Lesson 2: Prayer Means Repenting
Lesson 2—Prayer Means Repenting

Unit Summary
Prayer is a familiar topic to children—but do we truly teach children how to pray? For too many Christians (of any age), prayer is reserved for times of trouble or cursory meal blessings, but prayer is so much more. It connects us with our Creator and deepens our walk with God. Teach prayer as a skill so that children can discover firsthand how it enriches their lives. Teach children to pray, and there become many things you will not have to teach them—the Holy Spirit will do it for you! In order to give children a simple mental framework, break down the many aspects of prayer into four areas, each starting with a letter of the word “PRAY”—Praising, Repenting, Asking, and Yielding. While there is certainly more to prayer than can be captured in four simple words, each lesson will expand on the broader aspects to show kids that they will enjoy a lifetime exploring the power and the joy of connecting with God!

Lesson Summary
When we praise God and sincerely focus on how wonderful and majestic He is, we become more and more aware of how sinful and unholy we are. If we are Christians, forgiveness is already ours—Jesus paid for it on the cross, but to have our relationship restored, we need to own up to our sin—to admit the things we have done wrong as God’s Spirit brings them to our mind. In a healthy prayer life, God shows us our sin, we recognize it, and then we determine, with God’s help, to repent—to go the other way. This lesson will help children learn how to do this in prayer. If we can teach children how to allow God to reveal their faults and shortcomings, they can blossom into mature disciples of Christ as the adults in their lives watch in bewildered amazement!

Paul’s Power Principle: In prayer, God shows ways we need to change!

In this lesson, your children will...

KNOW
- God has great plans for them—as they surrender to His will.

FEEL
- Sensitive to what God wants to do in their lives.

DO
- Ask God to show them one personal area where He wants work.
Welcome!—Sin Wall
(For complete details on the Prayer Wall, please see Lesson One.)

For this second lesson, write in very large letters above the Prayer Wall “SIN WALL.” As the children arrive, invite them to write on the wall sins that kids their age struggle with. This may be difficult for some. Remind them that the sins do not need to be about them—they can write about sins they know other kids struggle with. Of course, no names are to be written on the wall. Let them continue to write until it is time to begin your service. Right before beginning the service, have a volunteer with some artistic ability take red paint and crudely paint a red cross over all the sins. Today’s lesson will address how Jesus’ death on the cross covered up all these sins—this will become a powerful visual the children helped create themselves!

Let’s Meet-n-Greet!
Tell the children you would like them to meet someone clear across the room. Have them stand on their chairs and spot one person across the room they don’t know. Have them leave their seats and go meet that person and not give up until they have. It will get a little crazy because everyone will be moving, trying to catch the people they spotted, and they all will be crossing the room to meet someone who is also crossing the room. Finally, everyone will have met their person and will return to their seats. Then point out that it took effort but they did it. Tell them that God made the effort to leave heaven and come to earth, not to meet them, but to save them! And not just one of us, but all of us!

General Supplies
Bibles, puppets, video projection (optional)
Pencils, pens, paper

Spark Interest
WELCOME!: markers, posterboard (optional)
LET’S PLAY!: cereal box covers
CONNECT WITH YOUR KIDS: none

Explore Scripture
KEYVERSE: none

Inspire Action
DRAMATIZE THE POINT: gadget prop

PowerPoint Presentation
As you plan your lesson, select PowerPoint slides that correspond to the lesson elements you choose. In the “Slide Sorter” View, you can rearrange and/or delete the slides as necessary. For descriptions of the included slides and tips on their use, see the notes accompanying each slide.
Leaders, be sure to stop whatever you are doing to move through the audience and greet the children, especially those you do not recognize. Announce any birthdays for the week. (See the How to Use DiscipleTown guide for quick and easy ways to acknowledge visitors and birthdays.)

Let's Worship!
As you shift to worship, open in short prayer, focusing on how incredible it was that Jesus left heaven to come to earth to forgive our sins. We worship You because, while we were still sinners, You came and died for us. That is why You are worthy of our worship. Help us repent of our sins and follow You.

