

Get Ready!

Prayer

By: Jeff Fletcher
Activities: Rebecca Dauksas



Text

Luke 11:1-10; Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 18:9-14; Matthew 7:7-11

Key Quest Verse

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

Bible Background

Jesus emphasized the concept that God is our Father, that He knows everything about us, and that we are objects of the Father's loving care. Believers approach God in prayer not only as to a living Person who is Creator and Ruler of the universe, but also as to their Heavenly Father who has perfect knowledge, unlimited power, and infinite love.

Five kinds or elements of prayer are: adoration (worship), confession, thanksgiving, petition (supplication), and intercession. In adoration, one talks to God about God Himself and tells Him how wonderful He is. In confession, one tells God about wrong things he may have done and accepts His forgiveness. In thanksgiving, we thank God for our blessings. In petition (supplication), we talk to God about our needs. In intercession, we pray to God about other persons. The five kinds of prayer are related to the three factors involved in the two great commandments set forth by Jesus – God, ourselves, and our neighbors (Matthew 22:36-40).

The prayer that Jesus taught His disciples begins with adoration of the Heavenly Father. Adoration is the highest type of prayer. Adoration may be distinguished from praise. In praise, one tells other persons how wonderful God is. In adoration or worship, he tells God Himself how wonderful He is.

Get Ready!**Lesson Quest****What I want my students to:**

- Know:** God is a loving Father and Friend who wants to share intimately in all of their lives.
- Feel:** The freedom to ask God for whatever they need at any time and any place.
- Do:** Develop an intimate relationship with God, so they bring every aspect of their lives to God in prayer.

Leader's Devotion

“Mommy, may I have a glass of water?” “Dad, will you play catch with me?” “May I have my allowance?” “Will you take me to the mall?” If you have children, you know that children are constantly asking their parents for things or to do things for them. And that’s okay, because God designed human children to be dependent upon their parents for a long, long time. Most animals outgrow their dependency upon their parents in a few weeks or months . . . humans take at least 18 years, or 22 or 30 depending on the child. As parents, we don’t usually resent it when our children ask us for things, because we know it’s their job to ask and it’s our job to either say “yes,” “no” or “wait ’til later.” It is the essence of the parent-child relationship for the child to be dependent. When it comes to our relationship with God, we are even more dependent than a small child. We don’t stop depending on God until we draw our last breath, and even after that we depend on God to resurrect us at the last day. There are those in the Christian Church who consider asking God for things to be immature or not very spiritual. But, that is a false spirituality. God clearly derives pleasure from His children recognizing that they are dependent upon Him for all things and humbling themselves by asking. James wrote: “You do not have because you do not ask God” (James 4:2). God wants us to ask. In today’s scripture, Jesus teaches us to A.S.K. (Ask, Seek, Knock) and to keep on asking until we get what we desire. What is your attitude about asking God for things or to do things? As you prepare to teach your students about prayer, be sure to check your own attitudes about prayer. Do you humble yourself before God? Do you acknowledge your complete and utter dependency on Him for everything? Perhaps this willingness to humbly ask, and keep on asking God for what we need is the kind of Child-like faith that Jesus told us we needed to have. What should you do if you discover that you have difficulty asking God for things? Ask God to help you. If you are interested in reading a really good book on prayer, check out Prayer, Finding the Hearts True Home by Richard J. Foster. It’s available in most bookstores and offers an excellent overview of the many different types of prayer.

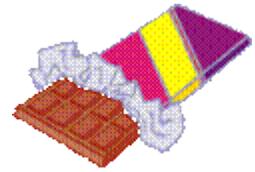
Get Set!**Option A****COURTROOM**

Materials: A black robe and wooden gavel. Set up a table with an American Flag beside it. Make a portion of the room appear to be a courtroom.

Procedure: Ask for 3 volunteers to do a role play. In the role play there will be two scenes. Background: One student was driving his/her friend's car, he/she was speeding and driving recklessly and had an accident (fortunately no one was injured, but the friend's car was totaled). He/she was given a ticket by the police. In the first scene, the person is in court appearing before a judge offering a defense. The student is trying to persuade the judge that they are not guilty. Have another student put on the robe and take the gavel and pretend to be the judge by asking questions (privately encourage the judge to be hard on the student). In the second scene, the student is to go to their best friend and tell him/her what happened in the accident. The student is to be honest about their guilt and seek their best friend's forgiveness. (Have another student role play the part of the best friend and privately encourage that student to be merciful).

