

**LESSON 1: WHY JESUS PRAYED**

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

**1. LEADER PREPARATION****LESSON OVERVIEW**

Throughout life, we all need someone to talk to—when things are up, and when things are down. That’s what prayer is all about: talking with God. Jesus gave us many examples of how he talked with God. He prayed by himself. He prayed publically. Jesus made a habit of praying regularly and consistently. Exploring why Jesus prayed will help your students see how they can follow Jesus’ example and make prayer a habit in their lives, too.

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

- 1. WHAT:** Prayer is a vital habit of the Christian walk and is really just having a conversation with God.
- 2. WHY:** Recognizing the importance of prayer can help teenagers grow in their relationship with Jesus.
- 3. HOW:** Students will explore why Jesus prayed and will consider what it takes to make this healthy, essential habit part of their lives, too.

**PRIMARY SCRIPTURE**

Luke 22:39-45

**SECONDARY SCRIPTURE**

Ephesians 1:15-17

**TEACHING PREP**

**LEADER  
TIP**

**Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you’ll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.**

**Read Luke 22:39-45.**

These verses arrive near the end of Jesus’ ministry. He’s with his friends, his closest disciples. They’ve just finished the Last Supper, the final time they would all share the Passover meal. Jesus explained to them what was to come, that his body would be broken and his blood shed for them. Jesus predicted Judas’ betrayal and Peter’s denial. The rest of the disciples were stunned and sobered, yet they argued over who was the greatest among them.

Jesus and his disciples then left the room and went to the Mount of Olives to pray. Jesus warned his disciples to pray that they would not fall into temptation. Then we read Jesus’ prayer. Raw. Genuine. Gut-

wrenching. Real. Jesus didn't want to go through with the plan—God's plan. Jesus knew he was to be crucified and it would be utterly torturous. He pleaded with God to find another way, yet he knew there was no other way. To save his people, God had to give Jesus as the sacrifice. Jesus wanted God's will more than his own way, and he received strength.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus demonstrated the habit of praying. He prayed by himself. He prayed publically. He knew he needed to talk with God on a regular basis. He could be real with God, wrestle with God. In this lesson, students will explore the important topic of why Jesus prayed. Jesus prayed so that he wouldn't fall into temptation, because he was facing difficulties, and to receive help.

In the later lessons of this series, students will also explore Jesus' habits of giving, serving, and withdrawing.

## **THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]**

### **TEXTS OR TWEETS**

**Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.**

- What do you talk to Jesus about? Are there things you don't share with him? Let's talk more tonight!
- How is talking with Jesus like talking with your best friend at school? We'll explore more this week.

### **PARENT EMAIL**

**Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.**

Dear parents,

We started a new series called "Habits of Jesus," and we began discussing how Jesus is the perfect example of how to live. Even Jesus had habits—things he did regularly.

In this first lesson, we talked about Jesus' habit of praying. Later in this series, students will also explore Jesus' habits of giving, serving, and withdrawing.

Jesus prayed—talked to God—about lots of things. Jesus prayed by himself. He prayed publically. And through Jesus' example, we see that prayer is just talking to God about life. Jesus prayed so he wouldn't fall into temptation. Jesus prayed because he was facing difficulties. Jesus prayed to receive help.

This week, talk with your teenager about the lesson and share what prayer has meant in your own life. Consider starting with these questions:

- When do you pray? Are there better times than others?
- What do you pray about?
- How have you seen Jesus answering your prayers?

Thank you for supporting your teenager and continuing the discussion on prayer. Have a great week!

**LESSON 1: WHY JESUS PRAYED****2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]**

Each student will need a cell phone for this activity (students can share, if everyone doesn't have a phone). If you have a phone, you can use it and participate in the conversation, too, but it's not essential to the effectiveness of the activity.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then lead students in this opening activity.

Ask students to pull out their cell phones and review their recent text conversations with friends and family members.

