Bible Point
We can ask God to help us with our problems or needs.

Bible Verse
“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for” (Matthew 7:7a).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Children will learn that God promises to help them with their problems and needs,
listen to how God answered other children’s prayers, and
discover that everyone has problems and that God has the best solution for them.

Teacher Enrichment

The Bible Basis

Hannah asks God for a son.

1 Samuel 1:1-20

To understand the pain caused by Hannah’s childlessness, one must realize how important it was in Old Testament times that women provide children. A woman who couldn’t conceive was an embarrassment, or even a disgrace, to her husband. Adding to Hannah’s pain were the taunts of Elkanah’s other wife, Peninnah, a situation that illustrates the strife that the practice of polygamy can create. Even Elkanah’s love for Hannah and his words of encouragement could not comfort her.

Hannah poured out her heart—even her bitterness—to God. Her prayer was so anguished that Eli, the priest, assumed she was drunk! God wants to hear from us when we’re hurting. We can go to him with our problems and needs.

Hannah’s prayer and God’s answer to it included her vow that if God gave her a son, she would give him fully to the service of the Lord.

When Samuel was born, Hannah lived up to her vow. Sometime after Samuel was about 3 years old, Hannah took him to Eli at the tabernacle and handed him over to be raised by the priest in service to the Lord.

Prayer
• Read Matthew 7:7-8.
• What does the Bible tell us we should do when we need help?
• Pray: Lord, thank you for helping us with our problems and needs. Please help me now with…
### Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

### This Lesson at a Glance

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Welcome

**SUPPLIES:** “Prayer Name Tags” (p. 134), safety scissors, markers, tape
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Growing Together” discussion. Use questions such as “What mealtime prayers or songs did your family share?” and “What people or issues did your family pray about last week?”

- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that we can ask God to help us with our problems or needs.**
- Hand out the name tags children made during Lesson 10, and help children attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged, or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.
- Tell children that the attention-getting signal you’ll use during this lesson will be blowing the **bird whistle.** Ask children to respond by raising their hands as they stop talking and focus their attention on you. Rehearse the signal with the children, telling them to respond quickly so you have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.

Attention Grabber

**Dodge-a-Problem**

**SUPPLIES:** none

Push all the tables and chairs against the wall to create a large open area.

Say: **We’re going to play a game called Dodge-a-Problem. I’m going to hand out these felt dots—we’ll pretend they’re our problems. Your job is to run around the room trying to hit other people with the felt problems without getting hit by one yourself. If you get hit with a problem, you have to sit down right where you are. Anyone can pick up a problem and throw it at anyone else.**

Choose one volunteer to play the role of the leader. Give him or her the **black-rimmed glasses** and the **animal ears** to wear. Say: **Your job is to go around the room and tap people who are sitting down. Once you tap them, they can join the game again. There’s one catch, though. Don’t tap anyone until he or she asks you to.**

Distribute the **felt dots** among the children, one dot for every two children.

Play the game for two to four minutes. Then blow the **bird whistle** to signal the children to stop the game. Wait for them to respond by raising their hands. Collect all the **felt dots**, the **black-rimmed glasses**, and the **animal ears**, and put them away in the Learning Lab.
Gather the children in a circle on the floor, and ask:

- **What did you like best about this game?** (It was fun; I liked throwing dots at people; I thought it was funny to get hit with a felt dot.)

- **Was it easy or hard to ask the leader for help so you could get back in the game? Explain.** (It was easy because she wanted to help me; it was hard getting his attention because he had so many people to help.)

- **How was this game like asking God to help us when we get hit with a problem?** (God helps us with problems, just like the leader helped us in the game; God can see and hear everything, but he doesn’t need funny glasses or ears; it’s easier for God to help a lot of people at one time.)

- **What kinds of problems do you get hit with in real life?** (I get into fights with my brothers; I get in trouble with my mom; I have trouble doing my work at school sometimes.)

- **What do you do when you can’t solve a problem?** (I ask my teacher for help; I forget about the problem; I don’t do anything; I pray about it.)