Recommended Song: Jesus Paid it All or When I Survey the Wondrous Cross from God's Kids Worship—Modern Worship Spring, April DVD, available at Kidology.org

Puppet Intro
Leader & puppet introduce today’s lesson. You will find a scripted version of this intro at the end of the lesson. Supplies: puppet

Puppet comes out very excited about the lesson today because it is about repentance. Leader says it is indeed. Puppet says that he has put together two lists. Leader asks what the lists are. Puppet says, “Well, the first list is my ‘Sorry List.’” Leader says, “Well, that sounds good. What’s on that list?” Puppet says, “Well, I wrote out all the stuff I’m going to do that I feel sorry about.” Leader says, “What?!” Puppet says, “Well, there’s just some things I gotta do, but that I know are wrong, and I feel really bad about ‘em, so I thought I’d better confess ‘em ahead of time, just to make sure God knows I’m sorry about ‘em. You know, then it’s not as bad, as if I just did ‘em and didn’t feel bad, you know, like some people we know.” The leader is flabbergasted, and says, “That’s...that doesn’t make any sense. If it’s wrong it’s wrong. Even if you feel sorry... well, it’s still wrong. And if you say you’re sorry about it in advance—it’s almost worse then.” Puppet says, “Well, I’m confessing it. Doesn’t that count for anything?” Leader says, “Yeah, it’s premeditated wrongness! That’s what it counts for!” Puppet says, “Bummer, I was afraid you might say that. So feeling sorry isn’t enough, huh?” Leader replies, “No! To repent means to change your mind about it—it means to go the other way. It’s more than just being sorry, it’s deciding not to do it.” Puppet sighs, scratches his head, pauses, and then says, “Okay, I repent then. I’ll rip that list up. I won’t do anything on that list, and I’m so glad God forgives me. I’m forgiven, right?” Leader says, “You sure are.” Puppet says, “That’s good news. I feel so much better.” Leader asks, “I’m almost afraid to ask, but what’s the other list?” Puppet says, “Oh, that’s my Lightning List.” Leader is exasperated again. “Lightning List! What on earth is that?!” Puppet answers, matter-of-factually, “Why the people I want God to strike with lightning, that’s all. Why? Something wrong with that, too?” Leader is about to lose it. “Yes! How can you have a list like that?” Puppet says, “Simple, they all did something to me. And unlike me, they haven’t repented yet. So I think they should be struck by lightning.” Leader takes a deep breath and says, “Didn’t you just say it was good news that God forgave your sins?” Puppet answers, “Yes, but what’s that got to do with anything?” Leader says, “Everything! The Bible says God will forgive you as you forgive others. In fact, in the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus instructed us to pray, ‘forgive us our sins as we forgive others who have sinned against us.’ So that means, if you don’t forgive the people on your list, why should God forgive you?” Puppet stutters, “Uh, well, uh, gulp—I guess if I get forgiveness when I don’t deserve it, they should get it, too, even though they don’t deserve it?” Leader says, “I think so.” Puppet throws his hands up, “Do you know what this means?” Leader says, “No, what does this mean?” Puppet answers, “This means I have to rip up my last list. Now I don’t have any lists left.” Leader says, “That’s okay, you’re on a better list, the list of the forgiven—and there is no better list than that!” Puppet says, “I’m gonna start a new list, my Blessing List—all the ways God has blessed me!” Leader says, “Now you’re talking!”
Let’s Play!—Pray It ‘n’ Play It—Cereal Box Puzzle

**Supplies:** two popular cereal box covers cut into sixteen equal squares

During this unit, hold a game show called PRAY IT ‘n PLAY IT: One Minute Challenges! It is based on a television show* that features challenges that contestants must complete in sixty seconds to win. Use the suggestions provided here, or visit the show’s website and watch the videos there and try some of the games they use. The games appear simple but are difficult to accomplish in only sixty seconds!

**The Challenge:** In sixty seconds, contestants must put together a puzzle of a popular cereal box cover that has been cut into sixteen equal squares. You can have two teams compete at the same time if you have two different cereal boxes.

**Easier Option:** Have a complete box that players can look at for reference.

**The Point:** These challenges are hard to do in only sixty seconds! With more time they would be much easier. The same is true in our relationship with God. We need more than one-minute spurts of prayer to truly connect with God. Talk to the children about how many people never pray for more than one minute and then wonder why they find their lives so challenging. If they spent more time in prayer, they’d find the closeness to God that makes challenges easier to overcome.

