

Lesson 3: Follow the Leader

What we want students to learn: That they would understand the Lord's Prayer and why Jesus uses it as a model for us to follow.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To evaluate their own prayer lives in light of the Lord's Prayer, and see how this model can practically help them as they approach God in prayer.

Scripture Focus: Matthew 6:9-13

Overview:

There are a lot of things in life we do out of routine without giving it much thought. It's easy for students to get caught in a rut of just going through the motions at school, church, or at practice. Sometimes it's in the way they respond to certain people or questions. They say things like "fine" or "not much" without really even thinking about how they're responding. The Lord's Prayer is something a lot of our students (and us) have probably heard quite a bit. Many of us can recite it from memory pretty easily. The question is whether we really think about what we're saying, or is just a motion we go through? Do we really understand why Jesus tells us, "Pray then like this"? In Lesson 1 you showed students that God's desire is for His people to draw near to Him in prayer. In Lesson 2 students learned that they can draw near to God in confidence because Jesus is their mediator. Finally, in Lesson 3 you'll help students look at the model Jesus gave us to follow in our own prayer lives.

Teacher Prep Video

The *elements Teacher Prep Videos* are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Prayer Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/prayer-teacher-prep>
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Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. *The Details* gives you background info for each book, while *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passages are used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **ym360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

The Details

Matthew

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew’s Gospel being written in the late 50’s or 60’s AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

The Main Point

This third and final lesson on this series focusing on prayer takes a look at the nuts and bolts of our prayer life. After identifying that prayer in its simplest form is how we communicate with God, and that Jesus is the one who gives us full access to God so that we can communicate fully and authentically, this final lesson gives us a valuable structure so that we will have a balanced and healthy prayer life. The Lord’s Prayer, which is common in many church’s liturgy, will be unpacked and used as a model not just for Big Church recitations, but beneficial in our personal devotional life.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible study section called *The Main Event*; an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

The Lead In

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to see that a solid prayer life has a few vital ingredients that form the foundation for a prayer life that is as unique as they are.
- **Set-Up:** If you choose, you can display the “Cheeseburger” PDF. It’s not necessarily vital to the activity, but makes a nice visual reference. Print it and show students, or drop it into your presentation software. You’ll need a whiteboard to write down the list of ingredients.

FIRST, remind your students that this is the end of a three-week series on prayer. You’ll be wrapping up what has hopefully been a powerful time of study on an important subject. But explain that before you talk about prayer, you need to talk about many people’s favorite subject: food.

NEXT, if you want, show the delicious cheeseburger displayed in the “Cheeseburger” PDF. Explain that something this extraordinary doesn’t happen by accident. There are a lot of ingredients that go into making a cheeseburger such as the one pictured here. Go to the white board and ask the students to brainstorm all the ingredients and condiments that makeup a cheeseburger. This should be fun and encourage your students to be as creative as possible. Push them past the basics. Encourage them to think of anything and everything they’ve ever had on a cheeseburger. The list could include things like:

- **Buns, hamburger, cheese, mustard, bacon, relish, onions, avocado, mushrooms . . . did we mention bacon?**

THEN, explain that these ingredients make an awesome burger. But, if we were just concerned about the absolute essential elements of a cheeseburger, what could we strike from this list? Ask your students to start eliminating items. As they do, erase them and ask the question, “It is still a cheeseburger?” Soon you should come up with three components that are the irreducible ingredients that make up a cheeseburger.

- **Bun**

- Meat
- Cheese

THEN, explain that while we are all different and like different things on our cheeseburgers, those add-ons are simply that: add-ons. Say:

- **What makes a cheeseburger is, bun, meat, and cheese. Without the three basic items then we don't have a cheeseburger. We can add thousands of things to these three components and have an incredibly fancy cheeseburger or we can have the basic three and have a delicious, satisfying cheeseburger. Once we take away the bun, the meat or the cheese, then we have a different meal all together. This different meal is fine, but it isn't a cheeseburger.**

NEXT, tell your students that today they'll be looking at a similar approach to thinking about prayer. Explain that they're about to see Jesus give us the basic recipe for prayer. Explain that it's a fitting way to end your three-lesson look at prayer.

