**Lesson 1**

**Big Idea:** We can approach God in prayer

**Key Verse:** Hebrews 4:16 – “So let us boldly approach the throne of grace. Then we will receive mercy. We will find the grace to help us when we need it.”

**Thoughts for Leaders**

Prayer is a really difficult practice for newcomers to wrap their heads around. Talking to someone you can’t see and you don’t “hear” back from feels strange and unnatural for many at first. Communication is key to every relationship, especially our relationship with God! Normalizing the idea of prayer, and even practicing it together is a great way to help kids become comfortable with the idea of talking to God wherever they are.


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## Supplies List:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Attention Grabber</th>
<th>Small Group</th>
<th>Memory Verse</th>
<th>Craft Table</th>
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<tr>
<td>- screen to hide actor</td>
<td>- enough caramels, peppermints, hot tamales, sour soothers and conversation heart candies for each child</td>
<td>Printouts of Memory Verse 3.1 (pg 10)</td>
<td>Chocolate chips</td>
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<td>- microphone/megaphone</td>
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<td>Microwave/slow cooker</td>
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<td>Ladle</td>
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<td>Wax paper</td>
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<td>Paper cups</td>
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<td>Optional: sprinkles</td>
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When the kids come in, King Wah-Wah should already be sitting behind a screen/curtain on stage. Ideally, he should have a microphone or megaphone to amplify his voice. Think Wizard of Oz for this set-up!

Leader: (In hushed tones). Today we have a very, very important guest with us. The Great and Honourable King Wah-Wah-Nicco-Licco-Bing-Bang has graced us with his presence.

You’re not amazed? Have you never heard of The Great and Honourable King Wah-Wah-Nicco-Licco-Bing-Bang? He’s famous! He’s incredible! He’s wonderful! He’s the smartest person ever born. He is the richest person alive. Why, if I could just get him to see me I could ask him any kind of question I wanted! But see, that’s the problem. He’s kind of famous for having a bad temper. Most of us aren’t even worthy to go see him. He doesn’t let just anybody in, you know. You have to be the right kind of person, say the right kind of things. I don’t even know what they are.

Do you think he would see me?

Maybe I’ll try. I know this much. When you want to see The Great and Honourable King Wah-Wah-Nicco-Licco-Bing-Bang you have to say it like this, “My name is _________ and I have brought you a _________.” Well, of course what you’re name is and what you brought are different for every person. And the funny part is, you don’t even have to actually bring him something. Just say that you did. But if he likes what you say, he’ll let you in. If he doesn’t like it, well, that can get pretty scary.

I’m a little scared approaching him. What should I say I’m bringing him?

Ask for ideas.

Leader: Okay, I think I have it.

Looks toward screen nervously. Wipes hands on pants, clears throat, and tentatively says.

Leader: Ummm... Hello, O Great One. My name is Linsday and I’d like to bring you gold. (Looks nervous.).
Attention Grabber continued...

King Wah: *(roars from behind the screen)* Who dares speak to me? GET OUT! I’ll have NONE of it!

Leader visibly jumps and cowers.

Leader: I guess I’m just not good enough. Does anyone else want to try it?

*Allow volunteers and kids to try approaching King Wah. The trick is their name and what they bring have to start with the same letter. If they get this wrong, King Wah needs to sound intimidating and scary. If they get it right, he kindly invites him to go in to see him. At this point, kids duck behind the screen, can be given a candy and told not to tell anyone the secret. If desired, kids can stay there until the Attention Grabber is over.*

Leader: You know, I just don’t get it. Why does he let some people in, but not me? Maybe I’m not good enough. Do you know why he lets some people in?

*If the kids have figured it out, let them explain it. If not, have a volunteer tell the secret. If the kids haven’t figured it out, let a few more try to see King Wah once they know the secret. If they have, continue with the script.*

Leader: Now that I know the trick to see The Great and Honourable King Wah-Wah-Nicco-Licco-Bing-Bang, he just doesn’t seem so great anymore. I thought I had to be good enough, or pretty enough, or rich enough. Really, this king just likes playing mind games. It seems kind of silly, now, but I was really scared before.

