was eight years old. He had always wanted a dog of his own but Dad said there was a lot of responsibility involved in looking after a dog. "Maybe when you're older," Dad would say.

Luke would have loved the company of a dog. He didn't have many friends at school. Jonathan, his best friend, had recently moved away to another school. Luke wasn't good at football like the other boys, and somehow he always got left out of games.

"How was school today?" Luke’s Mum would ask as Luke sat down to his after-school snack.

"O.K.," he would reply. But didn't really want to talk about it.

"You know that God is a Heavenly Father who gives good things," said Mum. "If you have a problem you can tell Him about it."

That night Luke told his Mum why he didn't like school anymore.

"It's not the same now that Jonathan's left. I don't have anyone to play with."

"Why don't we ask God our Father to help you make new friends," said Mum.

Luke agreed, and together they asked God to do something really special.

"We don't know how God will answer our prayer, but we know that He will answer if we keep on asking," said Mum. God knows the best way to answer our prayers. He loves us and only does what's best for us."

Each night Luke and his Mum would pray. Then it happened. A new boy came into the class. "Luke, would you take care of our new class member, Peter?" asked the teacher. Luke and Peter soon found they had a lot in common. They both liked drawing, liked the same T.V. programs, and both had the same secret wish...to have a dog of their own.

"Guess what, Mum!" shouted Luke as he ran in the door after school. I've made a new friend today. God really does answer our prayers!"

Mum had a big smile on her face. It looks as if God has given you more than one good gift today. Look what Dad's brought home for you.

Dad walked in with a little brown bundle.

"A puppy!" shrieked Luke.

"Your very own," said Dad. "I didn't want you to have a dog of your own until I was sure that you were responsible enough to look after it. I think you're old enough now. What are you going to call him?"

Luke thought for a moment.

"Pete," he said, taking the puppy in his arms.

Then he remembered something.

"Thanks, Dad! You really are the best Dad in the whole world."

Luke gave Dad a big hug. Pete just gave Dad a big lick on the cheek.

"Pete's saying thankyou too laughed Luke."

Discussion

What was Luke's problem?

How did God answer his prayer?

God is Love

Week 2 Keep on asking

Bible references

Luke 18:1-7 The parable of the widow and the judge.

Luke 11:5-13 Ask and keep on asking.

John 5:1-8 The crippled man at the pool.

Bible lesson 1: The widow and the judge

Jesus told this story to teach us about persevering in prayer. If our prayers are not answered the first time we pray, then we should not give up. We should continue to pray in faith. (Luke 8:1-7)

Jesus told his disciples a parable to teach them that they should always pray and never become discouraged.

In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected people. And there was a widow in that same town who kept coming to him to ask for help. She wanted the judge to tell certain people to stop treating her unfairly. For a long time the judge refused to act, but at last he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or respect people, because of all the trouble this widow is giving me, I will see to it that she gets her rights. If I don't, she will keep on coming and finally wear me out!'"

Why did the judge give the widow what she wanted?

Jesus wanted to show us that even a grumpy old judge will do what he is asked to do if he is asked enough times.

But God is not a grumpy old judge. He loves us very much and wants to give us the things we need, much more than any grumpy old judge.

Because God is loving father, He is not going to answer our prayer if what we pray is not good for us, or if we are praying with the wrong thoughts in our hearts.

Even though God knows what we need, He expects us to ask Him. And sometimes we have to wait because God knows the right time for our prayers to be answered. Maybe now is not the right time to get the thing we are praying for. He might have something to teach us about faith.

Read Luke 11:5-13

How is this passage similar to the story of the widow and the judge?

What are some examples of things we might pray for?

God wants us not only to keep on asking for these things but also, to keep on believing. We must never give up praying until the problem is solved. This is called perseverance. It is good to ask other people to pray with you when you really need something.

Bible lesson 2: The man at the pool (John 5:1-13)

The Bible tells us of a man who waited for healing for 38 years. He would lie beside a special mineral pool that occasionally bubbled a bit like a spa. It was meant to bring health to those who bathed in it. However the man could never get in because of the crowds of people all rushing to get in each time the water bubbled. The man never gave up hoping for healing. However one day Jesus came by. Jesus was able to offer the man far more than the mineral pool could ever do for him.

