

Question 39

With what attitude should we pray?



Answer

With love, perseverance,
and gratefulness.

Big Idea

When we pray, our attitude matters.

Aim

To help the children consider how what we know about God should influence the attitude with which we pray.

Bible Passage

Philippians 4:4–9

Memory Verse

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Phil. 4:6)

Virtue

Perseverance





Notes

Leader's Notes

Last week, we learned that God wants to communicate with us. He commands us to pray to him, but prayer is not drudgery; it's an amazing privilege! Some people may pray to God as if he were their servant who must do whatever they ask. Others approach in fear and doubt that God would ever listen to them. The Bible teaches us to approach God as a loving Father who always hears us. He will not always give us what we ask, but when he doesn't, it's because he knows better than we do what we need.

Things to remember when planning and teaching:

- While this lesson deals with the proper attitude for prayer, the aim is not to discourage students from praying until their hearts are perfect. Rather, this

lesson should inspire them to pray with hope and confidence that God hears.

- Children will be familiar with the concept of prayer but may not have discovered what a personal prayerful relationship with God is.
- The children need to understand that God hears the prayers of his people because of Jesus, and through him they can freely approach God.
- Children may be nervous about praying out loud and in an extemporaneous fashion.
- Remember to mix and match the activities in the lesson to fit your time frame (see p. 12 for some sample outlines). You won't have time to do them all. Feel free to adapt each activity based on your class's strengths and weaknesses.

Leader's Prayer

Father God, please let all that you have revealed about yourself influence the attitude with which I pray. May I pray with love, perseverance, and gratefulness, knowing that you are a good Father who gives his children

good gifts. Grant the children who will hear this lesson great understanding. May they be excited about the possibility of coming to you in prayer and challenged to come with humble hearts. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Leader's Tool Kit

- Q39 Catechism Recap (DL)
- Pieces of paper with hashtag signs printed on them
- Pictures of world leaders and famous people
- Q39 Emoticon Template (RB) for each child
- Crayons and markers
- Drinking straws

**10** Catechism Recap

Print out Q39 Catechism Recap. Stick the questions and answers up around the classroom. With each paper, also stick up a paper with several large hashtags.

Tell the children to go to one of the questions on the wall and create a hashtag that summarizes the question. If time permits, let the children write hashtags on more than one question. Read out some of their suggestions, and tell the children the hashtags can help them remember the questions and answers.

Example:

Question 14: Did God create us unable to keep his law?

No, but because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve we are all born in sin and guilt, unable to keep God's law.

#Unable

#BorninSin

5 Introduction to Question 39

Collect some pictures of world leaders and people you know the children will admire.

Introduce Question 39: "With what attitude should we pray?" by explaining to the children what the word *attitude* means. Help them to understand that it is a response to knowledge about an idea, person, or situation that can affect behavior.

Show the children some pictures of famous people and ask them to describe what attitude they might have if they were to meet them. For example, if they met the Queen of England, would they have a humble or sincere attitude? If they encountered a famous sports personality, would they have an enthusiastic attitude? If they met

someone who had been in an accident, would they have a sympathetic attitude?

Ask the children what kinds of attitudes they express

- To their teachers in school
- To their siblings
- To the school principal
- To an old person

Remind the children that Question 39 is "With what attitude should we pray?" Highlight that this lesson will help them consider how they approach God and what their heart response to God is when they come to him in prayer.



10 Activity



Give each child an Emoticon Template (RB) along with crayons (make sure you have plenty of yellow) and markers.

Have the children design their own emoticons showing four different attitudes. Encourage them to show the rest of the

group their emoticons and let the others guess what attitude each one represents.

Ask the children what sort of attitude they usually have when they pray. Are they bored? Hopeful? Silly? Distracted?

15 Teaching Outline

Begin the teaching time by asking for God's help. Ask that the lesson would be taught faithfully and that the children might listen well.

Explain to the children that what we know about people affects our attitude around them. God has revealed himself to us in his Word, and what we know about him should determine our attitude when we talk to him.

Read **Philippians 4:4–9**. Provide Bibles for the children to read along with you.

Explain to the children that **Philippians** is found in the New Testament and that Paul wrote to Christians in Philippi.

Explain to the children that Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison enduring difficult circumstances.

Ask the children if they would be able to write words like Paul's if they were in prison.

Explain to the children that these few verses will teach a lot about God and how to approach him in prayer.

In verse 4 Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." Explain to the children that Paul is encouraging Christians to find joy in the Lord. This is because he is a trustworthy, sovereign, and good God who loves his people and saves them from judgment, death, and hell through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus. Despite the fact that Paul is in prison, he is able to say "Rejoice!" not because his life or circumstances are good, but because he fully places his trust in God. Encourage the children to look at the second part of verse 5 and to realize that God is near to his people. He is not a far-off distant deity, but he is near, intimately and lovingly involved in the lives of his children. Help the children to see how amazing it is that the Creator of the universe wants to know his creatures and longs for a relationship with them.