In these two scenes we've seen how the same person can relate to different people in dramatically different ways. The conversation with the judge was based on fear and a desire to avoid punishment. There was no intimacy between the person and the judge. In the second scene, the conversation with the friend was based on the intimacy that comes with friendship. There was no need to pretend that the accident didn't happen and that it wasn't their fault. There was a trust that allowed them to be open and honest about what occurred. These two examples demonstrate some of the different ways that people relate to God. Some people think of God as an angry judge looking for reasons to punish us for our sins. Others experience God as a merciful and loving friend with whom they can be open and honest about their lives, both the good and the bad. In today's lesson, we will see that Jesus approached God with intimacy, and He teaches His disciples that we can also approach God with that same level of intimacy.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!

Option B**ASKING**

Materials: Enough candy bars for at least one for every student plus the teacher, or a bag of individually wrapped candies. (Some students may be diabetic or have food allergies . . . have some sugar-free candy or an alternate treat available in case this is an issue for a student.)

Procedure: Keep the candy hidden from the students. As you prepare to begin class, pull out two candies. Begin eating one candy yourself and place a second candy unwrapped on the table in front of you where the students can see it. Wait and see if one of the students asks you for that piece of candy. If one does . . . give it to them, and then pull out one additional piece of candy and put it in the same place. Wait and see if any other students ask for candy. If they do, continue the procedure, one at a time, until everyone who asks for a piece of candy receives one. Notice if anyone does NOT ask for candy. Notice if anyone complains about you eating candy or you giving a piece of candy to someone else. Then have a short discussion. Point out that in order for someone to get a piece of candy they needed to ask for it. If someone didn't ask for a piece of candy, ask them why they didn't ask for it. Let them know that as their teacher you care about them, you wanted them to have the candy but you wanted them to ask for it. Talk about the joy you received in being able to give them the candy. Then talk about how much God also enjoys giving gifts to us His children. Read Matthew 7:7-11.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!



Bible Story

Teacher Tip: Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles

Procedure: One of the best ways to learn a new skill is to watch someone who is really good at that particular thing and learn from them the best way to do it. Here’s an example: 20 years ago, the NBA basketball players wore short shorts and the good players tended to post up close to the basket. That all changed when a player named Michael Jordan came along. He wore long shorts and drove to the basket. He had a unique style, and he became the greatest player in the NBA. Now, the next time you watch an NBA basketball game, notice how many of the younger players wear long shorts and drive to the basket. Why? Because as they were growing up, they watched Michael and they all wanted to become “like Mike.”

Jesus’ disciples spent over three years with Him. They saw Him perform great miracles, cast out evil spirit, heal the sick, raise the dead, feed the hungry and proclaim the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. These were all the public aspects of His ministry. But, they also knew that in between the times of healing and teaching, Jesus would slip away to spend time alone praying with God. They soon learned that the source of Jesus’ power and strength was this time He spent in prayer. So, naturally they wanted to learn how to pray like Jesus prayed. Read Luke 11:1. Jesus’ response was to give them a very short and easy to remember model for how to pray. This model has served as a blueprint for prayer for Christians during the past 2,000 years. Every day, Christians in every culture and language use this prayer as the basis for their conversations with God. The prayer is found in two places in the Gospels: Luke 11:2-4 and Matthew 6:9-13. Have the students pray the Lord’s prayer if they know it, otherwise, pray it for them. There is nothing magical in praying those exact words, but what they provide for us is a pattern of 5 basic elements of prayer: Praise and Worship, Thanksgiving, Intercession, Petition, and Confession. We will look briefly at each.

Praise and Worship: “Our Father in heaven hallowed (holy, set apart) be your name.” Praise and Worship is devoted to honoring God for who He is. In praise, we proclaim to others God’s great attributes – His love, mercy, power, might. In worship we declare directly to God our love and appreciation for who He is. Praise and worship is often done together with other Christians. When we sing songs about God, like “A Mighty Fortress is our God” (Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs #29) we are praising God. When we sing songs like “Great is Thy Faithfulness” (P,H and S.S. #28) we are giving God worship. Throughout the Bible there are examples of both prayers of Praise and Worship.

Thanksgiving: Closely linked with praise and worship is Thanksgiving. In thanksgiving we honor and thank God for what He has done for us. Jesus models Thanksgiving for us when He stands before the tomb of His friend Lazarus and prays: “Father, I thank you that you have heard me” (John 11:41). (See *Thank You, Lord – Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs #577.*) Praise, Worship and Thanksgiving are all closely linked and all focused on proclaiming to God and people the greatness of who God is and What He has done. It is an indispensable part of prayer, which Jesus summarizes with the simple words “hallowed by Thy name.”