"Take up your bed and walk," said Jesus, and the man was healed immediately.

Maybe you know someone who is sick. Don't give up praying for them!

God is Love

Week 3 God knows what we need

Bible references

Matt 10:29-31

Matt 6: 25-34

Bible lesson

Read Matthew 10:29-31

Not even one small bird falls without your father in heaven knowing about it. And we are more valuable to Him than many small birds. We are so valuable that God even knows how many hairs are on our head. We should not be afraid. God knows all our needs and wants us to have what we need.

The little bird that Jesus spoke about here was the sparrow. Did you know that there are more sparrows in the world than any other bird? Sparrows build nests in trees or houses. A sparrow knows how to protect itself and perhaps that is why there are so many sparrows.

Sparrows are small brown or grey birds with short tails and short powerful beaks. Sparrows are seed eaters, but they also eat small insects. There are 35 species worldwide and one species is found in Fiji. That is, the house sparrow.

Jesus said, 'not even one sparrow falls without your Father in heaven knowing about it.' Do you know what that means? It means that God watches over and cares for all His creatures.

And if God knows about a sparrow how much more does he know about you? Jesus said, 'You are much more precious to God than a sparrow. God even knows how many hairs you have on your head!' There is a good reason why Jesus spoke about a sparrow. Can you guess what that reason is? See if you can pick the right answer from these three:

1. He wanted children to watch out for sparrows
2. He wants us to love all God's creatures
3. He wants us never to be afraid because if God knows and loves a sparrow how much more does he love you?

Do you ever worry? Do you ever get afraid?

When we are afraid we can pray to the Lord that he will keep us safe. He knows and loves you very much. He even knows how many hairs are on your head. We can trust Him to look after us.

Read Matthew 6:26 and verses 28-29

Don't worry about anything, about clothes, about food or about money for God knows you need all these things and he watches over you.

We can talk to God about everything!

We can talk to God not just about the things we need, or want Him to do for us. We can talk to God about everything; what makes us happy, sad, worried, upset or excited. God wants to be our best friend and share all our secrets. He wants us to thank Him all the time for all the good things in our beautiful world, and for looking after us. Having a thankful heart will mean that we have a happy heart.

What are some of the things we can thank God for?

A poem to read

Don't let the troubles of tomorrow
Bring you sorrow
For if the Father's eye is on the sparrow,
Then surely he will care for you.

He knows and cares,
Each burden he bears,
And if the Father's eye is on the sparrow,
Then surely he will care for you.

Questions

Does God know the things we need?
God wants us to ask Him for the things we need. Why?

Discussion

Which of these would your Heavenly Father expect you to pray for?

- control of your bad temper
- new friends if you are lonely
- a brand new car every year
- the ability to forgive someone who has done something awful to you
- losing your fear of the dark
- ice-cream for dessert every night
- a way to pay back someone who has wronged you
- strength to tell others about Jesus
- the latest fashions all the time
- a sick person

God is Love

Week 4 Listening to God

Bible reference

1 Sam 3 Samuel hears God speak

Matthew 11:15 Jesus said, "Anyone who has ears to hear should listen and understand." (NLT)

Listening activities

Use any games that focus attention on listening.

EXAMPLE 1: *Follow the sound*: One child is blindfolded. Another child stands somewhere in the room tapping. The blindfolded child must walk to the child who is tapping. (The blindfolded child will need another child to hold their hand to make sure they do not crash into things.)

EXAMPLE 2: *Identify the sound*

The teacher prepares a bag of objects that make sounds, e.g. a whistle, tapping sticks, a spoon and a glass, paper that can be scrunched, a pair of scissors opening and closing. Children have to close their eyes and try and identify each sound as it is performed by the teacher.

EXAMPLE 3: *How many sounds can you hear?*

Ask children to close eyes and count the number of sounds they can hear in the immediate environment.

Discussion

To listen carefully we must be very patient. It is important to be patient when someone is giving us instructions. See if you can listen patiently to these instructions, then carry them out:

Stand up. Pat your head three times, then touch your toes. Stand up again and blink three times.

God loves us very much and wants us to listen to Him.

How can we listen to God?