*Minute to Win It on NBC

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**Connect with Your Kids**

Repentance is a difficult topic—it can seem lofty and distant to children. Have you had an experience in your life when you needed to confess something or admit something even when it was difficult—when you could have lied your way out of a situation? Have you had a relationship restored when you and another person worked through a difficult situation and trust was rebuilt? No need to go into specific details (not only is it unnecessary, it is inappropriate for children, especially without the other party there). But do explain that there was difficult openness and honesty, even tears and sharing, but also prayer, and finally hugs and forgiveness. I have a close friend with whom I went through an extremely difficult time years ago. He misled me and lied to me, and we had parted ways. When he called me a few years later, I only took the call out of respect and told my wife, “This will be a short call.” I had every intention of being polite but getting off the phone. I did not expect him to ask for forgiveness, to own up to his sin, to name each and every offense, and to ask for my friendship back. I was on the phone for a long time, and after many tears, we are now again close friends. His repentance and my forgiveness restored our relationship. I have had to do the same for others in my life when I have failed. Do you have a story of repentance in your life? Again, details of the offense are not necessary, but the joy of the victory and the restored friendship—kids need to hear stories like that!
DiscipleTown Visitor
Find a script version of this segment at the end of this lesson.

Repairman Robert*: Repairman Robert comes down the street wearing overalls and carrying tools. The leader stops him out of curiosity to ask if he is an auto mechanic. Robert answers, “Of sorts. I’m an auto body repairman, meaning I can work on engines, but only when it is part of fixing them after a crash. I mostly work on fixing the outside of cars after a collision.” Leader says, “Oh, you fix cars after they’ve been in an accident?” Robert says, “Yup, rainy days are my best friend. Not that I want anyone to get hurt, but wet roads bring me lots of business.” Leader says, “People don’t slow down enough in the rain, huh?” Robert says, “Nope. They need to adjust their driving in bad weather, and slow down. But it’s also when they aren’t paying attention.” Leader says, “What do you think causes the most accidents?” The repairman answers, “Well, I like to joke, drivers zigged when they shoulda zagged, or zagged when they shoulda zigged! But mostly, it’s because they didn’t stay on the straight and narrow. They broke a law, or ignored a stop sign, or went too fast, or weren’t paying attention, and WHAM! (say that loud and startle the kids)—they get in an accident.” Leader turns to the kids, “You know, kids, that’s kinda how life is. People get in trouble when they get off God’s path, they break God’s commands, ignore His stop signs, get going too fast with the world, or aren’t paying attention to what the Bible says and” (Robert interrupts) “WHAM! (really loud) Sorry, couldn’t resist. Haha.” Leader laughs, “Well, the Bible does say in Matthew 7:13, ‘wide is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it.’” Robert interrupts, “It says that?” Leader answers, “Sure does.” Robert says, “Well, I can tell you this kids, it’s a lot easier to keep a car nice than it is to repair it, and some cars that come in, the damage is so bad we can’t fix it. I’d hate to see that happen to any of you kids. So before you make any bad mistakes, turn around and follow God.” The leader says, “You know what the Bible calls, ‘turning around and going the other way?’” Robert says, “No.” Leader says, “The Bible calls it ‘repentance.’ When we pray, God will show us if we are going the wrong way and headed for a crash, and if we listen, we can repent and turn around to avoid a crash.” Robert says, “I’m sure glad I came by here today. There’s some things in my life that I think I need to repent of and turn around on, so I don’t crash…I need to go the other way, back toward God. Fixing a person is a tough job. Thanks, [leader name], I’m gonna go home now and read my Bible and pray.” Leader, “You’re welcome. That Bible will be a light to your path, and prayer will help connect you to God!”

*CHARACTERS: These are suggested characters and names. Please feel free to change or adjust according to the actors and props you have available.
Let's Search!—Bible Dash

Supplies: Bibles

Ask all kids with Bibles to participate, or invite a few volunteers to come to the front. As children hold Bibles closed with hands on covers, state the Bible reference twice, then on the command “SEARCH!” have the students race to locate the verse. Once they have a finger on the verse, they can stand and call out, “FOUND IT!” Have the first child read the verse aloud while you project the verse on a screen via PowerPoint. See suggestions below for comments on each verse. Keep your comments brief and to the point of the lesson.

- **2 Corinthians 7:9-10**
  - Godly sorrow brings about repentance.