**ASK:**

- *What are some topics you've talked about recently with your friends or family?* [NOTE: This list could include relationship problems, something exciting at school, a funny joke, and so on.]
- *Now call out some specific things you talk to Jesus about—or pray about.*
- *How is talking with Jesus similar to or different from talking with friends and family?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Prayer is vital to our walk as followers of Jesus. Even though some people find prayer to be intimidating, it's really just talking about things with God. The things you talk about with your friends and family—you can talk with God about that stuff, too. God can celebrate with you. God can help you. God understands you. And prayer is a habit of Jesus that we see many times in the New Testament. Today we'll take a look at Jesus' habit of praying—and more importantly, why he prayed.*

**TEACHING POINTS**

Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Luke 22:39-45 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *This is a powerful passage where we see Jesus praying. Let's take a closer look and learn more about Jesus' habit of praying—and why he prayed.*

## 1. JESUS PRAYED SO HE WOULDN'T FALL INTO TEMPTATION

### ASK:

- *Tell us about a time when your GPS or phone gave you the wrong directions.*
- *Are you quick to make a decision, or do you need a lot of facts first? Why?*
- *Think of a specific time you made a decision that went against God's best plan for you—why did you make that decision?*
- *How do you know the difference between a good decision and a bad decision?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Like a GPS, prayer can give you a perspective on reality and can help you make solid choices. But unlike a GPS, prayer is always reliable! As you consistently spend time talking with Jesus, you can see more clearly and can make better decisions based on his desires and dreams for your life.*

## 2. JESUS PRAYED BECAUSE HE WAS FACING DIFFICULTIES

### ASK:

- *Think about the last time you had a really bad day, or you were facing some major challenges in life. Who did you talk to, and why?*
- *When things aren't going your way, are you more likely to try to find a way out or find people to share in your pain? Why?*
- *Why would Jesus want to hear about your bad day? Doesn't he have bigger things to worry about in this world? Explain your answer.*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Jesus knows when you're having a bad day and when you're facing big challenges in life. When you pray, you aren't surprising him with bad news or good news. Even though Jesus already knows, he still wants you to talk with him when things aren't going your way. He wants to know how you feel about it. He wants you to ask for help. He wants to be invited into the situation. He wants to rescue you.*

## 3. JESUS PRAYED TO RECEIVE HELP

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *In verse 43, we see that as Jesus was praying, he received the help he needed: An angel appeared and strengthened him. God answered Jesus' prayer—not with a yes, but with exactly what Jesus needed. God answers our prayers. The answer might be yes, no, or wait.*

### ASK:

- *Describe a time God answered one of your prayers. Was it what you expected? Why or why not?*
- *How do you react to God's answers—yes, no, wait? Which answer do you find the most difficult, and why?*
- *What topics are "off-limits" to God? Or can you talk with God about everything? Explain your perspective.*

## EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.



**ASK:**

- Read Ephesians 1:15-17. Who are you most thankful for in your life, and why? Be as specific as possible.
- How can a thankful attitude help you become more like Jesus?
- What people are role models of “a strong faith” in your life?
- Describe what it means to have spiritual wisdom.

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

## LIVING IT OUT

**ASK:**

- How can you express appreciation and thankfulness to some specific people this week?
- What does it look like to follow Jesus’ example and make prayer a regular habit in your life?
- We talked today about how Jesus prayed so that he wouldn’t fall into temptation, because he was facing difficulties, and to receive help. If you’re willing to share, in which of these three areas do you most need our prayers?



Ask students to form a circle for a time of prayer. This is your opportunity, as a leader, to pray for each student individually. Use the prayer below, inserting each student’s name individually. You can follow the prayer exactly or add some specifics of your own. Be cautious not to use too much of the students’ personal information to avoid causing embarrassment.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Just like Ephesians 1 shows us, I’d like to pray for each of you. I am thankful for you and our time together. Let’s pray.*

*I thank you, God, for \_\_\_\_\_ (student’s name). I pray that you give \_\_\_\_\_ (student’s name) spiritual wisdom to grow in relationship with you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

## SUMMARY



Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson’s content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

**FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]**

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

*“There he told them, ‘Pray that you will not give in to temptation’ ” (Luke 22:40).*