

Prayer is Yielding to God

Week #4 (3rd Mar 2024):

The Big Point: Prayer is Yielding to God

God's Word: The Story of Paul (Acts 9:1-22)

Memory Verse: "Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to me." John 15:4 (NIRV)

Application: I can yield to God and say YES to Him.

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Series Aim: To teach kids to know and approach God through prayer.

Creative Video (Optional):  [Paul's Ministry](#)

TEACHER'S WORD STUDY

♥ CENTRE YOUR HEART!

Why we do what we do

We have learnt how God is a good God we can trust and we want to Remain in Him to grow and bear fruits that will please Him. In this series, we learn one of the most important ways to remain in God, which is through prayer! We learn how we can come to know and love God through prayer and how prayer is to P.R.A.Y. (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield)!

Focus Aim: To teach kids to know and approach God through prayer.

♥ Prayer Points

Keep the Kids and the Kingdom in our hearts!

Let's pray for the following (and feel free to add on your own!) :

- Pray for kids to grow in their friendships with Jesus.
- Pray that as the kids remain in Jesus, they will grow to bear fruits that will please Him - good character / fruit of the spirit, a willingness to share of the gospel with others
- Pray for the kids to learn to grow in their experiences in prayer.
- Pray for the kids to also approach God rightly through their prayer by Praising, Repenting, Asking and Yielding!

♥ Memory Verse Write Up

“Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can’t bear fruit unless you remain joined to me.” John 15:4 (NIRV)

Throughout 2024, we will have “Remain” as the focus in HopeKids. This series hopes to help kids to have a greater understanding of prayer and to know, approach and remain in God through the spiritual discipline of prayer.

This verse expresses Jesus’ hope for his disciples to remain joined to Him. To “remain” or “abide” in Jesus means to continue in a daily, personal relationship with Jesus, characterised by trust, prayer, obedience (v10), and joy. Jesus is also saying to his disciples to “protect your relationship with me so that I continue to abide fully in you.” To remain in Jesus and be aware of Him, we need to learn to spend time with Him in prayer. Only then, can we bear fruits that will please Him and bring praise to Him.

♥ GROW DEEP ROOTS!

Understand the Big Point's focus

In the past weeks in our Remain in God: PRAY series, we learn one of the most important ways to remain in God, which is through prayer! We have taught the children that there are different things we can talk to God about —Praising, Repenting, Asking. This week, we will go through the different aspects of prayer again, and realise that if we were to remain in God and grow in our praying with God, we are learning to say yes to God in and through our lives.

Through this series, we will give children a simple mental framework to break down the many aspects of prayer into four areas, each starting with a letter of the word “PRAY”—Praising, Repenting, Asking, and Yielding.

Note to Preachers: As this week will be Holy Spirit Encounter, we also hope to recap on the past few week’s learning points to drive further the different aspects of prayer (Praise, Repent, Ask...) Please communicate with your service team, service IC and service hosts that day to know the exact programme flow for your centres and also tie down which parts you will do as preachers and which can be led by hosts. Scroll down to see the other aspects of Prayer (Praise, Repent and Ask) for more information.

Prayer is Yielding to God

Like what we have mentioned from the beginning of the series, in its simplest definition, prayer is talking with God. Through this week in Holy Spirit Encounter, we are going to recall again, the different parts of our prayers with God, and learn that also, **Prayer is Saying Yes to God.**

The more that we spend time in prayer talking with and to God, the more that we will come to know Him more and know God's heart and what God cares about. And we too, will come to care and want what God wants. Thus, the more we pray, the more we will learn to say yes to God and want what God wants.

P.R.A.Y.

In week #1, we looked at the importance of approaching God rightly with awe and respect, starting our prayers with praise, even as we seek to grow in our friendship with Him.

- The "P" reminds us that prayer should start with Praise, which shows that we know the God we pray to.

In week #2, we learnt about how prayer has to include our sincere repentance of the wrongs that we did and this can only sincerely come when we know God enough and spend enough time with Him to know His good and holy nature.