- **Matthew 3:8**
  - If you have truly repented, you’ll produce fruit.

- **1 Chronicles 21:8**
  - David confesses, “I have done a very foolish thing.”

- **2 Chronicles 7:14-15**
  - If we will humble ourselves and repent, God will hear and heal.

- **Psalm 41:4**
  - Asking for healing, admitting sin.

- **1 John 1:10**
  - If we claim we have no sin, we make God a liar.

- **1 John 1:9**
  - If we confess our sin, God will forgive and cleanse us.

- **Acts 17:30**
  - God commands repentance.

Paul’s Power Principle: In prayer, God shows ways we need to change!

Let’s Learn!—Prayer Is Empowered by Repenting  
**Matthew 6:12**

Supplies: Bibles, can-and-string telephone, scissors

How is your relationship with your parents after you’ve gotten in trouble for doing something wrong? They don’t exactly want to play games or joke around with you. They still love you, and you are still their child, but there is a break in the fellowship that you can really feel. It heals in time, and faster when you admit you did wrong and say you are sorry, but things can be tense for a while. That is how it is with sin. When we sin, God still loves us, and we are still His children (if we are Christians), but there is a definite break in our fellowship with God. Repentance fixes this break. Let’s illustrate it this way.

Make a string telephone out of two plastic cups and a long string, perhaps ten to twelve feet. Poke a small hole in the bottom of each cup and put the end of each string through the hole, and then form a large knot so it will stay. If the string is held taut, one person can talk into one cup while the other person holds the other cup to the ear to hear what is said. Experimenting with different types of cups and string will give different results. If you use leaders for the object lesson, the actual effectiveness of the prop is not important to make the point. Talk about how this prop is an illustration of prayer—where God is on one end and we are on the other. You can talk about how in prayer the string would be going vertically instead of horizontally across the stage. While two volunteers hold the cups with the string taut across the stage, use scissors to cut the string in the middle to illustrate what happens when we sin—our “connection” with God is “cut.” Then tie a knot to rejoin the two pieces as you talk about how confession and repentance restore that connection so that you can have a good conversation with God again.
Read Matthew 6:5-13 to give a general overview of the passage. If you’ve challenged children to memorize the passage, ask if any have done so and give them an opportunity to recite it for the group. (Ideas for motivators can be found in Lesson One.)

Remind the children of the P-R-A-Y outline for the four lessons:

- **P** = Praise (Expressing love or devotion to God)
- **R** = Repenting (Going the other way)
- **A** = Asking for our Needs
- **Y** = Yielding to God

Read Matthew 6:12. This week we are learning about repenting. We start with praise, because prayer should first be about God—and if we truly focus on God, it will cause us to realize we have sin in our lives and as a result, we should be willing to repent of that sin.

**What does it mean to repent?** If kids give incorrect answers, say “Good guess,” or “Close,” or “That’s important.” The answer you are looking for is, “To turn around.” If they say, “To change your mind,” you can answer, That’s very close, but I’m looking for another definition, the more exact one, but you are right on target. As soon as a child says, “To turn around,” pick up your lectern (if you use one) or simply walk down the center aisle to the opposite side of the room and ask the children to all turn their chairs around. If they sit on the floor, simply ask them to turn around. Tell them again, To repent means to turn around. Repent means to what? Have them shout, “TURN AROUND!” For the rest of this segment, have kids face the opposite direction than usual. Of course, any PowerPoints or videos will be behind them, but kids can handle looking behind themselves a few times. Every time you want them to look behind at the screen, you just say, “REPENT!” and point, and they can turn around to look at the screen. They will enjoy it, and it will reinforce the meaning of the word.

To repent means to turn around or to change our minds—to be willing to stop sinning and go the other way. In our H-E-A-R-T prayer guide, the second letter “E” stands for “Examine your life.” When we pray, we are not only talking to God, but listening to Him, too. And as we listen to Him, God will reveal to us things He wants us to change in our lives.

- **H** = Honor God with Praise
- **E** = Examine your life
- **A** = Ask for Personal Needs
- **R** = Request Help for Others
- **T** = Thank God for blessing you

Teach through the following verses. (If you are using PowerPoint, you will need to say “Repent!” to signal to the children to turn and read them on the screen behind them.)

