

Lesson 37 – Prayer

Grades 6-8

Lesson Preparation:

Read Lesson 37 in the Baltimore Catechism. You will need to have a Bible for this session. Also, be sure to print and copy the Lectio Divina sheets for the “Go Deeper” part of the lesson.

Opening Prayer:

Scripture: “Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God” Philippians 4:6

Leader: God, You speak to us, and You listen to us. As we explore the topic of prayer, teach us to love it, and never grow weary lifting our minds and hearts to You. Amen.

Together: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening:

This lesson is focused on prayer. Begin by allowing the students to share some of their favorite ways to pray.

Watch the Lesson 37 Video on Catholic Brain

Comprehension Questions: *Note: These questions are asked after the video, just to check student comprehension. They are not discussion questions, but be sure students understand the answers to these questions before moving on*

1) What is prayer?

Raising our minds and hearts to God.

2) What is mental prayer?

Prayer of the mind and heart

3) What is vocal prayer?

Prayer using words. They can be prayers we learn, like the Our Father, Hail Mary, etc., or our own words. Vocal prayer can support mental prayer, as in the rosary.

4) When we pray using our own words, what types of prayer can we make?

ACTS – Adoration and praise; Contrition; Thanksgiving; Supplication (asking for things – sometimes divided into asking for our own needs and intercession, for the needs of others)

5) Brainstorm some ways you can pray, that weren't discussed in the opening activity.

Discussion Questions: *Note: These questions are for student discussion. The students should consider these questions and comment on them. There are some key points included in this lesson, after each question, that you can use to help guide their discussion toward truth. It's important that the students think about and discuss these things, but that they don't leave the discussion with false impressions about what is true.*

1) Why is it important to pray?

We want to be united with God. Prayer is a conversation with God, an opening of our heart to God. We can not have much of a relationship with anyone if we never spend time with them or give them our attention.

2) What if we don't feel like praying?

We often can't help how we feel. Sometimes we feel a powerful desire to pray and receive consolation from prayer. Other times we feel very dry. At these times our prayer is even more powerful because we do not pray for the consolations we receive during those dry periods, but only for God, because we should, even when it is hard.

3) Why does it seem like sometimes our prayers go unanswered?

God hears all our prayers, but like any father, He can not always say "yes." God takes the longest of views - what is best for our salvation and the salvation of others. Sometimes our requests are not what's best; we must trust God's wisdom.

Go Deeper:

Using Scripture is a very powerful way to pray. There is an ancient form of prayer with Scripture called Lectio Divina. Look over the attached sheet describing Lectio Divina, and use it to teach the method to the students. Perhaps use the upcoming Sunday's gospel reading, or one of your favorites, for the prayer.

Remind students that a classroom is not the most conducive environment for this type of prayer (some soft Gregorian chant in the background, with the lights turned down may help) so encourage them to practice it at home.

One easy way to think of the four steps to Lectio Divina is:

- 1) Read
- 2) Meditate
- 3) Pray
- 4) Listen

Activity:

Divide a paper into four squares. Label them: Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Fill in the squares with ways you can pray in each of those categories. For example, how can we adore and praise God; what do we need to be contrite (sorry) for; what should we be thankful for; and what needs can we pray for, for ourselves and others?

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Lord, You have called us into a relationship with You, and You always listen when we pray. You delight to hear us calling to You. Help us become people of deep prayer. Amen.

Together: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.