- The "R" reminds us that we need to Repent—when we pray, we need to examine our lives and allow God to show us where we have sin and how we can change to be more like Him.

In week #3, we learnt that Prayer is Asking God! – We can ask God for things because God is our heavenly Father and He delights in giving to His children. We can confidently go to God to ask for things we need or even want, as God is a loving Father who longs to give us what is good for us that will help us to learn and grow to be more like Him.

- The "A" reminds us that we can Ask for things because God is our heavenly Father and He delights in giving to His children. We will learn more about this next week!

This week in the final week, we will learn that prayer is also about yielding to God, letting go of what we want to do to obey or follow what God wants us to do. A simple way to say this is to say YES to God – Yielding to what He wants, saying yes to Him, to what He wants and what He says. The truth is, this lesson may be the most important of them all.

Many people praise God. Some repent of their sins. Millions ask God for things. But prayer's real life-changing power comes when we yield and say yes to God.. And the truth is, it is difficult. Yielding is the act of letting others have their way. In prayer, yielding is

choosing to let God have His way—no matter what. Disciples of Jesus follow Him wherever He leads.

- The “Y” reminds us that prayer helps us Yield to God, or say YES to God so that we can see His will unfold in our lives.

This final lesson will teach kids how to ask God in prayer: “What are You asking me to do? Where are You asking me to go? How do You want me to respond? Which decision do You want me to make?” It will then encourage them to yield to whatever God reveals to them. It won’t always be easy, but it will always transform their lives.

Object lesson suggestion: Show your cellphone / smartphone or a picture of one.

- Ask the children what it is
- Regardless of whether it’s a smartphone or not, as long as it is a mobile phone that you can bring around, it is also called a “cell phone”.
- Can any of you explain why it is called a cell phone?

Cell phones are called such because when you talk into them, your voice is sent wirelessly through the air to a tower—the area around the tower is called a “cell.” That cell is part of a system of towers that are all wired together in a grid connected across the world. So everywhere you go, your phone always looks for the closest tower, and then that tower tells the system where your phone is.

When someone calls you, the tower (cell) that they are near connects to a giant computer that connects to the tower you are near—then your two phones are connected. If you are moving, like in a car, your tower might change. That is why sometimes you might lose the signal on the phone because the computer loses track of which tower you are connected to, especially if both callers change towers at the same time.

But what happens if you move too far away from any tower? Your signal weakens until you have no signal, right? No tower? No signal? No call. You can have the latest fancy smartphone with a fully charged battery, but if there is no cell phone tower, you can’t call anybody. Even with WiFi, it is similar, just that wifi uses only radio waves rather than just cellular data which uses both radio and cellular waves and towers.

Link back to Prayer: The truth is, our connection with God in prayer is like a cell phone tower. Even though God is as close as your heart, imagine Him high in the sky, ready and waiting to connect with you. But what happens sometimes? We get too far from our tower to connect. We sometimes sin, and that moves us “out of range.” The problem isn’t with God—it is with us. We get a weak signal from God and wonder, “God, where are You? Why can’t I connect with You? Why do You feel so far away and distant?”

And God wants to answer, “I haven’t moved or changed. You’ve just gone out of range with your sin. Come back to Me.” After all, sin dulls our senses to God’s presence and brings us to feel far from Him. But we can repent in our prayer like what we learnt in week #2. If we humble ourselves, and confess our sins in re[entance, we come back to God—He will feel close again. James 4:8 says that if we will come near to God, He will come near to us. God’s reception is great when you are near Him. Today’s lesson is all about yielding to God and saying no to the things that take us away from Him.

Read Matthew 6:5-13

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray using The Lord’s Prayer, which we went through in week #1. We also learnt that in the very beginning of The Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught the disciples to start our prayers with praise as seen in V9. (Prayer is Praising God!) If we look at Matthew 6:11-13, we also see how prayer is asking God (V11, 13) for the things we need and also, prayer is repenting (v12) as we ask for His forgiveness for the wrong we had done.