Romans 12:2 talks about the “transforming of our minds.” This takes places as we allow God to change us, and this same verse says that we will then be able to know “what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Matthew 5:23-24 talks about how if we are “at the altar” and remember that a brother has something against us, we should go and make it right, and then come back. While Jesus was talking about a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple, He knew that altar would soon be gone. The principle applies to any time we go to God. When we pray, if God brings to mind something we need to make right, we need to go and make it right.

In Romans 12:18, Paul says that as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Notice he doesn’t say “live at peace with everyone.” He says, “as far at it depends on you.” He knows that with some people it won’t be possible, but you are to do your best—do as much as you can. Do your part, and leave the rest up to God.
We will all make mistakes. We will all fail. We will all sin and fall short of God’s standard of perfection (Romans 3:23). What matters is not whether you are perfect, but whether you are willing to own up to your sin, admit it when you realize it, and turn back to God.

1 Chronicles 21:8: King David, when he realized he had sinned, admitted it. King David was one of the biggest sinners in the Bible! And yet God called him “a man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22)!

Walk back to the stage and have the children turn back toward the stage. You can say, “REPENT!” one more time just for fun to have the children turn around toward the back of the room. Repentance restores our relationship with God.

Suggested Bible Narrative


Zacchaeus spent one day with Jesus and changed completely! He not only decided to stop being a tax cheat, but he repaid those he had wronged and determined to run his business a different way from then on! What a wonderful example of repentance! He wasn’t just sorry for his sins, he changed his ways as a result of meeting Jesus!

Dee’s Disciple Tip: Prayer and Sin have a powerful relationship:

Prayer will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from prayer.

Show two magnets and how they are drawn together and stick together—this is how God designed our relationship with Him to be! James 4:8 says if we draw near to God, He will draw near to us. However, sin gets between God and us. Show a piece of plastic and put it between the magnets and show how they will no longer stick together. Emphasize that you are not talking about losing salvation, but about our relationship with God. The plastic (sin) robs us of our closeness to God. To get close to God again, we have to admit there is a problem and remove the thing that has come between us—that is called repentance. Remove the plastic and stick the magnets together again.
KeyVerse

Topic: Pray about Everything!
Reference: Philippians 4:6

Notice that in our KeyVerse, prayer seems to be mentioned twice when it says “by prayer AND petition.” Doesn’t that sound a little redundant? Like saying, “Prayer and prayer”? Why would this verse say, “in everything, by prayer AND petition?” “Petition” means to ask for something, so the word “prayer” must be referring to something else! Could it be that there is prayer that doesn’t ask for something? For some people, if you took away “asking for stuff,” there wouldn’t be much left to their prayers, would there? How much time do you spend in prayer not asking for things? It is something to consider. When is the last time you spent time in prayer just praising God? Worshiping God? Thanking God? Talking to God? When you are anxious—pray. Yes, petition is okay, but there should be other prayer, too.

Memorization Activity: Read the verse together several times and practice the hand motions introduced in Lesson One:

- Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God
  - wag pointer finger of one hand in the air motioning “no”
  - wring hands together
  - point around the room
  - arms extended as in a big hug
  - hands together in flat prayer pose
  - interlock fingers in prayer pose
  - right hand flat against face and then extend down, palm up
  - both hands palms up toward heaven
  - one hand writing on other like a pad of paper
  - “pen” hand goes up into a point toward heaven
Dramatize the Point—The Prayer Reader 4000

Act this out or read as a story. **Supplies:** four actors, gadget prop for the Prayer Reader 4000

This drama continues each week with four different actors (or puppets). The idea is that the leader has a device (The Prayer Reader 4000) that enables him or her to read the minds of four churchgoers as they pray. It is best to pre-record the prayers and play them through the sound system and have the actors only act out the prayers by moving their mouths and folding their hands, being dramatic to match the prayers, etc. If that isn’t possible, have them put a script on their laps and pass a microphone or have them speak loudly. The leader goes behind them holding the Prayer Reader 4000 over their heads as they “pray.” After all four pray, the leader asks the audience, “Which prayer pleased God the most?” and then “Why?” Discuss the other prayers and what was right and wrong with them.

**Actor 1:** Dear God, just so You know it wasn’t my fault, Sally took my toy first, and it was only fair for me to take hers. She had to learn that it isn’t nice to take other people’s toys. It had to be done. You see, I was just helping You teach her a lesson. I know You understand.