You know, some people feel that way about talking to God. They might feel like they’re not good enough, or smart enough, or the right kind of a person. They might feel like they don’t know the right words to say, or that God is really, really scary.

The Bible says that Jesus went through the same kinds of stuff we did when He lived on earth, and because of that, we can talk to God boldly. That means instead of worrying what He will think or say, or if He’ll even listen, we can have confidence to know that God wants to hear from us and will listen. Our memory verse today says: “So let us boldly approach the throne of grace.” – that’s God’s throne - “Then we will receive mercy. We will find the grace to help us when we need it.” That’s found in Hebrews 4:16.

And you know what? I think I’d way rather talk to God than King Wah-Wah-Nicco-Licco-Bing-Bang, anyway. He’s not so great after all!
Have you ever had to talk to someone and were really, really scared to do it? Maybe you had to apologize to someone, or confess something you did wrong to your parent. Maybe you had to talk to a police officer, or a judge even. There are people who can be VERY scary to talk to. Sometimes after we talk to them, we feel better and might even feel silly for being so scared. But sometimes it’s not like that. Sometimes it really is hard to talk to somebody.

God is a pretty great God. He knows it can be scary for us to approach Him. In fact, one man in the Bible wanted to see God really, really, really badly. God told him that approaching Him can be so scary that some people actually die! So He was really good and let that man, Moses, see His back. That way Moses wouldn’t die, but He would still get to see God. Moses said it was really amazing to see even that much of God.

But God didn’t stop there. He knows how much we need to see, hear, and talk to someone for that person to become important to us. He wants to be the most important person in our lives. And He wants us to ask for His power to help us, so He made a way for us to talk to Him very easily. He sent Jesus to live on earth so He could understand what it was like to be us. Ever since then, Jesus – who is God – has made it so we can go right up to God and talk to Him without being afraid. The Bible says we can approach God’s throne with boldness – that means without fear and with total confidence. We can talk to Him, we can ask Him things, we can cry to Him, we can tell Him all the things we love about Him, and we can even complain to Him. Best of all, when we do talk to God, He promises that He will give us mercy – that means He’ll be forgiving – and grace – that means help – for what we need.

Isn’t that great news!

So how do we talk to God?

The Bible has all sorts of ways! Some people in the Bible stood up, sat down, knelt on the ground, lay down, or danced when they prayed.

Some people in the Bible prayed in churches, in deserts, in their homes, on the streets, out camping, in the middle of a fight, during big celebrations, when they were alone, in the middle of a crowd, with other people or on their own, or even in their own closet!

Some people in the Bible prayed by singing songs, saying words, writing poetry or letters, asking questions, thinking about God or even by just groaning.
Teaching Time continued....

Asking how to pray is kind of tough! There are so many ways to pray! Jesus told us we could pray with confidence. He told us we could call God “Daddy” or “Father” if we wanted to. He told us to pray for our food, for help to forgive people, for God’s way to happen, and for help for the day ahead.

Really, we can pray in many different ways, in many different places, in many different postures. So long as it’s God we’re addressing, He hears us.

Right now would be a good time for us to pray together. This is one way we can pray. I can say the words, and you can agree with them quietly. Usually here we all bow our heads, close our eyes and fold our hands. Did you know that even though the Bible has TONS of ways to pray, that’s not one of them? That’s one we just made up that helps us concentrate. We bow our heads to remember that God is great. We close our eyes so we won’t get distracted by what’s going on around us, and we fold our hands so we aren’t tempted to bother other people while we’re praying. Often, at the end of our prayers, we say the word “Amen.” God doesn’t care if we say that or not. It’s an old word that is kind of like saying “That’s all,” or “I agree.” We use it here, mostly so that we can know when we’re done praying. So when I say amen, you can say it, too, which means “I agree.” That’s one way we can pray together.

This isn’t the only way to pray, but it’s one way we can pray, and we’ll use it right now. So, together, let’s bow our heads, fold our hands and close our eyes.

God, thank you so much that you made a way for us to talk to you with out being afraid or having to do any magical ritual just so you will hear us. We’re so glad you listen to our prayers and answer us. Amen.
**Leader:**
We're practicing prayer this week. This time, we're going to use candy to help us pray together.