Get Set!**Bible Story**

CONTINUED

Intercession: “Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” As Jesus’ model prayer continues, He invites us to shift our focus from God to other people. To intercede for another is to speak on their behalf. Jesus invites us to bring the needs of others before God and appeal to God on their behalf. Whenever we pray for a sick friend to get well, we are interceding to God on their behalf. When we pray for an unsaved neighbor to come to know God, we are interceding. Praying for others needs is an important part of prayer that we should not neglect.

Petition: “Give us this day our daily bread.” Our prayer does not need to end with praying for the needs of others. Jesus teaches us that it’s important for us to remember to pray for our own needs as well. Some people don’t like to pray for themselves . . . they pray for others needs, but don’t feel right about praying for their own needs. But, they are missing out on a great blessing. Jesus teaches us that God loves us like a parent loves us. God desires to give us good gifts (Matthew 7:11). God wants us to remember that everything belongs to Him and everything comes from Him. Apart from God, we can do nothing. Throughout Jesus’ life He prayed for His own needs as well as the needs of others. The best example was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus begged God to “let this cup pass from me.” If there was another way to bring salvation to us other than His own death on the cross, Jesus wanted God to do it. Yet, He recognized that God might have other plans. This is important to remember even as we are praying for our needs. Imagine yourself driving to the airport. You have a reservation and you don’t want to miss your flight, but you get stuck in traffic. As you sit there, not moving, you pray to God “please, don’t let me miss my flight.” God knows you want to make that flight. But still, the traffic remains stalled. Finally, you start moving and get to the airport . . . but it’s too late, you missed your flight. You might wonder “why didn’t God answer my prayer?” But look at it another way . . . suppose the morning was September 11, 2001 and you were flying out of Boston’s Logan Airport to Los Angeles, and you missed that flight. Later, you hear that the flight crashed into the World Trade Center. Sometimes God has different plans, and we need to always honor His right to tell us “no.” But, that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t ask and keep on asking. God’s wants us to ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking . . . when it comes to praying, persistence is a good thing, as long as we surrender the final outcome to God.

Confession: “Forgive us our debts/sins.” Of course, Jesus was without sin, but He knew very well that the rest of us make mistakes and need forgiveness. The word confess means literally to agree with or say the same thing. God knows it when we sin. When we confess our sins we aren’t presenting God with any new information that He wasn’t aware of. God knows the wrong things that we do, and He knows it when we blow a chance at doing the right thing. To confess our sins means to agree with God that what we did or didn’t do was wrong, we’re sorry about it, and we don’t want our mistake to keep us from being close to God.

Go!**Newspaper Prayers****OUR WORLD NEEDS OUR PRAYERS**

Materials: A newspaper, recent church bulletins and church newsletters, Resource Page

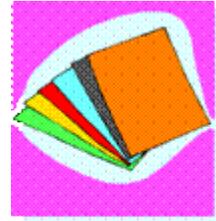
Quest Connection

Through prayer we have the wonderful opportunity to ask God to help others. We should pray for other Christians. The Apostle Paul wrote letters to the churches of the New Testament. On numerous occasions, he asked the people to pray for his ministry and wrote that he was praying for them as well. Let's look at a passage of scripture he wrote to the Christians in Ephesus. It is in the book of Ephesians chapter 1 verses 15-21. Read text. In his writing we see that he is offering up prayers of thanks for his fellow believers, he remembers them in his prayers, he prays that they will gain wisdom and revelation to have a closer relationship with God and Christ. He also asked that they would understand the wonderful hope of all the glorious things that God has promised them in His coming Kingdom and the power of God that is available to help them through their lives. We should follow Paul's example by praying for others. Your church bulletins or newsletters may list individuals that have requested prayer. List these individuals on your worksheet page. Pray that God will be with them and their families. Pray that God will give them strength to deal with the situations that they are facing. Now have students focus on community and world events through the newspaper. You may want to find headlines of people in need or pray for other countries in turmoil. Remind your students to pray for the Christians in other countries that may be faced with war or natural disasters. Also, be sensitive to the fact that this may be overwhelming for some of your students. Monitor this activity closely and allow enough time for "our hope" comments below.

Procedure: Present the prayer information about Paul. Have students look through the written materials and write down prayer requests on the provided worksheet page.