In verse 6 Paul encourages Christians to bring their prayerful requests to God. Explain to the children that this should encourage them to recognize that God loves



Question 39 | With what attitude should we pray?

to hear and answer his people's prayers: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Ask the children if they can imagine living a life without ever worrying about anything. You might want to ask them what kind of things they worry about.

Paul knows firsthand that life can be difficult, and yet he says that we can bring our worry and anxiety directly to God. Things might still feel scary, and we might want to give in to worry, but God wants us to let him take care of the things that make us anxious. Paul is encouraging Christians to trust God in each and every situation, from the really tricky ones to the everyday occurrences. The passage encourages Christians to be *frequent* and *persistent* in prayer. The way to fight off our anxiety is to pray about everything and ask God to replace worry with his peace.

Ask the children if they noticed the attitude Paul is encouraging Christians to have in bringing their prayers and petitions to God.

Christians are to have an attitude of thanksgiving in their relationship with God. Christians should have hearts that are thankful that God saves, that God is in control, that God is near, and that God hears and answers the prayers of his people.

What does Paul say will happen as we pray and trust God? Ask the children to read verse 7 aloud with you: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Explain to the children that as Christians learn to pray and understand God's will, they will be able to know peace, because they are confident that God is in control and that he is working for their good and his glory.

Finish the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 39 and the answer to memory.

(These notes are just for guidance. Please expand or amend them to suit your own children and context. Write out your talk in your own words and include illustrations and applications that you know will connect with your children.)



Activity



Give each child the prayer notebook they decorated the previous week. Have a few extras on hand for any children who were absent.

Read aloud Phil. 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever

is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Ask the children to write these words in their prayer journal, leaving space between each word (this will take up several pages):



Notes

True, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellence, worthy of praise

Ask the students if there are any words in that list they don't understand, and define them. Invite the children to spend a few minutes listing below each word some things that they associate with it. For example, God's word is true, a soldier who lays down his life is honorable, etc.

Tell the children that God knows that what we think about influences our attitude. Thinking on these things, as God commands, is one way to prepare ourselves for prayer.

Keep the prayer journals to be used again with Question 41.

5 Discussion and Question Time

Some questions that might arise include:

? Why does it sometimes seem like God isn't hearing or answering our prayers?

Read Matthew 7:7–11 with the children. This passage teaches us to believe that God hears us and we can expect him to answer us. He wants to give us good gifts. Ask the children, based on the analogy that God is a good Father, what a good father does when a child asks for something harmful or that would be too old for them. In the same way, God sometimes tells us “no” or “wait,” but he always hears us.

? Are some situations too unimportant to pray about?

There is nothing too insignificant for prayer. God loves to hear from us about the smallest details of our lives.

? What will having the peace of God feel like?

Explain to the children that the peace of God means our worries and fears get crowded out by faith in God and hope in his goodness. Explain that the peace of God is sometimes immediate, but sometimes it grows slowly, like a seed turning into a tree. We need to continue persevering in prayer to feel God's peace.

Also use this opportunity to help the children think about their own lives and how this question and answer affects them personally.

- Ask the children what an ungrateful prayer would sound like. Ask them if they've ever prayed without gratitude.
- Ask the children what kind of prayers they might pray that would require perseverance on their part.



10 Virtue Vision



Notes

Perseverance

Ask the children if they remember what perseverance means. Help them recall that to persevere means to keep going, even if you have to wait a long time to see any concrete results.

Share this story about George Müller, a passionate evangelist, with the children:

In 1844, a man named George Müller began praying every day for five of his friends. After many months, one of them became a Christian. Ten long

years went by, but then two others were converted. The fourth man became a Christian after Müller prayed for him for twenty-five years! Still the fifth friend did not believe. Müller persevered in prayer for him until Müller died, which meant he prayed for him for fifty-four years. He never gave up hoping that he would accept Christ. His faith was rewarded, for soon after Müller's funeral the fifth friend believed!

Now that is persistence that paid off!

10 Memory Activity

You will need a drinking straw for each child and two sets of the memory verse or catechism question and answer cut up into individual words. (Before you assign this challenge, ensure that the size of the words and weight of the paper makes this task possible.)

Divide children into two teams. Place one set of words on a table at the opposite end of the classroom for each team. Explain

to the children that they will run a relay race. They must run up to the table and suck one of the words onto the end of their straw and bring it back to their team. As each child returns, the next should run out. The first team to assemble the verse wins. The verse could be read before the relay to provide the children with a little help. Read it through several times after the relay for reinforcement.

5 Closing Prayer Time

Encourage the children to write another prayer in their personal prayer journal. Conclude by praying that God would help the children (and you) to pray with an attitude that reflects his goodness.