Say: Our leader in this game was there to help us with our problems, but there isn’t always someone around who can. In real life, we’re always going to have problems. You couldn’t help being hit by the foam problems during the game, and we can’t help being hit by real problems in life. But **we can ask God to help us with our problems or needs.** God will always be there for us. Listen to what our Bible verse for today says about asking for help. It’s from Matthew 7:7a: “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for.” God wants us to ask for help because he wants to help us! Let’s find out more.

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**Bible Exploration & Application**

### Words Can Hurt

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, photocopy of the pattern (p. 151), safety scissors, paper, tape, glue

Make a photocopy of the following page. Cut out the paper person, and use it as a pattern. Trace the figure onto another sheet of paper, and make enough photocopies for every child to have one.

Have each child cut out a paper person. Have the children recycle or throw away the paper scraps. Collect the safety scissors, and put them away.

Then gather the children, and sit on the floor with them. Have them bring their paper people.

Say: **Listen carefully while I tell you a story about two women who lived in the same house. Their names were Hannah and Peninnah** (pe-NIN-uh). **This story comes from the book of 1 Samuel in the Old Testament.** Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 1:1-20, and show children where it is.

Let’s pretend all our paper people are Hannah. Hannah was unhappy, so every time something bad happens to Hannah, tear off a small part of your Hannah doll.

Hannah wanted to have a baby. She loved children and wanted very much to have her own. But she couldn’t have any children. This made Hannah sad. Have children tear small parts from the paper people.
Peninnah did have children. She thought that made her better than Hannah. So Peninnah made fun of Hannah and teased her. Tear another piece. Peninnah teased Hannah so much that it made Hannah cry. Hannah was so sad that she couldn’t eat. Tear another piece.

Elkanah (el-KAY-na) was Hannah’s husband. He loved her very much. He gave her special gifts and asked, “Why are you sad, Hannah? Please don’t cry. Don’t you know that I love you? Aren’t I more important to you than having 10 children?”

But nothing Elkanah could say made Hannah happy. Tear another piece. One day, when they’d gone to worship God, Hannah was so sad that she was crying. Tear another piece. So she prayed to God, saying, “God, you are more powerful than anyone else. You can see how sad I am. Please don’t forget me. Please let me have a baby. If you give me a child, I promise the child will serve you.”

Hannah was praying silently. She prayed so hard that her mouth was moving even though no sound was coming out. Eli, the priest, thought she was drunk. Eli yelled at her, “You must throw away your wine and stop getting drunk.” Tear another piece.

But Hannah said, “Oh, no, sir! I haven’t been drinking wine or anything stronger. I’m just very sad. I’ve been telling God all about my problems. I have many troubles, and I’m very sad about them.”

Then Eli said, “I hope good things happen for you. I hope God gives you what you asked for.”

Then Hannah left. She ate something and wasn’t sad anymore.

Soon Hannah had a baby, and she named him Samuel because she said, “I asked the Lord for him.” The name Samuel means “God has heard.”

Have the children line up their paper Hannahs on the floor.

Ask: • Take a look at Hannah—what do you notice about her? (She’s all torn up; there’s not much left of her.)

• Hannah is torn up because of all the problems she had. When have you felt like Hannah? (When my dog ran away; when my mom moved away; when we had to move; when my dad lost his job.)

• What can you do to fix Hannah? (Nothing; I can tape the pieces back on; I could paste another piece of paper behind her and start over.)

Have the children try to fix Hannah. They may need more paper and glue or tape.

Ask: • Has Hannah been made whole again? Why or why not? (Yes, you can’t see the tears anymore; yes, we fixed her up; no, you can still tell she was ripped up.)

• Have you ever tried to fix something that was broken? What happened? (Yes, I broke a vase and tried to glue it together again, but it didn’t stay glued; I ripped a hole in my mom’s tablecloth by accident and taped it back together, but it came undone again.)

Say: We did our best to fix Hannah, and she looks much better, but the tears are still there under the tape and paper. Sometimes when we have problems, we can’t fix them all by ourselves. We need God to help us. We can ask God to help us with our problems or needs just as Hannah did. He knows the best way to fix what’s wrong. Let’s see now what it feels like to be in a scary new situation and ask God for his help.

