The Psalmists Talked to God Throughout the Day • Lesson 4

We can talk to God anytime, anywhere.

Bible Verse

“Never stop praying” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will
- understand that prayer may take place anywhere, at any time,
- pray in a variety of different places, and
- name times and places where they might pray.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

The psalmists talked to God throughout the day.

Psalms
5:3; 71:8; 119:55

These three verses highlight the fact that God’s ear is turned to us all the time. God doesn’t sleep, and he is never too busy to hear us. Psalm 5:3 talks about praying every morning. No matter where we are, and no matter what time of day, God hears our praises and prayers.

At first glance, Psalm 71:8 might seem unrealistic. How can anyone who lives in the real world have such a positive outlook all the time? It is important to notice, however, that the rest of the psalm paints a very real-life situation: personal attacks (verses 1 and 10), anxiety (verses 2-3), abuse by powerful people (verse 4), feelings of abandonment (verse 12). This is the stuff of real life. The key to the psalmist’s joy is contained in verses 5-7, 19. He never forgot God’s many acts of grace and faithfulness throughout his life. The key to keeping an optimistic, praise-filled outlook, even amidst the difficulties of life, is to remember God’s faithfulness in the past.

The poetic nature of Psalm 119 suggests that, just as we may talk to God in the many various circumstances of life, we may also use the varied gifts of human creativity he has given us to express our praise. Psalm 119 is an elaborate acrostic poem in the original Hebrew. The psalm is divided into 22 stanzas. Each stanza contains eight verses, each of which begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Other Scriptures used in this lesson are Judges 6:11; Jonah 2:1-2, 7; and Acts 16:23-28.

Prayer

- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
- Under what circumstances are we typically tempted to neglect prayer?
- Do you regularly take the opportunity to pray to the God who is always listening to you? As you teach children, are you praying regularly for them?
- Pray: Lord, thank you for hearing my prayers no matter when I pray. Please help the children I teach learn that they can talk to you no matter where they are.
Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

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Welcome

As kids arrive, ask how they put what they learned last week into action. Ask questions such as “What things did you tell God?” and “Was it easier to pray, knowing that you could tell God anything?”

Remind the kids that whenever you sound the giggle hammer, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Remind them that when their hands go up, their mouths go shut. Explain that it’s important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

Module Review

Use the casual interaction time at the beginning of class to ask kids the following module-review questions.

- What prayers have you seen God answer?
- What prayers are you waiting for God to answer?
- How have you grown closer to God in these past weeks?
- What have you discovered about prayer?
- How is your life different as a result of what we’ve learned in class this month?

Attention Grabber

Talking Time

SUPPLIES: treats

Before class, hide two heart clips, two popping eyeballs, two plastic stirrers, and two foam flowers in conspicuous places around the room.

Place two chairs in the middle of the room, and have everyone form a circle around them. Say: I’m going to ask some questions to get to know you better. Whoever answers one of my questions will receive a treat. However, in order to answer a question, you’ll have to find the object I call out, grab it, and sit in one of the two chairs in the middle of the room. As you’re looking for the object, you have to walk in tiny baby steps.

When two people are sitting in the chairs holding the correct items, I’ll sound the giggle hammer. Everyone else should form a circle around them. No one is allowed to talk unless he or she is sitting in a chair and holding an object. Ready? The first objects you must find are the heart clips. Go!

When two students have found the objects and are seated in the chairs, sound the giggle hammer and have the others form a circle around them. Ask the students in the chairs:

Repeating the Bible Point over and over will help the children remember it and apply it to their lives. Help children learn one point that will stay with them for days and even years to come.
Lesson 4

**Hands-On Bible Curriculum—Grades 3 & 4**

- **What's your favorite thing to do on a Saturday?**
  When they've answered, give them a treat, and ask them to wait against a wall. Repeat the process, asking others to find the **popping eyeballs, foam flowers, and plastic stirrers**. Use the following questions:
  - **If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go?**
  - **What's your favorite meal?**
  - **What's the best movie you've seen recently?**

When all of the items have been found, return them to the Learning Lab for future use. Then ask the remaining group:

- **What seemed unfair or strange about this activity?** (It was strange to only talk when we were sitting in the chairs; only the people who found the objects got to talk.)