**Actor 2:** Dear God, I realize that in being disobedient to my mom, I was also being disobedient to You. I am sorry for disobeying. Help me to be more careful with my choices so that I can show my mom and You that I love You. Will You forgive me?

**Actor 3:** Dear God, Mom says I need to pray and tell You I’m sorry, but I’m not sorry. I did mean to hit Sara, and I’m not sorry at all. But Mom said that if I didn’t say sorry, then You wouldn’t forgive me, so I will say I’m sorry, so that You will forgive me, okay? I’m sorry, there I said it. Forgive me now please, so I can go play. Later!

**Actor 4:** Dear God, I just want You to know that I did Joshua a real favor today by hiding his colored markers in class. He is a terrible artist. I know You think I am here to say sorry, but really You should be thanking me, the pain I have spared the world is...well...HUGE! Don’t worry, I got it covered...I am the awesome art defender of the world! Art-man Out!

Which prayer pleased God the most? Which prayer showed a change of heart? Which prayer showed true repentance?

Object Talks—The Slingshot and the Magnifying Glass

**Supplies:** video projection

The video clip for this lesson features Karl, the Kidologist, doing a short object lesson featuring a slingshot who learns from a magnifying glass that forgiveness can be found when he admits his failure and asks for forgiveness. Use this short teaching video to show the kids or to train a leader to do the talk “live.” **Featured verse:** 1 John 1:9
Let’s Talk!—Small Group Discussion
Divide kids into groups of five or six and provide each small group leader with a length of 2” x 4”, a hammer, and some nails. Supervise the children in using the hammer and nails to make holes on one side of the wood without leaving the nail driven into the wood. Once each child has had a turn, explain that the nail holes represent our sins/mistakes, and the wood represents our lives. When we sin, it leaves a permanent mark—there is nothing that we can do to make the mark go away. However, when we repent and ask God to forgive us, it becomes like we never sinned (Turn the wood piece over to reveal the unmarked side).

Use the following questions to stimulate discussion:
1) What happens to the wood when you hit it with the hammer and nail?
2) Why are our sin and mistakes like the nail marks on the wood?
3) Is there anything we can do to make our sins go away?
4) What does repentance mean?
5) What does forgiveness mean?
6) Are there any marks or sins/mistakes that God cannot forgive?
7) What happens if we make the same mistake again—can God forgive us?
8) What things can we do to help ourselves learn from our mistakes, and grow stronger in God?

DiscipleTown Super Citizen
Choose a child who demonstrated a teachable spirit or desire to learn during the service. Point out what he or she did that showed the child desires to learn or grow. Maybe the child said he or she was sorry, or asked questions, or participated well. Repentance shows we want to learn and grow and become more like Jesus. Reward someone who reflects this attitude.

Let’s Pray!
Dear Jesus, we praise You for Your great love for us. Thank You that by dying on the cross and rising again, You made a way for all of our sins to be forgiven. We are sorry for the many times we have made mistakes and hurt Your heart. Help us remember that we can always come to You when we are truly sorry and that You will always forgive us and help us make better choices. We know that You love us and will always accept us no matter what mistakes we make. We want to be closer to You so we will repent quickly and allow You to teach us a better way.

Help us in our prayers to start with praise and then to listen to Your Holy Spirit as You reveal ways we need to change. Help us be willing to make the changes You require, so that we can experience the awesome life You desire for us. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Cy’s Challenge: Ask God to show you ways He wants to change you.
Let's Review!
If you have extra time, use these review questions to keep the kids focused on the lesson until time to dismiss. A handful of candy will help you keep their attention. After each question, take a minute to reiterate the lesson point related to the question.

1) T/F Jesus paid for most of our sins on the cross.
2) Repentance means ___.
3) T/F King David was a practically perfect person.
4) T/F Prayer will make you perfect.
5) T/F Zacchaeus was a really tall man.
6) T/F God knows what we are going to pray about before we pray.
7) Our KeyVerse is ___.
8) T/F Prayer gives us personal access to God!

For the Home
DiscipleTown Table Talker: Give each child a copy of this week’s DiscipleTown Table Talker. Be sure to show the kids how to put it together and encourage them to ask their parents to lead family devotions three times this week.