First, we are each going to take a caramel. Before you eat this caramel, let's thank God for something sweet that has happened in your life this week.

*Do this part out loud – tell each other (and God!) what you are thankful for.*

**Leader:** Now, let's take a peppermint. Peppermints give your mouths a nice clean feeling. Let's do something called confession. We can do this quietly if you like. Confession is when you tell God something you are sorry for and ask for His forgiveness. He promises to forgive us and, just like this peppermint makes your mouth feel clean, He cleans our hearts. Let's talk to God quietly and confess what we are sorry for.

*Do this part quietly. Allow time for prayers.*

**Leader:** Next, we're going to take a Hot Tamale. Before we eat this, let's ask God for help for a hot situation we might be in: something that's on your mind, confusing you, or concerning you.

*Allow time for prayers.*

**Leader:** Next, we're going to take a sour soother. Before we eat this, let's bring to God a situation that makes us upset: maybe you feel like you've lost a friend, or something's going badly at school.

*Allow time for prayers.*
Small Group continued...

Leader: To end, we’re going to take a conversation heart. This reminds us that God loves us, and gives us an opportunity to tell God that we love Him, too. Let’s end with a time of telling God we love Him!

Finish with this prayer.

Leader: That wasn’t too hard, was it? Praying doesn’t have to be difficult. And I bet you eat some of these candies every now and again – whenever you do, you can remember to pray just like we did today!

End with prayer journals.
Monthly verse: Hebrews 4:16 – “So let us boldly approach the throne of grace. Then we will receive mercy. We will find the grace to help us when we need it.”

Use the definition cards to learn what some of these words mean: BOLD, APPROACH, MERCY, GRACE.
### Memory Verse 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BOLD</strong> (bold) adj.</th>
<th><strong>APPROACH</strong> (ə-prəch) v.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fearless and daring; courageous.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Requiring or exhibiting courage and bravery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To come or go near or nearer to: approached the tunnel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To come close to</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MERCY</strong> (mûr'së) n. pl. mer-cies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Compassionate treatment,</td>
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<td>2. be kind and forgiving</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th><strong>GRACE</strong> (grâs) n.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A favor given by someone who does not need to give anything.</td>
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Definitions adapted from www.thefreedictionary.com
CrafT TaBle

Chocolate chips
Mini pretzels
Microwave/slow cooker
Ladle
Wax paper
Paper cups
Optional: sprinkles

Arms of prayer

Leader: Did you know that the pretzel used to be a holy symbol? Many, many years ago, people used to pray with their arms folded across their chests. (Demonstrate) People ate pretzels only during a certain time of year, called lent, and they made them in the shape of folded hands to remind each other that this was a special time of prayer.

Since we are learning all about prayer this month, let's make pretzels that can remind us to pray as well!

Instructions:
- Melt chocolate chips in a microwavable bowl in the microwave (set on low heat and stir often. Do not overcook.) Another option is to place the chocolate in a slow cooker or crock pot earlier in the day and have it slowly melt. Once melted, keep the slow cooker on “warm” setting. Immediately before craft time, ladle small amounts of chocolate into individual paper cups to pass out to the children.
- Give each child some wax paper to protect the table, a small paper cup with melted chocolate and a handful of pretzels.
- Instruct children to dip half of each pretzel in the chocolate and lightly coat with sprinkles (if desired). Lay pretzels on wax paper to dry. It only takes a few minutes for the pretzels to dry, and then the children may either eat their craft, or take it home in a sandwich bag to eat later.
Telephone

Have children line up (or sit in a circle, if a smaller group) in groups of 8-12 children. Have the first person in line (a leader is often best for this role) whisper a phrase to the person beside them. That phrase (which can only be repeated once) gets passed on from person to person until the last person in line hears it. They, then say out loud the phrase as they understood it. It usually gets mixed up in the hearing and the results are often hilarious!

**Leader:** Isn’t it great news that, because of Jesus, we can talk directly to God? There’s no mixing up the messages when we can talk to God ourselves!