Close

Have a prayer time for some of the requests listed. **Our hope:** It is very difficult for us to see all the bad things around us. We are faced with sickness, natural disasters and war. We know that we are in a world that is still under the curse. We are looking forward to the day when Christ will come and make everything perfect for us (Titus 2:13, 3:7). We know that now we are not taken out of every bad situation, but that God does promise to be with us so we can handle anything that we have to go through in this present world. We may have situations that seem almost impossible to face, but God promises us that He will give us the strength to get through it. He also tells us that someday we will live where everything is perfect in His Kingdom. So pray knowing that God hears every prayer. Some are answered immediately and some we must wait to see completed when His Kingdom comes and "His will is done" (Hebrews 11:40; Revelation 7:16-17, 21:4).

Go!**Prayer Papers****ARTS/CRAFTS**

Materials: Colorful pieces of paper, one for each student

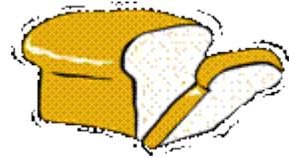
Quest Connection

Jesus spent time with God in prayer. It is important for us to spend prayer time with God, also. We see from Christ's example that He sometimes prayed with others and at other times He wanted to be by Himself during His prayers. Let's look at Matthew 14:23. Read. After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone. Christ needed those times with God away from the crowd to speak openly with Him. We need those times, too. In Matthew 6:6, Jesus tells us, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." He was helping the disciples understand that our prayers should not be to show others how great we are. They should be open and honest talk with God. Fill your prayers with your love for God. Express your temptations. Thank and praise Him for your day and your life. Pray for others around you. Just open up your heart to Him, because He loves and wants to share time with you.

Procedure: Each student should fold the piece of paper into 7 sections. On each fold write a day of the week, a prayer request and a praise. For instance, on Monday you might request that I may have a good influence on my friends at school by being kind to them and thank God for the support that you receive from a Christian friend. Have the students take the "prayer papers" home. Instruct them to place them in their bedrooms, in a place where they see them each day – perhaps by the alarm clock. Tear each section off as you pray each day.

Close

Prayer: Dear Father, we thank You that we can share our feelings with You at anytime. We thank You that You are always here for us. Please help us to make prayer time an important part of our lives. We want to share time with You. Please be with us and help us to follow You completely. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, amen.

Go!**Give Us Our Daily Bread****FOOD**

Materials: Any type of warm bread (biscuits, toast, English muffins, etc.), butter and jelly, napkins and knives for spreading

Quest Connection

In the Lord's Prayer we ask that we be given our daily bread. The scriptures are filled with references to bread. One of these references refers to our physical need for food to keep our bodies going, but there are also many other scriptures where bread has many meanings. One of the Old Testament references also states, "give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread." The writer of this verse found in Proverbs 30:8 did not want to be wealthy or poor. He asks God for just enough to provide for his daily needs. Let's look at Proverbs 30:9 to see his reasoning. ("Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.") Jesus and the Jewish people of His time were familiar with this Proverb. As we pray the Lord's Prayer, we should also remember this wisdom. We do not want to be consumed with becoming wealthy and materialistic. Our society is always telling us that we need more and more stuff. Think of all the commercials that we see in just an hour of TV, listening to the radio, or flipping through a magazine. We also want to be able to provide for ourselves by working and planning for our needs. We should do our best to plan, budget and make wise choices with our money. Let's really think about the words when we pray the Lord's Prayer. There is so much of God's wisdom in it.

Procedure: Have the students prepare a piece of the bread with the toppings. Let them eat the bread while you explain its meaning.

Close

Prayer: Let's pray the Lord's Prayer together. "Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Go!**Prayer Circle****CHRISTIAN LIVING****Materials:** Bibles**Quest Connection**

Say, we have learned that prayer is an important part of our lives. God answers the prayers of His people. Have a student read 2 Chronicles 7:14 (“if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land”). We want God to hear our requests and we want to be a people that He can bless. We are going to offer up prayers for some specific people in our nation, community and church. In 1 Timothy 2:1-3 it states, “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior.” Let’s bow our heads. I will make a prayer request and let you silently pray to God for these individuals.

Dear Father,

We ask you to please give these people for which we are praying wisdom, guidance and strength to fulfill their important roles.

