

4th Grade: God's Call

OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE:

- To understand the importance of having a prayer plan, and to make a daily/weekly prayer plan.

MAIN CONCEPTS:

- Every person is called by God to an intimate relationship with him.
- This friendship with God is our first and most important vocation.
- We say, "yes" to God's call when we live a life of prayer and virtue.
- A plan for prayer helps a person grow in friendship with God.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS:

- Complete the core components of the lesson. Select and complete other components given the time you have and the needs of your students.

INTRODUCTION

2 min

Summarize the theme of prayer as it relates to vocation.

Through these units we hope to become familiar with the vocations to which God calls people so that you will be able to follow his call always. Right now, you are in the single state of life, but someday God may call you to a particular vocation—married life, priesthood, or religious life. Today's focus is on living our first and most important vocation: to know God and spend time with him.

GOD'S CALL

"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." - PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

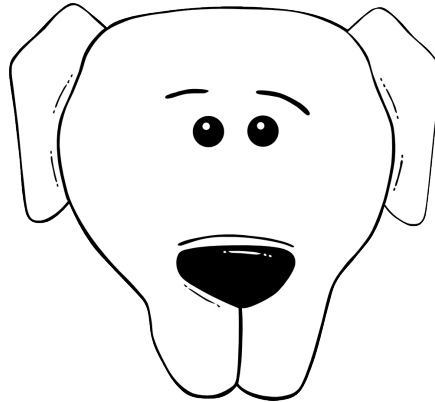
ACTIVITY

ORIGAMI ACTIVITY

Instructions:

Take a plain piece of paper and fold it into a dog's face.

Wait for your teacher to give you further instructions.



READING

Read the selection on Prayer Plans, and answer the reflection questions.

HAVING A PRAYER PLAN

Introduction

Having a specific plan for how you will pray everyday helps you remember to and actually pray! Here's what one person says about prayer:

"If you want to take a four-week vacation, you don't just get up one summer morning and say, 'Hey, let's go on vacation today!' You won't have anything ready. You won't know where to go. Nothing will have been planned. This, however, is exactly how many of us treat prayer. We get up day after day and realize that significant times of prayer should be a part of our life, but nothing's ever ready. We don't know where to go. Nothing has been planned. No time. No place. No procedure."

- JOHN PIPER

Have you ever felt this way about prayer or anything else? You might know you need to spend time praying, practicing a musical instrument, or writing a report, but unless you have a plan for how you will do this, it doesn't get done until the last minute or not at all! Read what one priest says about having a plan for prayer:

Some people are very specific: "I will pray from 7:30-7:45 in the evening, sitting in the blue chair by the window with the phone, computer, and television turned off. I will talk to Jesus in my own words and spend at least half of the time trying to listen to him." Notice that the goal describes time, place, and other logistics. Being specific increases the likelihood that prayer will happen.

-ADAPTED FROM TO SAVE A THOUSAND SOULS

VOCATION LESSONS | 4th Grade: God's Call

OPENING PRAYER

2 min

Let's draw near to God during today's lesson. The Bible says...

1. Read aloud Philippians 4:6-7.

"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

2. Pray this or a similar prayer from the heart:

"Thank you, God, for the gift of prayer. Please give us the grace and strength to pray well today."

TEACH

5 min

Teach these main concepts.

- Marriage, priesthood, and religious life are all vocations, but before all of these God calls us to be holy through friendship with him.
- This friendship with God is our first and most important vocation.
- We say “yes” to God when we live a life of prayer and virtue.
- Praying daily and continually is part of fulfilling our purpose for existence.
- A plan for prayer helps a person grow in holy friendship with God.

ACTIVITY

5 min

1. Hand out a plain piece of paper to each student.
2. Ask students to fold it into the face of a dog without giving them directions or a plan. After 2 minutes ask if anyone has completed it.
3. Now display the following “plan and directions,” and again direct the students to make the face of a dog.
 - Fold your paper into a square.
 - Fold the square in half diagonally.
 - With the folded crease on the top, fold down the corners for ears.
 - Draw eyes and a nose.
4. After giving the students a few minutes to complete the project, ask how results differed with and without the plan.

Sample answers:

Without a plan, it took more time and frustration to make the dog’s face. Some may not even have been able to complete the face at all. The plan made the project easy, doable, and less frustrating.

Discuss this question with the students: *“In what ways is this experience similar to trying to have a friendship with God without having a plan for how to spend time with him in prayer?”*



GOD’S CALL

READING *continued*

Below are several examples of prayer plans from people of different ages and vocations.

Prayer Plan of an 18 year-old teenage boy who is thinking about entering the seminary:



Each day

- 6:30 a.m. Pray three Hail Marys to know and accept my vocation.
- 7:00 a.m. I will go to Mass three times each week.
- 7:35 a.m. I will pray the rosary while I drive to school.
- 2:30 p.m. I will talk with Jesus about my day as I drive home.
- 9:00 p.m. I will pray for 20 minutes in the blue chair by the window with the phone, computer, and television turned off. During my prayer time, I will read the Mass readings of the day.

Each Week

- I will go to daily Mass three times per week, as my schedule permits.
- I will pray before the Blessed Sacrament in church for one hour each week.

This Year

- I will go to Confession at least monthly.
- I will go on 2 retreats.