We will realise that when we look at V10 of the Lord’s Prayer, we will also see how **Prayer is Yielding to God** – letting go of what we want to do to obey or follow what God wants us to do. The words itself says “your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” which asks for God’s will to be done on earth like how it is in heaven. Jesus calls us to pray and work for the continual advance and expansion of God’s kingdom on earth. The presence of God’s kingdom in this age refers to the reign of Christ in the hearts and lives of believers, and to the reigning presence of Christ in the church—so that they increasingly reflect his love, obey his laws, honour him, do good for all people, and proclaim the good news of the kingdom. We also pray for God’s Will to happen – what God wants to happen to really happen on earth. We need to raise our perspective—stop thinking about just our needs and think on what God is up to on a grander scale! When we start praying for things to be done God’s way—not ours—it also changes us!

Read Psalm 37:4

Many people read this verse and think, “Wow! What a wonderful promise! Delight myself in God, and He will give me everything I want!” At the beginning, the desires of their hearts may be money, security, a nicer house, or a faster car, but here is what happens to those who take this command seriously. As they delight themselves in the Lord, their hearts begin to change! They begin to see material things like a nice house or a nice car, money and the world differently. They starts to see people as lost souls who need Jesus; they see money as something that can be used to build the Kingdom:

- Money to build new church buildings
- Houses as places to minister and people to meet
- Cars as vehicles to bring people to new places!

Soon their very desires change to match God's desires. The meaning of the verse becomes clear—God doesn't give us the things we desire—God gives us new desires! And that is why Jesus promises that if you remain in Him, you can ask whatever you want and you'll get it, because of the kinds of things you'll ask for if you are remaining and abiding in Him. It won't be a million-dollar winning lottery ticket, it will be for a friend to come to church, or an unemployed dad to find a job, or a poor person to find help, or an orphan to know a home.

When we yield to God—the world changes because we change. There is an old saying, "Be the change you want to see in the world." When we yield to God, He changes us.

Object lesson: Show a mirror with a picture of Jesus behind the mirror

Read Philippians 1:6, 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Ephesians 5:1-2

Jesus has begun a work in you—a work of making you more like Him! Show a mirror and look in it. When you look in a mirror, you see yourself. But the Bible says that God is at work to make us look more like Jesus. Not physically, but in the ways we live and act. We reflect the Lord's glory and are being transformed into His likeness. We start by imitating Jesus, who lived a life of love.

- At that moment, turn the mirror around and show the picture of the face of Jesus.
- If we want to be more like Jesus, we need to yield to God when He shows us in prayer what He wants us to do. Pray a short prayer, asking God to give the children strength to yield whatever God has brought to their minds as you were teaching. Yielding to God opens up the wonderful future God has planned for us!

Read Acts 9:1-19

The following is for your reference and learning as you prepare your lesson/sermon. :)

Saul was a Jew who believed in God, but not in Jesus, and so was an enemy of the early Church—until he had an encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus! He yielded his life and was radically changed. He became not only a Christian, but one of the most powerful leaders of the Christian Church—writing much of the New Testament and starting churches throughout the known world! We now know him as Paul the Apostle.

V1-2 Saul's Journey to Damascus

Saul was born as a Jew, and trained in the Law or what the Jewish people will know as Torah. He was qualified to be a Pharisee and definitely ranked high in the Jewish religious system. He was alive during the time when Jesus was just crucified. Even though Saul grew up studying the law of following God, he didn't believe that Jesus was the son of God and the promised Messiah who will save them all. In fact, Saul hated Jesus and persecuted the believers and followers of Jesus. He even went around catching people who believed in Jesus and persecuting them by throwing them in jail, torturing them, or

even killing them. There was no one more zealous in persecuting Christians, known then as followers of The Way, than Saul.