We pray for our President and Vice President, and for all our Federal leaders, (pause after requests so students can pray silently)

We pray for our Senators and Representatives and all our state leaders,

We pray for our individual teachers and our principals,

We pray for our Pastor,

We pray for our church leaders and all those in charge of church ministry,

We pray for our Youth Leader and Youthworkers,

We pray for each person in our church,

We pray for each person in this circle,

Father, we love You. We ask that we be a people that You can work through, that we can be Your hands and feet in this community and in our families. We pray that You will help us live our Christian lives. We ask for forgiveness of any sin that might separate us from You. We ask for Your power and guidance in all things. We know that You are the source of all good things, and we thank You for every wonderful blessing in our lives.

Go!

Quest Connection**CONTINUED**

**We thank You for the hope of eternal life in Your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.**

Procedure: Form a circle with your students. Have a couple of Bibles available.

Close

You can encourage your students to participate in special prayer days by having your youth groups and churches observe the National Day of Prayer and “See You at the Pole.” The National Day of Prayer is held the first Thursday of May. For more information, visit www.nationaldayofprayer.org. “See You at the Pole” invites students to meet at the flagpole of their schools to pray. This student-led prayer session is always held on the third Wednesday in September. For more information, visit www.seeyouatthepole.org.

Go!**Let Us Pray****MUSIC**

Materials: Recommended CD “If My People Pray”/ National Day of Prayer Album

Quest Connection

Many of the songs that we sing are prayers to God. Through them we sing of His greatness, we praise Him, we ask for help for others, we pray that He enlighten us to His truth and open our eyes and ears. Many of the words that we sing are taken directly from the scriptures. We may not realize it, but our songs should be used as prayers and praise. Think of some of the Christian songs that you know or sing during your worship services.

Procedure: Sing the following song with your students:

Let Us Pray

Let us pray, Let us pray
Like breathing in and breathing out, let us pray
sung by Steven Curtis Chapman

Close

Listen carefully to the songs that are used in your worship services. What are the messages that they give? Are they expressions of Praise and Worship, Thanksgiving, Intercession, Petition, or Confession?

Go!**Prayerful Praise Pop-Ups****GAME**

Materials: Stopwatch (or watch with second hand)

Quest Connection

This activity encourages students to see the many blessings in their lives and respond with thanks to God for them.

Procedure: We are going to play a game called Prayerful Praise Pop-Ups. The object of this game is to think of as many things as we can for which we are thankful. When you think of something, jump out of your chair and say it. Then sit down and try to think of others. No two people can stand at the same time, so watch each other to see when you should jump. You can only use an answer once. We will see how long we can keep the praise going. You can thank God for your family, your friends, church, food, your Bible, life, etc. If I hear an unacceptable answer, the time ends. For instance, my smelly shoe is not acceptable. I will be the referee.

Ready, Set, Go!

(Let the student jump. Try to help them so they are not jumping at the same time. See how long they can praise. If your students are good at naming praises, you will have to have a time limit, because they can keep this up for hours. If they are having trouble coming up with answers, have a student come up to take your place as referee and play the game with them.)

Close

We see that God has blessed us with countless blessings. In the book of James from the New Testament, it says that every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights. Just think of all the wonderful gifts that God gives us! We should always try to remember those and thank Him for them.

Go!**Prayer Groups****GUEST QUEST**

Materials: Guest from your congregation who is a leader of a prayer chain or prayer group

Quest Connection

We know that prayer is important, because Jesus taught us to pray. In the Lord's Prayer Jesus shows us that we can call on God as our Father in prayer. We have a special guest to share the importance of prayer. I have invited _____ (guest's name) to share some thoughts on prayer today.

Procedure: Invite someone from your congregation who is a leader of a prayer chain or prayer group and let them discuss why prayer is important in their lives. Share the questions with them ahead of time so they can prepare for their visit.

Ask your guest to share the following information:

1. Why do you believe that prayer is an important part of a Christian's life?
2. Is there a certain time of the day when you pray?
3. What are some of the things you pray about?
4. Have you experienced answers to specific prayers?
5. At what times do you participate in group prayers?
6. Who taught you how to pray?
7. Is there a special Bible verse on prayer that you would like to share with our students?

Close

We are so glad that _____ (guest's name) could join us to share what prayer means to him/her. Ask the special guest to dismiss class by leading the group in the Lord's Prayer.

