

NE MN Synod Discipleship Challenge: Love Like Jesus!

Children's Discussion Guide March 2014: PRAYER!

The NE MN Synod faith practice focus for March is "*Prayer*." You are encouraged to use this discussion guide with younger children in your home or as part of a Sunday school class or church children's event. As a family you might do this after a meal, for nightly devotions, as you drive from one activity to the next, on a Sunday afternoon – whenever or wherever you have the opportunity to dwell on and discuss what it means for us as individuals and as a family of faith to Love Like Jesus! There are no right or wrong answers, no right or wrong way to do this...the point is to make room in your lives for thoughtful and deliberate faith conversations.

Remember – our spiritual hunger to grow and deepen our faith has nothing to do with success, getting the "right" answer, or works. It's all about living – fully living – into the grace of God as God's children...as discipleship, following Jesus in our daily life!

Thank you for your partnership in the gospel and for your willingness to help younger children grow in their discipleship to Christ our Lord!

For more information and resources on the Discipleship Challenge:

www.nemnsynod.org/Discipleship

Love Like Jesus: WORSHIP! Children's Discussion Guide February 2014

Teaching our children to pray is one of the many promises we make at their baptism. We will teach them the Lord's Prayer, and we will nurture them in faith and prayer so that they may learn to trust God (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p.228). Children need to memorize prayers (the Lord's Prayer, table graces, etc.), but they also need to learn to become comfortable speaking words to God from their heart. Prayer is also about listening to God. Helping children learn that silence is sometimes a part of prayer can be tricky, but it can also be life giving for our

children who live in an overstimulated world. Enjoy practicing prayer with your children this month!

Introduction: Begin a conversation about relationships. How do we stay connected to people? How do we make new friends? What is important to do to stay friends? Help children think about the importance of sharing our ideas and listening to our friends. What if you never talked to your friend? What if you didn't listen to your friend? Prayer is speaking and listening to God. Taking time to pray is important to our relationship with God.

Play a game of telephone to illustrate the importance of sharing our ideas clearly and listening.

Bible Reading: Read **Matthew 6:5-15**. For older children, have them look up the verses and read aloud with you. If you can, find the Lord's Prayer in a children's bible and use that to share this story. Another story idea: Read 1 Samuel 3:1-20, the Calling of Samuel. Talk about how we can listen for God's voice when we pray. God wants to speak to us!

Ask: ***What did the disciples ask Jesus to do?*** (Teach them to pray). ***What did Jesus say?*** (2 ways to pray: in a quiet place by self, and use the Lord's prayer, a congregational prayer). ***When do we hear this prayer?*** (In worship, may say it at bedtime). ***What things do we pray for or about in the Lord's Prayer? How can we listen to God when we pray?***

Craft/Activity Suggestions:

Help children memorize the Lord's Prayer by making a game. Write out the words of the Lord's Prayer on notecards (one or two words on each, or a phrase on each depending on age level). Scramble up the words and have children put them in the right order. Make it a race against the clock or between two teams.

Create prayer sticks. Supplies: Craft sticks, plastic cup, sand or stones, small stickers, and markers. Write a name of a person or prayer concern on each craft stick (5-10 sticks per child). Decorate a plastic cup with markers or stickers. Place sticks in the cup with a few rocks or sand in the bottom to keep it from tipping over. Use sticks to guide prayer time by having children thank God or pray for the person/concern they chose from their cup. For young children, you could glue pictures of people or items they are thankful for on each stick.

Closing Prayer: Say the Lord's Prayer together. Encourage children to memorize this prayer and use it before bedtime.