Bible Insight

Hannah’s vow to commit the son she yearned for to God may be seen as a distraught woman’s feeble attempt to bribe God. However, the vow is better seen as an expression of thanksgiving that Hannah offered to God in the expectation that God intended to bless her. Hannah’s story demonstrates the importance of giving thanks for God’s blessings before we receive them.
HANDS-ON BIBLE

Say: Sometimes we ask for things that we think we really need, but they are actually things we really want, not need. Let’s read about that.

Ask the children to open their Hands-On Bibles to 1 Samuel 2, and find the “I Neeeeed It!” activity on the left-hand side of the page. Read it aloud, and explain the instructions to the children. Hand out pencils, and have children write directly in their Hands-On Bibles. The children can interview their classmates about times God answered their prayers. Then have them create headlines of how God answered one of their own prayers. Ask volunteers to share their headlines with the class.

Then ask: • What does it feel like to have something you really need or want from God but you’re not sure you’ll get it? (Scary; anxious; unhappy; desperate.)

• How did you feel when God answered your prayers? (Excited; happy, glad; thankful.)

Have children turn to a partner and each quickly share one thing he or she is asking God for in prayer. Then lead the children in prayer, asking God to help them with their problems or needs.

Pray: Dear God, thank you for loving us and caring for us. We are so glad that we can ask you to help us with our problems or needs and you will hear us. We love you, God. Thank you for your help! In Jesus’ name, amen.

Encourage children to try this activity at home and interview family members or other friends.

A New Friend

SUPPLIES: dress-up items such as coats, shirts, hats, aprons, gloves, and scarves; tape

Say: In our Bible lesson today, we saw how much Peninnah’s words hurt Hannah.

Ask: • Has someone ever said something to you that really hurt your feelings? Explain. (Yes, my sister said I wasn’t old enough to play with her; yes, kids at school said they didn’t want to eat lunch with me.)

• Have you ever said anything to someone that might have hurt his or her feelings? Tell us about that. (I yelled at my brother and told him I didn’t like him; I said I didn’t want to play with someone in my class at school.)

Say: Words can hurt others. Peninnah’s words hurt Hannah, so Hannah prayed to God for his help. We can ask God to help us with our problems or needs, too.

Have children count off by twos, and have the numbered groups stand together on opposite sides of the room. Turn to the Ones, and say: Let’s pretend right now that you have just moved here from a faraway place, so you dress and act a little differently from everyone else. Today is your first day at school, and you don’t know anyone.
Have the Ones dress up using the mylar wig, half-mask, black-rimmed glasses, twist coil bracelets, fake fur, tissue shaker, and any dress-up items you have provided.

While the Ones are putting on their costumes, say to the Twos: This is your school, and you are greeting the new students. Remember that God wants you to be nice to other people. It’s important that you treat these new people with love and kindness, the way you would want to be treated. Make them feel welcome.

When all the Ones have their costumes on, huddle them together and lead them in a prayer to ask God for his help in the new school. Pray: God, we’re a little scared to meet new people, but we know we’re not really alone. You are with us. Please help us make new friends at school today.

Have the Ones approach the Twos, acting as if they are new kids in school. The Ones can ask the Twos what their names are, if they can sit with them for lunch, and what it’s like to go to school here. Encourage Twos to say nice things to the “new kids,” inviting them to play with them at recess, join them at lunch, or sit by them in class. Have Twos compliment the crazy styles of the new kids instead of making fun of them. Allow two or three minutes for the role-plays, and then have the groups switch roles and costumes so the Twos are now the new kids and the Ones are the home kids. Be sure to have the new kids pray before approaching the home kids. Allow a few minutes for the role-play.

Say: You make really interesting “new kids”! Thank you for treating each other so nicely. We were just pretending in this game, but in real life sometimes people aren’t as nice to newcomers. Sometimes mean things are said to people who are new or different.