Parent Email: Copy and send the email below to help your parents connect with their kids during the week. Send them early in the week, but not on Sunday. As a courtesy, be sure parents have opted to receive these emails. Review and edit as necessary to reflect the lesson elements you have used. You can also find this email as a Microsoft Word document in your download bundle.

Dear Mom and Dad,

As our series on How to Pray continued this week, we learned about true repentance. We talked about how important it is to remember that God’s forgiveness is always ours, and that God wants to forgive us and help us to grow.

We learned about Zacchaeus and discovered how an encounter with Jesus’ love helped him to change his life completely around so that he became a generous and loving person. The amazing thing is that God has a plan for each of us, and that means kids, too.

As you spend time with your child(ren) this week, encourage them to talk with God about the mistakes they make. Encourage them to repent and ask forgiveness, then go a step further and ask God for His help in fixing the behavior. Be sure to use the DiscipleTown Table Talkers at mealtimes as discussion starters.

If you want to go a step further in building relationships with your child(ren) and modeling repentance for them, share with them a recent time when you made a mistake and needed to ask God for His forgiveness. You can share how God is making you into a better person, just like He is doing with your child(ren).

I love it when you share your answered prayers with us—please keep them coming. If you have any questions, or prayer requests, please let me know.

Partnering with you for your child’s sake,

[Your Name]
Chip's Snack Time!

**Supplies:** gelatin mix, gelatin molds

The day before your class, make the gelatin per package instructions and pour into molds. Chill until you are ready to serve. During class, pour out the gelatin upside down on a plate to reveal cool shapes—allow children to eat with spoon while you chat.

While your kids are enjoying their snack, talk to them about how gelatin takes the shape of the mold. **God has a new mold for us, one that is perfect. God wants our hearts to be soft toward Him so He can change us to look like Him. We are the gelatin, and He is the mold.**

### Additional Ideas

**God Says**—This is simply a variation of the common game “Simon Says”—except that instead of “Simon,” you’ll use the leader’s name. The leader gives random instructions to the children such as “Put your hands on your head” or “Grab your nose with your right hands” etc. However, if the command is not preceded with “[Leader’s name] says,” the children are NOT to do the command. The object is to trick the children into doing the command when they shouldn’t, and in so doing they are “out” and must sit down. The last child left standing wins, or the last remaining kids, if you can’t get down to one. There are a variety of techniques for fooling the children that will be learned with practice. There are a lot of voices in this world giving us instructions, but we should only do that which is preceded by “God says.” If what we are told to do contradicts what “God says,” we should not do it.

**Sins Nailed to a Cross**—Pass out small pieces of paper and pencils and have children write down their sins during a serious time of prayerful reflection. Assure them that no one will see what they write—this is between them and God. Then have kids fold the papers in half and bring them up and nail (or pin) them to a wooden cross as you talk about how Jesus paid for their sins on His cross. The recommended song under “Let’s Worship”—*Jesus Paid It All*—could also be used here. This has the potential for a very moving and memorable time if done well.

**Repentance Game**—To help the children remember that “REPENT” means to “TURN AROUND,” choose one boy and one girl. Create a giant die with 1,2,3,4 on four sides, and “REPENT” on the other two sides. With masking tape, make two starting squares in the middle of the room, one for each of the contestants. Then from each starting square, make five squares going toward one wall and five going to the opposite. The boy and girl each choose a partner to roll the die on stage. Teams can choose their starting direction, but they can’t change direction unless the die roll shows “REPENT.” Teams take turns rolling. They move the number of spaces they roll. If “REPENT” shows, the player simply turns and faces the other wall. Reaching either wall wins. You can let kids trade rolls or choose new kids to play. Play as many rounds as time permits. This is a good game for when you have extra time. You can tally how many rounds the boys and girls have won. However, rivalry aside, emphasize when “REPENT” is rolled, that it means TURN AROUND and players must now “go the other way.”
DIRECTOR'S NOTES
The words in italics are notes for you and your puppeteers; they are not to be read aloud.

Leader: Hey, [puppet name], you’re looking chipper.

Puppet: I’m excited that today’s lesson is about repentance.

Leader: You are, huh?

Puppet: Yep. I’ve put together two lists...

Leader: You sure like lists...

Puppet: I sure do! Anyway, my first list is my “Sorry List.”