- By listening to the Bible
- By listening to those who teach us about Him
- By listening to our conscience, (when our mind says to do the right thing.)
- By being still and thinking about God. We can hear God in our hearts and minds.

Bible lesson 1: The Parables

Jesus told many stories to the crowds who gathered around Him. However not everyone listened carefully to the words of Jesus. Some people thought they already knew everything they needed to know about God. These people were the Pharisees. They didn't even try to understand what Jesus was saying.

Jesus told stories called parables.

Children will already know of some examples of parables. Ask them if they can give an example. If not, remind them of one.

The parables were stories with hidden meaning. Jesus would tell parables to make people listen carefully. People had to think carefully about the story in order to understand the hidden meaning.

Jesus said, "Anyone who has ears to hear should listen and understand."

Bible lesson 2: Samuel

The Bible tells us about a woman who lived in Old Testament times. Her name was Hannah. She had been married for quite a long time but had no children. She really, really wanted to have a child. Every year she would go with her husband to a place called Shiloh.

While they were there, there would be a big festival and everyone would celebrate all that God did for them. They would thank God for their crops and everything God gave them, and give sacrifices or presents to God to show how thankful they were.

This sometimes made Hannah very sad because she wanted so badly to be thankful, but was discouraged because she couldn't have a child. Her husband loved her very much and tried to make her feel better but nothing seemed to work.

Finally Hannah did the only thing she knew that she could do to help her situation. One evening when they had finished eating and drinking Hannah went to the temple and began to pray.

When Hannah prayed she was very honest with how she was feeling. She sometimes cried a lot and probably felt like God had forgotten her. But while she was praying she promised God, "Dear God, if you would only look and see how sad I am and remember me, please give me a son. If you would do that for me I will dedicate my son to you for his whole life."

As Hannah was praying there was a man named Eli, a priest, who was sitting nearby and saw her. While Hannah was praying she was praying to herself, her lips were moving but Eli couldn't hear her say anything.

(We can pray just like this too if we need to; we can pray to God in our head so no one can hear.)

Eli realized that Hannah was being very honest and truthful with God and he said to her, "Go in peace and may God answer your prayer." After that Hannah left she felt much better because she had talked to God about what bothered her. Early the next morning she even went to worship God before she went home.

Sometimes God doesn't answer our prayers straight away. God knows what's best so there's always a good reason why he hasn't answered your prayer.

God answered Hannah's prayer and gave her a son. She named him Samuel. Hannah had waited so long for this child and she loved him so much, but she remembered that she made a promise to God. Hannah kept her promise.

When Samuel was old enough she went back to the place where she had prayed and said to Eli the priest, "Do you remember me? I am the woman that cried and prayed for this child and God answered my prayer. Now I give him to the Lord and I will leave him with you to learn and work with you."

So Samuel lived with Eli and every year Hannah would pack her suitcase and visit him and bring him new clothes. It might have been hard for Hannah to see Samuel only once a year but she wanted to keep her promise. God blessed Hannah again and gave her and her husband even more sons and daughters.

Samuel did very well while staying with Eli. Then one night something unusual happened. Eli and Samuel had both gone to bed and were having a nice sleep. When Samuel all of a sudden woke up, someone was calling him, "Samuel."

Samuel thought it was Eli so he ran to his bed and answered, "Here I am; you called me?" But Eli said, "I did not call you; go back and lie down."

So Samuel went back to his bed. He didn't know this, but God was calling him. Just as Samuel got settled God said, "Samuel!" And Samuel jumped up and went back to Eli and said, "Here I am, you called?"

Again Eli answered, "No I didn't call you; go back to bed."

The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli again and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Eli couldn't work out what was going on. He had been thinking who could be calling Samuel, they were the only ones there. Suddenly Eli realized what was happening. Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if you hear the voice again, say, 'Yes, Lord, I'm listening.'"

Sure enough, Samuel went to lie down and the Lord called again, "Samuel! Samuel!" So Samuel quickly replied, "Speak Lord, I am listening."

From then on Samuel knew when God wanted to talk to him and he always listened. God blessed Samuel and he grew up to be a great prophet who brought people messages from God. Samuel learned to hear what God was saying from a young boy, and because he listened to God he was able to help many people know God better.



Discussion

God loves us very much and wants to speak to us.

How does God speak?