PRAYER PUZZLES

1. Unscramble the words below from our Bible passage in Luke 11:1-10.

LOWHLADE _____

VILE _____

DOMINGK _____

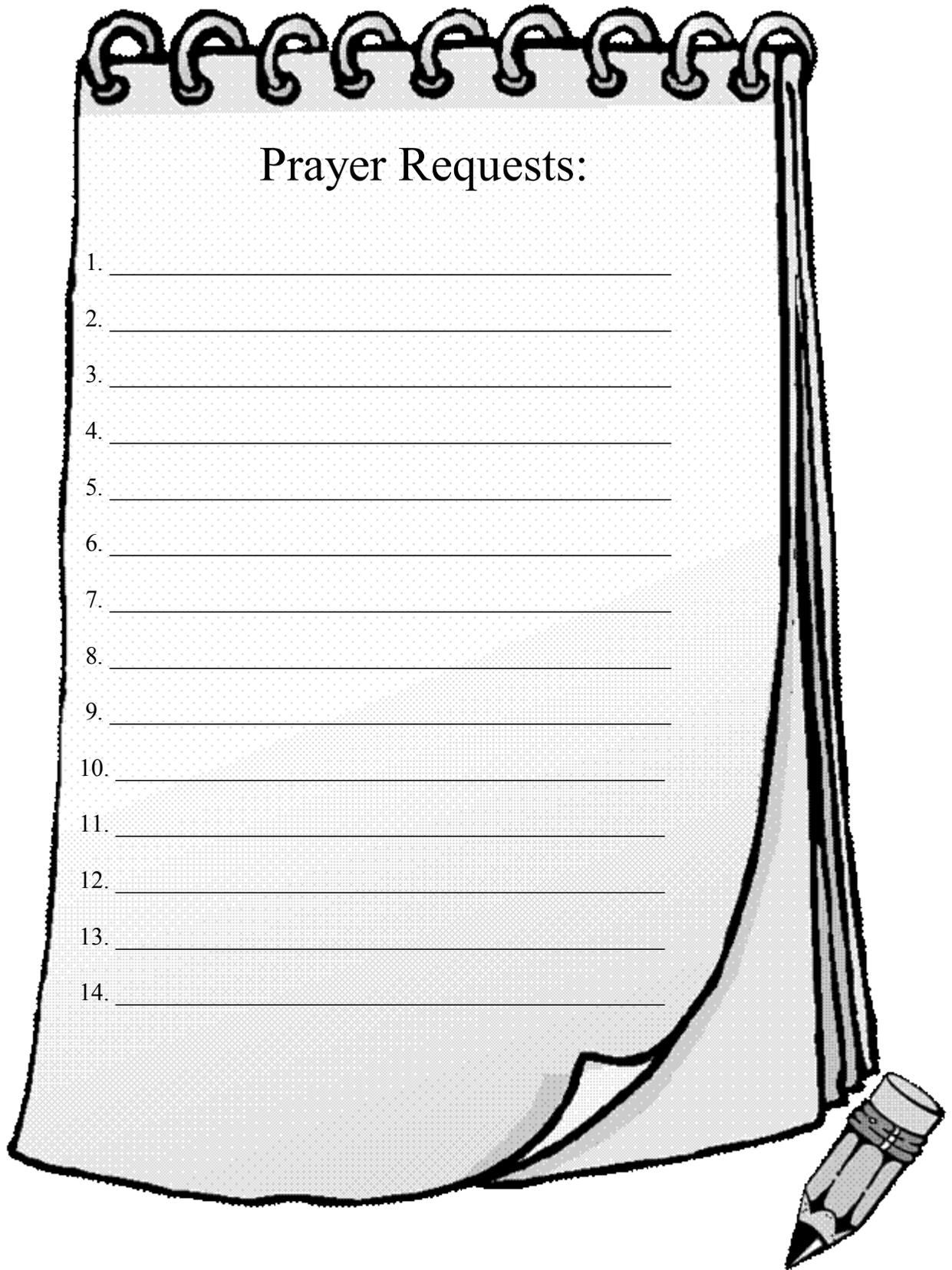
THECA _____

KANSE _____

NCKOK _____

2. How many words (three or more letters) can you make using the words

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A black and white illustration of a spiral-bound notebook. The notebook is open, showing a page with a spiral binding at the top. The page is titled "Prayer Requests:" and has 14 numbered lines for writing. A pencil is drawn at the bottom right corner of the page, pointing towards the bottom right. The notebook is shaded to give it a three-dimensional appearance.

Prayer Requests:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____

Open your Bible to Matthew 6:9-13 to "The Lord's Prayer." Using a dictionary or concordance, rewrite "The Lord's Prayer" in a more modern way of talking.