Leader: Well, that sounds good. What’s on that list?

Puppet: Well, I wrote out all the stuff I’m going to do that I feel sorry about.

Leader: [Flabbergasted:] That’s...that doesn’t make any sense. If it’s wrong, it’s wrong. Even if you feel sorry... well, it’s still wrong. And if you say you’re sorry about it in advance—it’s almost worse then.

Puppet: Well, I’m confessing it. Doesn’t that count for anything?

Leader: Yeah, it’s premeditated wrongness! That’s what it counts for!

Puppet: Bummer, I was afraid you might say that. So feeling sorry isn’t enough, huh?

Leader: No! To repent means to change your mind about it—it means to go the other way. It’s more than just being sorry, it’s deciding not to do it.

Puppet: [Pauses, then scratches head and sighs.] Okay, I repent then, I’ll rip that list up. I won’t do anything on that list, and I’m so glad God forgives me. I’m forgiven, right?

Leader: You sure are.

Puppet: That’s good news. I feel so much better.

Leader: I’m almost afraid to ask, but what’s the other list?

Puppet: Oh, that’s my Lightning List.

Leader: [Exasperated:] Lightning List! What on earth is that?!!!!

Puppet: [Matter-of-factly:] Why the people I want God to strike with lightning, that’s all. Why? Something wrong with that, too?

Leader: Yes! How can you have a list like that?

Puppet: Simple, they all did something to me. And unlike me, they haven’t repented yet. So I think they should be struck by lightning.

Leader: [Takes a deep breath.] Didn’t you just say it was good news that God forgave your sins?

Puppet: Yes, but what’s that got to do with anything?

Leader: Everything! The Bible says God will forgive you as you forgive others. In fact, in the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus instructed us to pray, “forgive us our sins as we forgive others who have sinned against us.” So that means, if you don’t forgive the people on your list, why should God forgive you?

Puppet: [Stuttering:] Uh, well, uh, gulp—I guess if I get forgiveness when I don’t deserve it, they should get it, too, even though they don’t deserve it?

Leader: I think so.

Puppet: [Throws up hands:] Do you know what this means?

Leader: No, what does this mean?

Puppet: This means I have to rip up my last list. Now I don’t have any lists left.

Leader: That’s okay, you’re on a better list, the list of the forgiven—and there is no better list than that!

Puppet: I’m gonna start a new list, my Blessing List—all the ways God has blessed me!

Leader: Now you’re talking!

*PUPPET: Develop a puppet character to use regularly. The children will get to know the personality and enjoy these regular visits. Dee, Cy, and Paul puppets are available at DiscipleLand.com
DIRECTOR’S NOTES
The words in italics are notes for you and your volunteers; they are not to be read aloud.
You will need overalls and tools

[As leader is finishing his talk, a repairman comes.]

Leader: Excuse me sir. Are you any chance an auto mechanic?

Repairman Robert*: Of sorts. I’m an auto body repairman, meaning I can work on engines, but only when it is part of fixing them after a crash. I mostly work on fixing the outside of cars after a collision.

Leader: Oh, you fix cars after they’ve been in an accident?

Robert: Yup, rainy days are my best friend. Not that I want anyone to get hurt, but wet roads bring me lots of business.

Leader: People don’t slow down enough in the rain, huh?

Robert: Nope. They need to adjust their driving in bad weather, and slow down. But it’s also when they aren’t paying attention.

Leader: What do you think causes the most accidents?

Robert: Well, I like to joke, drivers zigged when they shoulda zagged, or zagged when they shoulda zigged! But mostly, it’s because they didn’t stay on the straight and narrow. They broke a law, or ignored a stop sign, or went too fast, or weren’t paying attention, and WHAM! [very loud—try to startle the kids]—they get in an accident.

Leader: [To audience:] You know, kids, that’s kinda how life is. People get in trouble when they get off God’s path, they break God’s commands, ignore His stop signs, get going too fast with the world, or aren’t paying attention to what the Bible says and—


Leader: Well, the Bible does say in Matthew 7:13, “wide is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it.”

Robert: [Interrupting:] It says that?

Leader: Sure does.

*CHARACTERS: These are suggested characters and names. Please feel free to change or adjust according to the actors and props you have available.
Each DiscipleTown Unit will teach your kids an essential "how to" skill to become victorious disciples of Jesus!