Ask: • What was it like pretending to be the new kid in school? (It was fun; I liked it because I got to dress up; it was silly.)
• Do you ever remember being the new kid in school for real? What was that like? (It was scary; it was OK; I didn’t like not knowing anybody.)
• How did people treat you as the new kid? (They were nice; some boys were kind of mean; I had to sit all by myself at lunchtime.)
• How was this game like or unlike being the new kid in school? (It was unlike it because if I were the new kid, I wouldn’t wear funny glasses like that; it was like it because sometimes people look or act differently, but if you get to know them, you can become friends.)
• Did asking God for help ahead of time make a difference? How? (Yes, the kids were nicer to us new kids; yes, I felt more peaceful about going to school.)
• How can God help us even if others are mean to us? (God can make us feel better; we can pray and talk to God about our problems and worries.)

Say: We can’t always trust that other people will treat us with love and respect. Sometimes people who don’t know us can be hurtful or even mean to us because we are new or different. But whenever we are facing a new situation, we can ask God to help us with our problems or needs. God will always hear us and help us.

Our Bible verse for today comes from Matthew 7:7a, and it tells us not to give up: “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for.” Even if we are nervous or scared and want to give up, God wants to help us—so we should ask! Let’s listen now to some stories about other children who asked for help from God.
Prayer Everywhere

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player

Cue the CD to track 12, “Prayer Everywhere.”

Gather the children, and say: Listen carefully to these children talking about their problems and what happened when they asked God to help them.

Play the segment. On the CD, children talk about their problems and needs and what happened when they prayed. Turn off the CD player at the end of the track.

Ask: • What did these kids pray about? (Being sick; getting lost; having a parent in the hospital; getting in fights; having strange dreams.)

• Have you ever prayed about such things? Tell us about that. (My brothers and I prayed when Mom had surgery; once I got lost at the store and I prayed that my dad would find me, and he did.)

Say: God hears and answers every prayer. If we read Isaiah 41:17b, we see that the Bible tells us God will answer. Listen while I read it to you. Read Isaiah 41:17b aloud. Then ask:

• Why does God answer our prayers? (Because he loves us; he wants to take care of us; he cares.)

• Are there any problems we can’t pray about? Explain. (No, because God will always listen; no, because God knows everything anyway.)

Say: Tell a partner about a time God answered one of your prayers.

Have partners swap stories; then ask volunteers to share their answered prayers with the rest of the class.

Say: Now tell your partner about another problem that you can pray about today.

Have volunteers share what they’ll pray about.

Say: We can ask God to help us with our problems or needs. Sometimes God answers in ways we didn’t expect. And sometimes it takes awhile for our prayers to be answered. But God always answers our prayers. People prayed to God for a very long time to send help for their problems and needs. God heard the people’s prayers, and he had a plan. When he sent Jesus, he sent the people a real answer to their prayers—a chance to be forgiven for their sins through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross! We can be forgiven for our sins, too, if we ask God to forgive us and we believe in Jesus.

End in prayer, thanking God for sending Jesus to earth to bring us real help for our problems and needs.
Prayer Buttons

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, scissors, stapler, construction paper, tape, glue, crayons, markers, CD player

Before class, cut the cardboard pieces into enough pieces for each child to have one. Each cardboard piece can be cut into as many as seven smaller pieces. Don’t worry about the shape of the pieces. Irregular shapes will make this project more fun.

Say: In Old Testament times, people made tassels to hang on their clothing to remind them to pray and to follow God’s commands. We’re going to make prayer buttons to remind us to pray to God.

Let each child choose a cardboard shape. Have the children decorate the shapes with something that will remind them to tell God about their problems and needs. Gather a stapler, glue, tape, scissors, construction paper, crayons, and markers for children to use to decorate their buttons. You can also have children use the felt dots.

Here are two ideas to make the edges of the buttons fancy:

- Cut several thin strips of construction paper. Loop and staple them around the edges of the button. (See the picture in the margin.)
- Cut a piece of construction paper about an inch larger than the button. Glue it to the back of the button. Then use scissors to fringe the edges. You could do this with several different colors of paper for multicolored fringe.