How do we speak to God?

God is Love

Week 5 Listening to God and others

Bible references

1 Kings 19 God spoke to Elijah in a still small voice

Matthew 14:23 Jesus went to a quiet place to pray.

Psalms 85:8 I am listening to what the Lord God is saying. (GNB)

Listening Game: Sound identification

Select some percussion instruments or noisy objects.

EXAMPLES: saucepan lids; rice shakers; spoons, OR, commercial instruments such as tambourine, maracas, drum.

Children sit in a circle. Place the instruments in the centre. Ask children to close their eyes, then play the instruments in sequence. (No more than three.) The children must identify the sounds in the correct order. Teacher asks: *Which did I play first? second? third?*

Discussion

Discuss the importance of listening.

We listen to others to show that we care about the person who is speaking. We don't butt in with our own words, but let the person have a chance to say what they want to say.

EXAMPLE 1

A student is telling the class about their holiday. What should the class do to show respect to the speaker?

EXAMPLE 2

A friend has lost something really important. They are really worried. They want to tell you about it. What should you do?

We can show God's love when we listen to people who have problems. We let them speak, then think about how we can help them.

We also have to listen carefully to people who are giving us instructions.

EXAMPLE 1

Mum wants you to go with your big brother to buy some things from the shop. She needs a carton of milk, a packet of biscuits and six potatoes.

Did you listen carefully? Can you remember what she needs?

EXAMPLE 2

Mum wants you to tidy your room. She wants the books stacked neatly in the shelves, the clothes on the floor to be placed in the dirty laundry basket, and the toys put away. Can you remember what to do?

God has important things to tell us too. But how do we listen to Him?

- By listening to the Bible.
- By listening to people who obey Him.
- By praying to Him, and then waiting quietly to see whether God wants to give you any special thoughts. Some people call this a 'quiet time'. You can have a quiet time every day. You can read from the Bible and then pray. After you have prayed you can wait for God to speak. He won't speak in a loud voice, but may speak through your thoughts.

Bible lesson: The still small voice

This is a true story from the Bible. It is about a man called Elijah. Elijah was God's special messenger. God would speak to him through his thoughts, and Elijah listened. Elijah would then bring messages from God to the people. Elijah was called a prophet, because He heard God speaking, and told others what God had said.

One day, while Elijah was having a sleep under a tree, an angel touched him and said, "Wake up. Eat and drink, Elijah." Elijah looked around and saw a loaf of bread and a jar of water near his head. Elijah ate some bread and drank some water, but then went back to sleep again. He was feeling very tired. Then the angel woke him again. "Eat and drink, Elijah, for you must go on a long journey to Mount Sinai. You will need this bread and drink to give you strength for the journey."

Elijah ate and drank some more, then set off for Mount Sinai. When he arrived, God told him to go and stand on the top of the mountain, because God was going to give him a special message. Elijah went to the top of the mountain. He waited for God to speak. Elijah heard a great wind. Leaves on the trees swirled about, branches shook and dust blew against him. "This must be God speaking," thought Elijah. But no, it was not God's voice.

Then there was an earthquake. The ground trembled and the rocks fell down around him. Surely this must be God's voice," he thought. But no, it was not. Then Elijah saw a flickering fire. But no, God was not in the fire.

Then it became very still. Everything was very quiet. Elijah waited and waited. Then there came a soft whisper. Yes, this was God's voice. God spoke to Elijah in the quietness of the evening on top of the mountain. Elijah spoke to God too. Elijah told God how sad he was that the people of Israel were disobeying their Lord. God told Elijah many things. God told Elijah who the new kings would be, and about a new prophet called Elisha, who would be able to hear God's voice just as Elijah had done.

Discussion

- The story shows us that God wants to speak to us when we take time to listen. God wants to speak when everything is quiet. It could be difficult to hear God speaking during our favourite TV show, or while we are playing a game. However when we take time to read, think, pray and listen, God can speak to us. .
- Listening to a Bible story and understanding the meaning is one way that we can hear God speak to us. God can also speak to us through our conscience. That's something inside that tells us when it is right or wrong to do something.
- When Jesus was living on earth, he would often go away quietly on His own to talk with His Heavenly Father. After a busy day, He would send all the people away, and go and pray.