In fact, Saul was on the way to Damascus with letters from the high priest, giving him a warrant to raid the synagogues to catch followers of The Way, so that he may persecute them, bringing them back to Jerusalem, either to be thrown to jail or even executed.

It is not known how Christianity had come to Damascus—perhaps through converts at Pentecost or by some of those “scattered” following Stephen’s martyrdom ([8:1](#)) in Acts 7.

V3-6 God Meets With Saul on the way to Damascus

Just as he was reaching Damascus, Saul was met by a great light from heaven, so bright that it was described brighter than the sun by Saul himself (Acts 22:6, 26:13) when he later recounted his experience meeting the Lord. The brightness made him fall to the ground and he heard the voice of Jesus calling out “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Jesus’ reference to Saul’s “persecuting me” shows his close identity with his followers: to persecute Christians was to persecute Christ.

Saul questioned the voice, asking, “Who are you, Lord?”, to which the answer came from Jesus Himself. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” The truth was, the risen Christ Jesus could have simply punished this man who had persecuted, hurt, harmed and killed so many of Jesus’ followers and believers. And yet, God had a plan for Saul, since He was the one who had created him. God saw what Saul could do with such zeal and believed that Saul could use the same zeal to spread the good news of Jesus. Jesus spoke to him kindly, giving him instructions on what to do next.

It is interesting to note that though Saul was ultimately blinded by the bright light, he indicates elsewhere that he actually saw the risen Christ on this occasion (see [1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16](#); cf. [Acts 9:27](#)). The scene is significant not only because of Saul’s conversion but also because it shows that he would have known of the resurrection from direct experience of Jesus and thus could come to appreciate why resurrection was a key part of the Christian message (see [1 Corinthians 15](#)).

V7-9 Saul’s Response to God

V7 Saul’s companions heard the voice but saw no one. In his later testimony to the Jews, Paul spoke of them seeing the light but not understanding the voice ([22:9](#)). They had no vision of Jesus nor did they hear the message to Saul, but they could testify to a brilliant light and a sound, which pointed to an objective event that was not a matter of Saul’s imagination.

V8-9 After the encounter, Saul could open his eyes but could not see. Saul's blindness and his fasting should not be seen as punishment but as a result of the intensity of his encounter with Christ. However, like the deaf-muteness of Zechariah in [Luke 1](#), it was designed to produce a time of reflection of his actions so far. It is also in this time that Saul realised his mistake. He truly was sorry, and repentant, knowing now that Jesus was indeed the Son of God and the promised Messiah.

V10-16 God Called Ananias to Minister to Saul

At this point, while Saul was in deep reflection through his blindness, God spoke to Ananias, a disciple from Damascus, telling him clear instructions to minister to Saul, to help and assist him in recovery of his sight and meet his needs

Ananias was willing to obey but concerned as he knew the reputation of Saul as a great persecutor all who believe in Jesus. Here is where God informs Ananias in v15-16 of Saul's special calling to become a chosen instrument to carry the name of Jesus and the Gospel to the Gentiles and how much Saul will have to suffer for the sake of Christ.

V17-19 Saul is healed and becomes a disciple of Jesus

Ananias obeyed and following God's instructions, came face to face with Saul. Ananias first ministered to Saul's need for healing, laying down his hands on Saul's eyes. This was a physical symbol of the invisible power of the Holy Spirit coming to heal Saul from his blindness and dwell within him. Ananias himself said to Saul to receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

Upon Ananias' prayer, something like scales fell from his eyes, which was also a symbol that Saul's spiritual blindness had been overcome and he could now see and understand the truth of Jesus Christ. Paul received the power of the Holy Spirit and believes in the truth of Jesus' love and power. He now recognises that he once was a terrible sinner who persecuted Jesus and His followers, but now admits the truth and turned himself around and through baptism, made an immediate public declaration of his faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

Linking Back to Prayer and Conclusion - Paul's Ministry for Jesus

Paul heard from Jesus and came to a position where he yielded to God's truth and God's will and plans. Even though the Bible text did not mention Paul taking time to pray, Paul took time to listen to God's truth in his times of blindness and came to a place of humility, letting go of what he thought he knew and to follow after God's truth and God's Will for him. Paul then continued to yield himself to God and became a powerful force of the Gospel making many missionary trips where he fearlessly and fervently preached the Gospel at any opportunity. He became an apostle, bringing people to know the love of

Jesus and starting new churches in new cities. He even wrote many books of the Bible in the New Testament, known as Paul's letters of the churches.

