

Ask God for What You Need

Featured story from the *Catholic Children's Bible*; *Matthew 7:7-11*

Parent Activity Guide for use with children in grades 1-5 and their families – December home lesson

Gather

Gather your family members around a central table or activity space. Make sure everyone can see *The Catholic Children's Bible* or another Bible of your choosing.

Quiet yourselves and take a moment to enter into God's presence. Choose someone to lead the opening prayer.

Begin with the sign of the cross and then the reader should pray aloud the following:

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son, Jesus, to live among us and form a community of believers. Let your Holy Spirit open our hearts to hear what You want to say to us through the Bible passage today. Give us a mind like Jesus to understand your message to each of us. Amen.

Share in God's Word

Ask your child to read aloud the feature story from the children's Bible, **Matthew 7:7-11** (found on page 1464 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* revised edition, copyright 2017). Provide support as needed.

The leader should explain that the word 'seek' from the passage means 'search or look for.'

Check to see if your child has any other questions about the passage and address them as needed.

Understand it

Leader: Let's review the main ideas of this passage. This story emphasizes that we can ask God for what we need in prayer and he will answer us.

Refer to your *Catholic Children's Bible* "Understand it!" section or read aloud the following:

In this Bible story, Jesus teaches us to ask God for the things we need. Jesus says that God will answer the way any loving father would. Your parents love you. When you ask for something, don't they usually give it to you? Sometimes they say no if what you want isn't good for you. Or they may say, "Wait awhile." Or maybe they give you something you need even more.

Jesus wants us to turn to God so much that he said it three different ways. He says to ask, to seek, and to knock on God's door. Yes, God knows everything, and so he knows

what we need. Still, Jesus tells us that we must put our needs into words and pray for them. Our Heavenly Father will give us the best answer.

Live it *

Items needed: pencil/pen and paper or notecard

Leader: Write your own prayer to God. Your prayer could have three parts:

1. Ask God to help someone who needs help.
2. Ask for something you need.
3. Thank God for listening to you.

Save your prayer in a special place. Then trust God to give you the best answer.

Tell it

Using the pictures in the “Tell it!” section of the featured story spread, check your child(ren)’s comprehension by asking him/her to retell the story in his/her own words.

* Adaptation: If you do not have *The Catholic Children’s Bible*, ask your child to create a comic strip with three pictures to depict three main ideas from the passage and explain them to you.

Closing Prayer

Leader: We quiet ourselves now and ask God to be present with us as we pray. After hearing this Bible passage, who or what we should pray for today?

[Give everyone time to list anyone or any situation in need of prayers.]

Leader invites everyone to join in the Sign of the Cross, and then prays aloud the following prayer or adapts it to fit your family’s needs:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of our lives and the chance to share this prayer time together. We offer all of the names spoken here and any difficult situations or decisions in our lives into Your care, trusting in Your great love for us and that You will take care of everything. You are a wise and loving parent, and we know that You will give us exactly what we need. We give all of these prayer intentions to You. Amen.

* See optional additional activities on the next page.

Additional Activities (Optional)

These interactive family activities could be used as an extra activity in the above family lesson or used at another time in the month to reinforce the main theme of prayer for December.

These activities and more can be found on <https://d6family.com/splink/>.

Can You Hear Me?

Listening for God is an important part of prayer.

Plan a family night after dinner one night this week. Tell your children that they will get to participate in an obstacle course.

Instruct them to listen very carefully, because you are only going to whisper. Emphasize that they will be able to hear your instructions better if they are quiet. Set up the obstacle course, blindfold a child, and then have them listen for you to guide them through the course. Remind them that the key is for them to be still and listen because you are only going to whisper. The other children waiting for their turn must also be quiet so that the player can hear the directions.

Discuss the activity and remind your children that we must be quiet in order to hear direction from the Lord. Close your time in prayer together asking God to help you be still and listen to His voice above all the other noises the world offers.

Want to Get Stronger?

When Daniel was just a young man, he decided to put God first. Every day, he prayed three times a day (and probably more). Daniel was a very important man and probably had many responsibilities, but he made praying his priority. A priority is something that is very important to you. Even when the king made a law saying no one could pray to anyone but him, what do you think Daniel did? (He prayed three times a day like he had done before the law was made.) Daniel put God first, and God gave him the strength to do what was right, even when faced with the threat of being placed in a lion's den!

One of the best ways to help your kids get stronger in their faith is to help them get into the habit of having a "quiet time" each day where they read the Bible and pray. Give them a good devotional book and/or read the Bible together as a family.

One night a week ask everyone to bring their devotional or Bible to the dinner table and discuss what they've been reading. Some questions to ask:

- What is something you read and liked?
- What have you learned about God this week?
- What can you do to show God love?

Pray Expectantly

Items Needed: Spiral notebook, pen/pencil

Start a prayer journal. Buy a spiral notebook. On the first page, draw a vertical line down the middle. On the left side write “Requests” and on the right side write “Answers.”

Every evening after dinner, take five minutes to pray. Write the requests in the notebook. Then say sentence prayers, asking God to answer the requests. Put the date requested and the date answered. (You could do this at bedtime if your family gathers together then.)

Howard Hendricks, a Christian author, said he did this when his children were growing up, and this is one of the most valuable things they own. He plans to pass it down to his children as evidence that God is real and hears and answers prayer.

Having a strong prayer life takes self-discipline, making ourselves do what we know we should do. Daniel and his friends showed self-discipline when they obeyed God’s laws instead of the laws of the King of Babylon. When we choose to make right choices, others will see God living in us.

God is able to do more than what you can think or ask. Don’t just ask for things, but ask Him to help you make right choices, to obey your parents, to love your enemies. He wants you to pray to Him. Don’t be timid about asking, because God is listening, and He will answer.

Marco Polo

By honing our skill of listening for God’s voice in prayer, we can better hear God’s call and answer it in our lives. The following activity helps remind us of this truth.

Play the popular game “Marco Polo” together. Be sure there are safe parameters defined wherever you choose to play.

This is a simple game requiring one player to be blindfolded or keep his or her eyes closed while trying to find the other players in the game. The finder calls out “Marco” and the others reply with “Polo” to indicate locations. Make your own rules with regard to how many times a player can change locations in a round or what rooms of the house are off limits etc.

Encourage every family member to take a turn being the one to find the others. After having some fun with it, remind family members to consider how this game relates to answering God’s call in their lives.