- **If you were going to change this activity to make it fair, how would you change it?** (I'd let everyone answer whether they found the objects or not; I'd let people talk even if they weren't sitting in the chairs.)

Ask a question of each student who didn't get to answer one, and give those students treats, too. Use the questions you asked earlier or make up new ones. Then form a circle and ask:

- **What would it be like if you were only allowed to talk to God in one certain place?** (We wouldn’t pray very often; praying would be more difficult; that wouldn’t make sense; praying would get boring.)

- **Can you think of a place you can't talk to God? Explain.** (No, because we can pray anywhere; no, but there are places I might forget to pray.)

Say: **It's silly to imagine only being able to pray in one place, but sometimes we do forget that we can pray at all times. Church, the dinner table, and our bedside may be the only places where we're used to praying. We need to realize that we can talk to God anytime, anywhere.**

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**Bible Exploration & Application**

### 'Round the Clock

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, masking tape, CD player, paper, pen

Before class, set up three bases in different corners of the room, using masking tape to make an X to mark each base. Label one corner “morning,” label another corner “noon,” and label the third one “night.” Place a Bible by each base. Use a **plastic stirrer** to mark the following passages for the appropriate bases: for morning, mark **Psalm 5:3**; for noon, mark **Psalm 71:8**; for night, mark **Psalm 119:55**. Place a slip of paper with the Scripture passage written on it inside each Bible. Cue the **CD** to “Quiet Music” (track 10).

Have a volunteer read **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, “Never stop praying.” Say: **God wants us to never stop praying. While I play music, walk around the bases I've set up. Point out the “morning,” “noon,” and “night” bases. When I sound the giggle hammer, stand on the nearest base.**

Play the “Quiet Music” track on the **CD** (track 10) while kids walk around the
bases. After a few seconds, sound the giggle hammer. Ask kids to find a base, but specify a certain number of kids to be on each base so that students will be evenly divided. After everyone has found a base, have kids form a circle around the Bible and choose one person to read the verse you marked. Instruct the group to name five things they might pray about at that time of day.

After a minute, sound the giggle hammer again. Have kids move to the next base and follow the same instructions. Repeat the process again so that each group has read the Scripture and named five things they might pray about.

Turn off the CD, sound the giggle hammer, and say: Sit down at your bases, and discuss these questions.

Ask: • What was it like to think of praying at these different times of the day? (Neat, because I never think of it then; cool, because there’s so much to pray for then; weird, because there is too much to pray for.)

• What kinds of things could you pray for at those different times? (Family members; safety; school; teachers; kids at sports practice; people who work at night.)

• Why do you think people pray at different times throughout the day? (They need to talk to God about something; a need may come up; there’s not just one right time to pray.)

• Why does God want us to talk to him anytime and anywhere? (Because he loves us; God wants us to be closer to him; God wants us to know that he’s always there for us.)

• What would it be like if you could only pray at one place or at one time of the day? (Boring; hard to remember to pray; you’d feel separate from God the rest of the day.)

• God listens to us whenever and wherever we pray. How does that make your friendship with God better? (I feel like he cares; he’s more like a friend I can talk to whenever I want; I don’t have to wait to talk to him.)

Say: The psalmists, whose verses you just read, talked to God throughout the day whether they were on a hillside or in a palace. God wants to talk with us at all times, too. ►We can talk to God anytime, anywhere. Our next activity will help us remember that.

All Kinds of Prayer

SUPPLIES: Bibles, scissors, fine-tip permanent markers

Have kids form pairs. Have each pair hunt through the book of Psalms to find examples of the psalmists talking to God. Have pairs be ready to tell what the psalmists prayed about and how they felt.

Be sure kids understand that they shouldn’t look only for the word pray. Sometimes the psalmists simply talked to God. At other times, psalmists used words such as cry.

After three or four minutes, have each pair share its findings with the rest of the class.

Ask: • What did the psalms you looked at teach you about praying to God? (You can pray a lot; you can pray about anything; it’s OK to be upset when you pray.)

• What emotions do you have trouble expressing to God? (Anger; sadness; being scared.)
Lesson 4

• How can knowing that you can tell God anything change the way you pray? (I won’t be afraid to talk to God; it’ll be easier to tell God what I’m feeling; maybe I’ll talk to God before anyone else.)