The Main Event

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to understand the Lord's Prayer, and why Jesus uses it as a model for us to follow.
- **Set Up:** Students will need paper and something to write with.

FIRST, tell your students that you're about to look at one of the most well known passages in all of the Bible. Explain that some churches say this prayer out loud in every church service. And while some others might not recite it in services, just about every Christian adult in the entire world knows this prayer. Explain that part of the reason for this is that Jesus literally told His disciples to "pray like this." Say:

- **Since Jesus commanded it, and the church for 2000 years has affirmed it, it is a pretty good idea for us to become familiar with both the actual words of the prayer and the themes that are identified within it.**

Explain to your students that you're going to unpack this prayer, look for the overarching themes, and then put them in your own words. You're going to have a little fun with it and do it in the same style as your cheeseburger opener by identifying the main ingredients of this prayer. Inform students that you'll be looking at the main ingredients and then doing a little discussion after each one.

THEN, instruct students to turn to Matthew 6:9-13. Have a student read vs. 9. Then write the first ingredient on the board. Write:

- **INGREDIENT 1: WHO ARE WE TALKING TO?**

Lead your students in a short discussion. Ask:

- **Why it is important to understand whom we are praying to when we pray?**
 - *Answer:* Answers will vary, but help students see that it boils down to who God is. God is our heavenly Father. He's a loving father, which means that He is relationally connected to us, cares for us, and has power and authority over us.
- **What does it mean to "hallow" God's name?**
 - *Answer:* It means that we should honor God's name. God is ruler of creation, all-powerful, holy, and righteous. And while He is relationally connected to us as our Father, he is also "other," separate from us and deserving of honor and worship.

- **Think about your own prayer life. How do you open your prayers? Do you start by praising God? Be honest.**
 - *Answer:* Allow students to say yes or no and encourage them to follow Jesus' model by starting their prayers off by acknowledging who God is and praising Him for it.

Instruct students to take a moment and re-write vs. 9 in their own words. Tell them they're to write an opening salutation to God as if they were praying to Him themselves, one that puts to work what they just learned. (Don't have them share, because at the end of the lesson, each student will have an opportunity to share their prayer to the group.)

NEXT, have a student read vs. 10. Then write the second ingredient on the board. Write:

- **INGREDIENT 2: WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF YOUR PRAYERS?**

ASK, your students:

- **Jesus is saying here that we're to be deeply concerned with wanting to see God's will ruling on the earth, more and more. We're to want the earth to be as influenced by God and His ways as heaven is. But, how many of us focus our prayers on asking God to make us a vital role in seeing that happen? Why don't we do a better job of this? What do we often focus on instead?**
 - Answers will vary, but lead students to see that we are so innately self-centered that most of our prayers focus on seeing our will accomplished in our lives, not our lives being used to accomplish God's will.
- **When you pray, what's the focus of their prayers? Are they more focused on your needs and wants? Or on God's desires for you?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **How does this mesh with what Jesus says here?**
 - *Answer:* Because God is our spiritual Father our desires come under His. If God above us, and we love and serve Him, then the shaping view of our prayer are God's concerns, not ours.
- **How does focusing on God's will being done in and through you change your prayer life?**
 - Answers will vary.

THEN, ask your students to re-word vs. 10, putting these ideas down on their piece of paper in their own words. Instruct them to write down a sentence or two about joining our concerns for the world with God's.