While the children are working, ask them why their decorations will remind them to pray about their problems or needs. Also ask the children where they will put their buttons so they’ll be reminded to pray.

Say: It’s important to remember that we can ask God for help. Let me read Psalm 86:7 to you. It’s about this very thing. Read Psalm 86:7 aloud. Then ask:

- Do you think God wants us to pray to him? Why or why not? (Yes, because he wants to hear from us; yes, he cares what happens to us; yes, he wants us to trust him.)
- Why is when you have a problem an especially good time to pray? (Because God will help me; it will make me feel better; sometimes we can’t solve our own problems.)

Say: We can ask God to help us with our problems or needs. Say that with me: “We can ask God to help us with our problems or needs.” Sometimes we need help remembering to ask God for help. Put these buttons where you’ll see them and remember to pray. And don’t forget, it’s OK to keep asking God until you get an answer.

Play “Keep On” (Matthew 7:7) on the CD (track 13). Play it a second time, and encourage the children to sing along with the CD. Lyrics are at the back of this book.
Lesson 12

Closing

Our Softest Prayers

SUPPLIES: scissors

Before class, cut the fake fur pieces into small strips. You’ll need one strip for each child.

During class, ask:

• What is the most important thing you remember about today’s lesson? (God helps us with our problems; I can ask God for help.)

• What kinds of problems do first- and second-graders have that God could help with? (Learning how to read; remembering to feed my pet; what to do about the big kid who’s mean to me during recess.)

Give each child a fur strip.

Say: Hold this fur piece close to your cheek, close your eyes, and think of a problem you have. Sometimes we don’t want to tell things to anyone but God. We can ask God to help us with our problems or needs...even our private problems.

Have children each give their fur strip to a friend, so each child has one, and say, “God hears your secret, softest prayers.”

Pray a short closing prayer. Mention each child by name, and thank God for being concerned about his or her problems and needs.

Have children take their fur strips home.

Tell your children that in Bible times many people prepared for prayer by putting on prayer shawls. A shawl showed that a person was ready for special moments with God.

Use a 1-yard length of light-colored fabric to create a prayer shawl for your class. Have the children make tassels out of blue yarn. You can make tassels by wrapping yarn around an 8½x11 notebook several times. Clip the yarn at the bottom of the notebook. Then tie the top, folded ends with another piece of yarn. Attach these tassels to the corners of the fabric with a stapler. Use markers to draw symbols representing prayer on the shawl.

When the shawl is finished, offer sentence prayers together. Have each child drape the shawl over his or her shoulders while saying a prayer. Keep the shawl in your classroom, and use it often when you pray as a class.

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Takin’ It Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic. Follow up on the “Growing Together” activities next week by asking children what their families did together.
Growing Together

Bible Story
Hannah asks God for a son.
1 Samuel 1:1-20

In Touch

Picture This
Spend time one evening looking at pictures of family and friends. As you look at each picture, pray that God will be with the people in the pictures. Send a note to each person or family you prayed for.

Prayer Everywhere
Teach your child that prayer is a natural and joyful expression. Plan regular times for talking with God, such as before meals, at bedtime, and at family devotion times. Pray with your child before school. In the car, you could thank God for keeping you safe while you travel. At the playground, you could praise God for creating laughter.

Talking to God
Each day this week, pray with your child for people in leadership roles. Don’t forget your pastor and church teachers. Send each person a note saying you prayed for him or her. Include one reason you appreciate each person’s leadership.

Paper Prayers
Clip a small branch from a tree or bush. Put one end of the branch inside a can or jar, and stabilize it with dirt or rocks. Make leaves of green construction paper, write prayer requests on them, and tie them to the tree. Talk about how prayer is a living, growing thing. Sometimes it seems like our prayers aren’t answered, but we can trust God to answer us as surely as we know leaves will bud in the spring.

Key Verse
“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for” (Matthew 7:7a).

Prayer 12:
We can ask God to help us with our problems or needs.

Key Verse
“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9b).

Today your child learned that we can ask God to help us with all our problems and needs. Children talked about their problems and how to ask God for help. They discovered that no problem is too small or too big—God is concerned about all their needs.

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