Cut a 2-inch section of the silver strip of the streamer wand for each pair. Give each pair a fine-tip permanent marker and a pair of scissors. (Keep the colored strip intact for a later lesson.)

Have partners discuss what they’d like to pray about today, based on what they learned from the psalms. Have each pair cut the streamer section in half lengthwise. Then have kids write on the strip one word that will help them remember to pray anytime, anywhere.

Say: Keep your streamer wand strip in your Bible to help you remember to pray during the week ahead. Right now, let’s find out more about prayer.

Prayer Walk

SUPPLIES: Bibles

Before class, plan a route your group can use as a prayer walk. Plan to visit five locations that are fairly close together. Try to plan a combination of indoor and outdoor locations, but be sure to have alternative indoor places to visit in case of bad weather. Use the following suggestions, but adapt the list to fit your church facilities.

• Church nursery
• Church staff-member’s office
• Playground
• Garden or tree
• Kitchen
• Choir loft
• Church library
• Sanctuary
• Parking lot

Form two groups, and distribute Bibles. Say: The Bible tells us about many people who prayed in places that we might think are strange. Let’s see what some of them were.

Have one group look up Jonah 2, and ask a volunteer to read verses 1-2 and 7 aloud so both groups can hear. Say: Jonah was having a rough time! He had disobeyed God and been thrown off a boat into stormy waters. Then he found himself in the belly of a huge fish.

Ask: Why do you think Jonah prayed while he was inside the fish? (He wanted to get out; God was the only one who could help him.)

Have the second group look at Judges 6:11, and ask another volunteer to read the verse aloud so both groups can hear. Say: Gideon was hard at work, separating wheat from chaff, when the angel of the Lord came and spoke to him. Then Gideon prayed to God.

Ask: Why do you think the angel interrupted Gideon while he was working? (Because that’s where the angel found him; God could talk to him anytime; talking to the angel was more important than what Gideon was doing.)

Say: When we learn that we can talk to God anytime, anywhere, we also learn that God can talk to us anytime, too. Although we may never speak
to God from the belly of a fish or have an angel appear to us while we’re working, we need to remember that communication with God is important! There are lots of different places we go that can be good places to pray. Let’s discover some of these today.

Ask students to get in a line, and lead them on a walk, following the plan you made. When you arrive at each spot, ask students to form a circle and, if possible, sit down.

Ask: • **What happens in this place?** (People sing; people take care of babies; we serve food; birds build nests.)

• **Why is this place important?** (Babies need a special place to sleep and play; the pastor works here; it makes our church pretty.)

• **What thoughts or concerns about this place would we want to tell God?** (That the pastor would be a good leader; that people would drive safely; that the babies would stay healthy; we could thank God for nature.)

After naming ideas for prayer, ask for a volunteer to lead a prayer at that place. Then walk to the next place on your route. Ask the same questions and then pray at each place until you have visited five locations. Then walk back to your classroom. Have kids form a circle, and ask:

• **What did you learn about prayer from our prayer walk?** (We can pray about all kinds of things; it seems strange to pray in so many different places; it’s not as hard to pray as I sometimes think it is.)

• **How does praying in unique places make prayer more meaningful?** (I can look around at nature; I imagine people who use this spot; I feel closer to the people I’m praying for; it makes it seem more real.)

• **What’s the most unusual place you’ve ever prayed?** (Some of the places on our walk today; on the school bus; on a roller coaster; at a funeral.)

Say: **God wants to be close to us, so he wants us to pray wherever we are, whenever we think of him. We might be in an unusual place like Jonah was or doing our work like Gideon, but, remember, you can talk to God anytime, anywhere.** Now let’s find out about an unusual place where two guys in the Bible prayed!

### Prayer Partners

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, CD player, several rolls of toilet paper


While kids are reading the passage, give each pair several yards of toilet paper. When you notice that partners are finished reading, say:

**Let’s see what it must have been like to be Paul and Silas.**

Have partners sit together. Instruct one student in each pair to loosely bind one ankle to his or her partner’s ankle with the toilet paper. Then read Acts 16:25 aloud. Turn out the lights and say: **Share with your partner something that worries you. Then take turns praying for each other.**

After a minute or two, say: **Paul and Silas prayed and talked to God through their songs.** Lead kids in singing “Pray About Everything” (Philippians 4:6-7) (track 6) with the CD. Lyrics are at the back of this book.
After the song, turn up the lights. Read Acts 16:26. Have kids rip off the toilet paper bindings and form a circle.