NEXT, have a student read vs. 11. Then write the third ingredient on the board. Write:

- **INGREDIENT 3: WHAT ARE OUR NEEDS AND BURDENS?**

Remind students that the initial focus of our prayers is on a God who deserves to be honored and whose will should be our will. But our prayers are also to our heavenly Father who loves us and cares for us, who longs to meet our needs and carry our burdens. Then ask:

- **Just to be clear, what did Jesus mean by "daily bread."**
 - *Answer:* Our daily bread is about our daily needs.
- **How is this different than our wants? Why didn't Jesus say, "Give us this day our two scoops of chocolate chip ice-cream with sprinkles"?**
 - Bread represents needs. The ice cream would represent a want. Many of us confuse needs with wants. While it is great to share our wants with God, Jesus teaches us that our prayers should be focused on our needs. God is not just interested in making sure our physical needs are met, but our emotional and spiritual needs as well.

Ask your students to re-word vs. 11, putting these ideas down on their paper in their own words. Tell them to continue with a couple sentences and soon this prayer will be complete.

THEN, have a student read vs. 12. Then write the fourth ingredient on the board. Write:

- **INGREDIENT 4: WHO DO WE NEED TO GET RIGHT WITH?**

Remind your students that prayer is about communication for the sake of deep relationship. And the number one relationship killer is sin. Thankfully the way to fix this is by identifying our sin, humbly asking for forgiveness, and offering forgiveness to others. Ask students:

- **Why is it so important to understand our own sin and need for forgiveness?**
 - Answers will vary, but help students understand this is the very heart of God's mission of redemption through Christ. Our sins separate us from God. While Jesus paid our sin-debt on the cross once and for all, seeking forgiveness from God helps us remember God's call to holiness.

These verses are pretty straightforward, but encourage your students to put these ideas down on their piece of paper in their own words.

NEXT, have a student read vs. 13. Then write the fifth ingredient on the board. Write:

- **INGREDIENT 5: WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

Explain that the Christian life is a journey. Jesus invites us to follow Him. This implies movement, starting somewhere and going somewhere else. Explain that most of the time we are content with going our own way and asking God to simply bless our journey. The final ingredient is an acknowledgement that our journey is one behind Jesus, not the other way around. Ask:

- **We want our choices and our path to be after the plans of God, not of our flesh, of the world, or of Satan. How does God lead us away from the temptation to sin?**
 - *Answer:* The world is full of distractions and diversions. Jesus says that the way of the world is the wide gate, but following Jesus in the narrow one. There are countless ways in which we can get off course. We want to ask God to reveal to us what those distractions are so we can stay focused on following Jesus and being a part of bringing His Kingdom here as it is on heaven.

Then ask students to put these ideas down on their piece of paper in their own words.

FINALLY, transition to The Last Word by asking for any thoughts or questions. Then, remind students that a healthy prayer life recognizes that following Jesus is difficult and there are plenty of distractions. But by following this model, we put God's agenda first and ultimately, conform our desires to His.

The Last Word

- **Goal:** For students to have the Lord's Prayer be the shaping prayer of their own devotional lives.
- **Supplies:** The paper they have been writing on for this entire lesson.

FIRST, tell your students how proud you are that they stuck through this lesson. It is a meaty lesson and was long. But explain that it's one of the most important things they can get their heads around in their spiritual development.

THEN, explain that to wrap up you're going to give students the opportunity to share their re-worded Lord's Prayer with the group. It's cool if some don't want to share. To get things going you may want to have one of your own ready to share. Allow student a chance to read their prayers to the group.

NEXT, once people have shared, or you've at least given them the opportunity to, instruct students to have a moment of silence where they each pray through their guide, using it as a model to voice a prayer to God. Challenge them to use this model in their daily prayer lives to help focus and guide their prayers.

FINALLY, when students have had the chance to pray, close the group in prayer, thanking God that He longs to be in relationship with us and that He gives us such a powerful and simple model to guide our conversation.

- Don't forget to distribute the "Prayer Lesson 3" devotions to your students. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Consider texting students a couple of times during the week to encourage them to follow through with reading the devotions.

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.