Note: Many stories state that God gave Saul a new name, Paul, but this is not actually true. The Bible did only start referring to Saul as Paul after his conversion, but the name Paul is not connected with his conversion. It was simply that he had two names, Saul being his Jewish name and Paul being his Roman name, just like how many people of the Chinese race in Singapore have both an English and Chinese name. Saul/Paul continues having a right to both names and continues to call himself [and to be called] Saul until his ministry in Cyprus [13:9]. He likely started to call himself Paul in the written Epistles as they are written to Gentile churches.

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HOLY SPIRIT ENCOUNTER - P.R.A. Recap Points + Prayer Stations Activities

Prayer is Praising God

Prayer is Praising God - saying good things about God! This is because it is important to approach God rightly with awe and respect. We start our prayers with praise, even as we seek to grow in our friendship with our good God. Prayer should start with Praise, which shows that we know the God we pray to and how good He is.

Jesus taught us how to pray to God using The Lord's Prayer and He too, started the prayer with praise of God, for God's name to be praised and lifted up! **Prayer is Praising God!**

- **Suggested Activity for P (Praise) will be the extended Praise and Worship for that service!**

Prayer is Repenting

Prayer is Repenting - Being sorry and saying sorry for the wrong we did and turning away from them, changing our ways so that we can learn and be more like Jesus. Prayer has to include our sincere repentance of the wrongs that we did and this can only sincerely come when we know God enough and spend enough time with Him to know His good and holy nature, which makes us want to change our ways and turn away from our wrongs.

(Optional) We learnt this in week 2 through the life of Zacchaeus, who after spending time with Jesus and getting to know Jesus' goodness and love, was convicted of his sins and wrong and decided to turn away from his wrongdoings! **Prayer is Repenting!**

- **Suggested Activity for R (Repent): Repentance Box/Basket/Bag** – Get children to confess a sin by writing them down on a slip of paper and dropping them in a box/basket/bag, like telling Jesus what we have done wrong and leaving it in His hands. Preacher can also bring out some of the slips of paper to tear to bring across the point that when we repent and leave it in God's hands or at the foot of the cross, Jesus' blood will cover it. God will not bring it to remembrance again!

Prayer is Asking God

Prayer is Asking God – We can ask God for things because God is our heavenly Father and He delights in giving to His children. We can confidently come to God to ask for things we need or even want, as God is a loving Father who longs to give us what is good for us that will help us to learn and grow to be more like Him.

In prayer, we have a DIRECT LINE to God, who is eager to listen and help us! God is our heavenly Father. And like a father who delights in caring for his children, our heavenly Father loves to give us good things—not only what we need, but also what we enjoy! We can ask God things, ask God for help and also ask God for things in prayer.

(Optional) We also saw the heart of our loving and good God in the story of the Roman Commander. Even though he was not yet a follower of Jesus, he believed in Jesus' goodness and power and he had the faith to ask Jesus for help. He sent people to ask Jesus to help heal his sick servant. He even believed that Jesus could heal just by saying the words for his sick servant to be well again. Jesus was amazed by his faith in asking and granted the Roman Commander what he asked for, and his servant really got well once Jesus said for him to be healed! How much more can we ask and believe God since we get to talk to Him directly in prayer!

- **Suggested Activity for A (Ask): Prayer Board** – Get children to write or draw out something they are asking God for on a post-it and add it to a common board (kids can choose to be anonymous). They will retrieve another post-it from the board that they can spend time praying for.