Have a volunteer read Acts 16:27-28 aloud. Say: The experience with Paul and Silas changed the jailer’s life. That night he and his family became Christians.

Ask: • Why do you think Paul and Silas kept praying and singing even after they had been beaten and put in jail? (Because they loved God; they needed to feel close to God with all the bad things they were going through.)
  • How did prayer help Paul and Silas? (It probably comforted them; it made the chains come loose; it helped them show others what they believed.)
  • How can praying help us when we’re afraid or when we face hard times? (It reminds us that God is with us; it makes us stronger; it might change things.)
  • What can you learn from the story of Paul and Silas? (We can pray anywhere; songs can be prayers; praying brings results.)

Say: Even when something terrible happens, like it did to Paul and Silas, it’s important to remember that God is still with us through it all. No matter what happens, we can talk to God anytime, anywhere.

Say: Throughout their ministries, God helped Paul and Silas tell others about Jesus. They led many people to Jesus, just as they helped the jailer and his family become Christians.

Ask: • Why did Paul and Silas keep talking about Jesus, even though they often got in trouble for doing so? (Because they wanted everyone to know about him; they believed in him.)
  • Why is it so important to tell others about Jesus? (So they can be saved; so they can go to heaven; so they can spread the news about him.)
  • Who can you tell about Jesus this week? (My cousin; my friend; my teacher.)

Say: The only way to be forgiven for our sins is to believe in Jesus. And only by believing in Jesus can we get to heaven. That’s why Paul and Silas kept telling others about Jesus, and that’s why we should tell others about him, too! This week, remember to tell the person you thought of about Jesus.

Most kids have about a seven-minute attention span. That means you need to be ready to move on to the next activity before kids get bored with the current one.

HANDS-ON BIBLE

Have kids turn to page 1089 in their Hands-On Bibles. Set out cups, pennies, and index cards for kids to use as they do the “Stayin’ Put” activity. When kids finish their experiment, have them form pairs. Let partners pray with each other about staying put and praying to God next time they need to know what to do.
The Psalmists Talked to God Throughout the Day

Closing

■ When and Where

SUPPLIES: “When and Where” (p. 56), pencils

Photocopy the “When and Where” handout for each of your students. Have students form a circle, and distribute the handouts and pencils.

Say: We can pray at so many different times and in so many different places! Our Bible verse for today really sums it up. Have kids look up 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and read it aloud together: “Never stop praying.” See? We should never stop praying!

On this handout, fill in things you can pray about at each of the starred spots. After a minute or so, I’ll sound the giggle hammer to signal you to form trios. In your trio, share what you’ve written.

Allow kids to work for a minute or two, and then sound the giggle hammer. Give trios a minute to share what they’ve written. Say: In your trios, take turns completing this sentence with the names of others in your trios. “[Name], God will listen when you talk to him anytime or anyplace.” Have trios work on this affirmation together. Then say: This week display your map in a prominent place to remind you that we can talk to God anytime, anywhere.

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at 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.
When and Where
We can talk to God anytime, anywhere.

**Bible Point**

We can talk to God anytime, anywhere.

**Bible Verse:** “Never stop praying”

(1 Thessalonians 5:17).

**Check It Out**

- Read Matthew 6:5-6. Are there places where we shouldn’t pray? Explain.
- Read Colossians 4:2. How can we remember to pray at all times?

**Fun Food**

For a snack you can take just about anywhere, mix equal amounts of peanuts, raisins, chocolate chips, and pretzels. Put the mixture in resealable plastic bags that are ready to go when you are!

**Way to Pray**

Plan an outing to pray in different locations. Visit a park, and pray that your family will care for God’s creation. Drive to a hospital, and pray for the patients and staff. Walk through your neighborhood, and pray for your neighbors. Afterward, discuss how praying in different places makes the experience of prayer different.