Description of how a little 4 year-old girl prays every day:

This little girl has no brothers and sisters, but she feels the presence of God. When she plays house, blocks, puzzles, or runs in the yard, she plays with God. She prays before breakfast, lunch, and dinner with her parents. At bedtime she says, “thank you” to God for many things. Mostly her prayer everyday is smiling with love at God.



5th Grade Student’s Plan for Prayer:



When I wake up I will pick one of these things to do today. When I am going to bed, I will do one more of these things.

1. Talk with Jesus in my thoughts about everything
2. Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be
3. Listen to a song about God
4. Ask Jesus what to do
5. Kneel to pray by my bedside
6. Read a Christian book I like
7. Kiss a cross or crucifix
8. Look at a picture of something holy and think about its meaning
9. Memorize a Bible verse
10. Imagine that Jesus is standing near me
11. Do my work as if it were a present for Jesus

Be Curious

- What do you notice about the times of day each person prays?
- How might someone who prays like this think and feel?
- Which prayer plan seems most familiar to you? Most attractive?
- Does it surprise you that people of so many different ages have prayer plans?
- Do you know anyone who has a prayer plan?

YOUR OWN SPIN

- As that little 4 year-old girl grows up and gets very busy, she often forgets to smile at God. Walking through the day as if she is playing with him does not come naturally anymore. She misses that closeness that she had with God as a little child. What can she do now as a busy 10 year-old to help her be close to God again?
- For some people, planning is not exactly their favorite thing to do. How can people like this take the idea of being prepared, specific, and committed to prayer without feeling boxed in or overwhelmed?
- What would you recommend to them?

VOCATION LESSONS | 4th Grade: God’s Call



READING

15 min

1. Read the “Introduction” section aloud with the students.
2. Have students read the “Prayer Plans” section individually, in small groups, or together as a class.
3. Use the questions to spark class discussion, or assign students to write answers to the questions.

EXPLORATION

10 min

DEVELOP YOUR PRAYER PLAN

1. On a blank sheet of paper, have students write a prayer plan that would work for their life with 2 – 4 things on it. They can use the reading selection for ideas of what to do. They can choose the format of their plan (e.g., graphic organizer, a list, description, or schedule). Encourage students to make their plan reasonable, something they can really accomplish. *Some people say that the more specific the plan is, the more likely it will be used. Remember that most of the people on the reading sheet were much older than you. Make your plan work for your life and your personality.*
2. Students can make their plan colorful and decorate it.
3. Encourage students to post their plan at home in a place they will see it everyday.

VISUAL ART

5 min

1. Display “Grace before Meal” by Franz Defregger.
2. Direct students study the painting in light of today’s theme.
3. Discuss the following questions with the students.
 - What are the people in this picture doing?
 - What clues from the painting show you that prayer is a special thing for this family? (Sample answers: Light is coming in the window, smiles are on most everyone’s faces, the woman is bowing her head, and even the dog is paying attention.)
 - What kind of a mood does this painting convey?



GOD’S CALL

EXPLORATION



YOUR PRAYER PLAN

1. Create your own daily or weekly prayer plan.
2. Include 2 – 4 ways you will pray. You can draw ideas from the reading selection or come up with your own methods of prayer. Be realistic! Don’t make your plan too hard.
3. Decorate your plan.
4. Post your prayer plan at home in a place you will see it everyday. Ask God to help you follow this plan.

VISUAL ART



“Grace Before Meal”
by Franz von Defregger

PRAY TOGETHER

Prayer for Generosity
– St. Ignatius of Loyola

Lord, teach me to be generous.

Teach me to serve you
as you deserve,

to give and not to count the cost,

to fight and not to
heed the wounds,

to toil and not to seek for rest,

to labor and not to ask
for any reward,

save that of knowing that
I am doing your will.

AMEN.

VOCATION LESSONS | 4th Grade: God’s Call 3

REINFORCE

5 min

1. Display the main concepts on the board.
2. Have the students verbally repeat them, write them down, or ask questions about them.
3. Quiz the students a bit to see if they grasp the concepts. If it is helpful, refer to the Vocation Glossary found at www.vocationlessons.com/glossary.

MEDITATIVE PRAYER

5 min

1. Set a calm atmosphere.

Now is the time for peaceful listening and talking with God in your mind. Get a little bit comfortable, and listen to God and the scripture with your heart. Be still. You can close your eyes if you wish.

2. Read the Bible passage slowly with several seconds of silence between each phrase.

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians: "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." - PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

3. Help the children meditate on the Bible passage.

Think about these words deep in your own heart. What do you have anxiety about? Tell God about it. With God's help and peace, can you let go of that worry a bit? Place it in Jesus' hands right now. What does a thankful heart look like? Think about some of the things you are thankful for. Feel your mind and heart getting stronger and healthier as you trust and thank God. The Bible says that when you pray and are thankful, peace will guard your mind and heart. Imagine what peace looks like guarding your heart. Thank you, God, for this time. We are grateful that we can come to you and tell you what we are concerned about. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

2 min

1. Direct the students to look over the *Prayer for Generosity* by St. Ignatius of Loyola.
2. Lead the students in praying this prayer aloud together.



GOD'S CALL

EXPLORATION



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VISUAL ART



"Grace Before Meal"
by Franz von Defregger

PRAY TOGETHER

Prayer for Generosity
– St. Ignatius of Loyola

Lord, teach me to be generous.

Teach me to serve you
as you deserve,

to give and not to count the cost,

to fight and not to
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to toil and not to seek for rest,

to labor and not to ask
for any reward,

save that of knowing that
I am doing your will.

AMEN.