



#### Follow-up Activities

Here are some simple ideas that further develop the day's emphasis on prayer as conversation. They are only suggestions. Read through all three and modify or change them to suit your children, your situation and your own preferences.



#### For Younger Children:

Create an "I Can Talk to God" booklet. The photocopyable page that is included on page 13 can be cut and stapled to create a small book. The children can colour in the pages. Invite them to add pictures or stickers of things they can talk to God about. Help them to understand that talking with God is more than just asking for things but also involves telling God that we love Him (add a heart sticker or shape to one of the pictures perhaps), thanking Him for our world (animal, plant or people stickers) and thinking about people who are in need (people, food or clothing stickers). As they work, sing again "God hears your prayer" or another suitable song.



#### For The Middle Years:

Return to the discussion about times and places for prayer. Talk about the need for quiet, "alone" times. Invite the children to draw a picture of their "quiet spot" or cut one from nature magazines or old wall calendars. Have them add a short, simple prayer to their picture - one that you have selected for them, one that they find in a book or one that they write themselves. The picture and prayer could be taken home to use for their own quiet times.



#### For Older Children And Teens:

Provide the young people with assorted paper and writing materials and invite them to write a message to God. In addition to Chris Rice's "Questions for Heaven", the song "Operator" by the Manhattan Transfer may provide an easy introduction to this concept. As they work, music playing in the background (a Solitudes or Soundscape CD perhaps) and a lit candle may help to create a thoughtful atmosphere. For reluctant writers, they might be more comfortable simply copying out a prayer using the words of a song, the worship bulletin or a book of prayers. A group may work together to create a poster-size prayer for the whole group to use.

#### Just Before You Leave



Be sure to leave a few moments to gather and share what each person has discovered about prayer during their group time, or what they have created to take home. End with a short prayer time together, taking the requests from the group's 'prayer wall' or inviting one or two individuals to share a special prayer that they wrote or found. Ask the children to bring a book of prayers next time from home to share with the rest of the group.

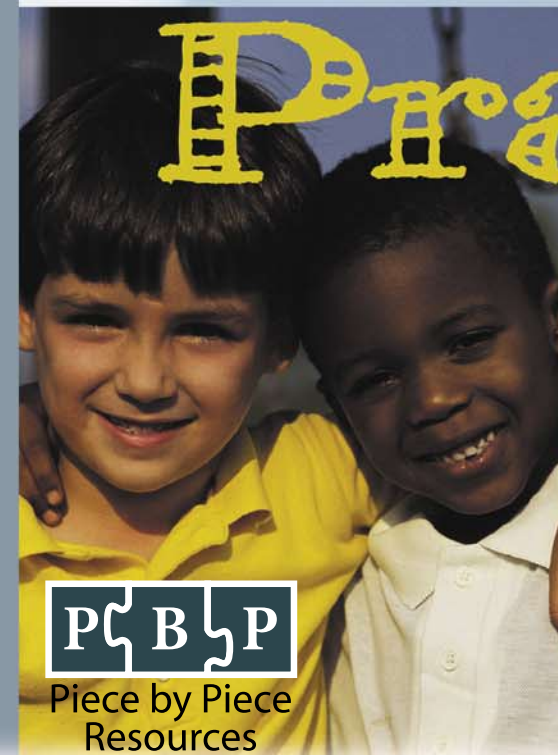
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A modular approach  
to building a ministry program  
for children and young teens

The following three pages sample one of the topics from the book. *Piece by Piece: Prayer* (photocopyable resources not included.)

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Piece by Piece  
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Cathy Fairley



# Prayer Is Conversation With God

The focus for this first lesson is to help children understand that we can talk to God just as we can talk to friends. Talking with God is called prayer.

Introduction	Bible Passage	Activities: Younger Years	Activities: Middle Years	Activities: Older Children	Closing Prayers
Prayer is conversation with God	Jesus in the Wilderness <i>Mark 1:12-13</i>	<i>I Can Talk to God</i> booklet	Quiet places and quiet moments for prayer	<i>Dear God,</i> messages and prayers	Prayer wall

## Introducing the Lesson



As a large group (during an opening session with all children present or during the children's sermon or "focus" in church), introduce the topic with a short conversation such as the following. Instructions and possible answers are in square brackets:

Talk with the children about their friends.

*Friends are great to have, aren't they? What do you talk to your friends about?* [A cell phone, lap top computer, or envelope and stamp could be used as a prop to help stimulate the discussion.]

*Have you ever thought of God as your friend? Do you ever talk to him? Talking with God is called praying.*

*Do you know of other people who pray? What about people in the Bible? Today's Bible passage is about Jesus, who spent 40 days in the desert before he began his ministry. What do they think He spent that time doing? Do they think He spent time in conversation with God? What do you think they talked about?*

*We can talk to God too. In fact, God wants us to talk with Him. Where can we talk to God? When?*

Teach Cynthia Wright's song "God hears your prayer" (*All God's Children's Sing*, Wood Lake Books, 1992) or another song that is about praying.

Continue with the large group or in smaller groups.

*What can we talk with God about?* Tape a piece of chart paper on the wall and record the children's ideas, perhaps under the headings of:

- Thank you (Things we are thankful for)
- Please (Someone who needs God's love and care)
- I'm sorry (Things that I've done that I feel bad about)
- Be with me (Things that I'm worried about)

The children could add to this 'prayer wall' as they arrive each week during this study. Prayer contributions could be added and incorporated into the closing prayer time.

Jesus in the Wilderness  
Mark 1:12-13

## The Bible Passage



Help the children to find the passage in class Bibles so they can follow along. Or, read the story from a bible story book or tell the story in your own words using a picture as you talk. Depending on the age of the children, pose questions in order to have the children wonder about what Jesus was praying about and how God might be responding.

Ask them to talk about where and when they pray. What questions might they ask God if they could? What are the times and places when they feel that God is present? Share your ideas as well and be sure that they understand that there are no right or wrong ways or times to pray.

People throughout the centuries have talked with God. All bookstores and public libraries have excellent selections of prayer books for children. See the recommendations on page 32.

Older children may like to read prayers written by others. Introduce a book of selected prayers. Choose one of your favourite prayers to share with your group and encourage them to take the time later to look for one that they like. Teens might enjoy hearing Chris Rice's song *Questions for Heaven* and coming up with a list of questions they have for God.

