



AIM:

To help the children know they can talk to God.

OUTCOMES:

- To help children live depending on God.
- To help children understand that we depend on God by asking for his help through prayer.
- To help children look for God's answers to their prayers.

NOTES FOR LEADERS:

Eric Says Please reminds all of us of the need to depend upon God and that pride can get in the way of this. We all need to learn humility. Prayer is an important part of a relationship with God and this session introduces the idea that this is the primary way that we show our dependence on God. We should also expect and look for God's answer to our prayers.

Jesus even provided us with a pattern to use for our prayer lives in Matthew 6. *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

It is important for us as leaders, and in order to help the children understand better, to remember that prayer is not simply confined to the formal use of these words. God wants us to speak to him all the time, as a natural rhythm of our day. We do not need special words or a special place. As disciples of Jesus, we are constantly encouraged to remember that our God wants to have that deeply personal relationship with his children. It is why he went to the lengths he did to solve the problem of sin by sending Jesus to die and rise again. We can talk to him about anything at any time and in any place.

As you prepare to lead this final session with the children, take some time to pray to your Father in heaven. Pray for yourself and your own walk with God. Then pray for the children, that what they are hearing over these three sessions will tune them in more to God and who he is. Pray that he will speak to the children about how much he loves them and what he has done for them.

MENU

KICK-STARTER

Choose your kick-starter activity from the options below. Instructions are in the activity menu at the end of the session. Make sure that you have all the resources that you need ready to go before the children arrive.

- **Would you rather? (older children)**
- **Make a list (younger children)**

Discuss

1. **Was it easy to decide which thing to choose in 'would you rather'? Or to know what to put on your lists? Encourage the children to respond.**

Say: We are normally good at knowing the things that we want and what we need but sometimes we are not so good at asking for help.

Explain to the children that you are going to watch and listen to a story on the video. Before watching, ask the children what sorts of things we need help with? Who are the people who help us with the things we have to do every day? (Parents, teachers, grandparents, friends, leaders.)

Encourage the children that as they are watching the Eric Says Please story to see if the same people that they thought of also helped Eric in his day.

STORY

Watch the video of Dai Hankey telling the story of Eric says sorry at <https://vimeo.com/327923124/6e648a16e8>

If you do not have access to video equipment, the storybook can be used to tell the story 'live'.

Once the children have heard the story, have a conversation with them about it. This is the last in the 'Eric says' sessions and the children will have learnt a lot about God and a relationship with him. This session builds on the idea of us depending on him through prayer.

Discuss together the problems that Eric got into because he insisted on doing everything himself and not asking for help. Use the pictures from the book provided to remind the children of the problems Eric encountered in his day (broken raft, lunch, falling from tree, shoelace).

Ask: What sorts of things do the children try to do without asking for help? What usually happens when we do that?

Ask the children if they can remember the things that Eric learnt in the last two sessions (saying thanks; saying sorry).

Say: In this story, Eric learns about saying please. He learns that we can talk to God at any time and in any place about anything. And it is not simply that we can ask God for things, but he wants us to ask him. It is all part of being in a relationship with him. We do not need to have big, clever sounding words. We can just talk to him in our normal words, being ourselves. We can tell him exactly how we feel. And we can pray about the big things that bother us and that are happening in the world, and we can pray about the things that maybe only we know about.

BIBLE VERSE GAME

This activity is to help the children learn the Bible verse that is used at the back of the book. It is to begin to help the children understand something about prayer.

In the story, Eric's grandpa helps him to see where he has gone wrong in his day and how he can make it better. He helps Eric to see that ultimately we can talk to God and ask him to help us to know when to ask for help and also to help us sort things out when we mess up!

The verse says: "Your Father knows the things you need before you ask him". This verse is from a book in the Bible called Matthew chapter 6 verse 8. Matthew is one of the books which tells us about the time when Jesus lived on earth. In fact, this verse is part of something Jesus said when he was teaching his friends all about prayer.

BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY CONTINUED...

There are two suggestions here for how to teach this verse. Either choose one or both depending on your time.

1. Guess the word
2. Sign language

You will find instructions in the activity menu at the back of this session.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

We want to encourage children to encounter God. One way that we can do this is through some creative prayer ideas.

Set up these activities and give the children some time to interact with them and encounter God, as you have done in the previous two weeks. As this is the last session in the series, there are four activities as the children may want more time to process all the things they have heard. Have leaders place themselves around the room so that they can interact with the children as they think about saying “please” to God. There may not be time for the children to do all four activities but this is about giving them choice to encounter God in more ways through prayer.

- Prayer wall
- Jigsaw prayers
- People tree
- Pipe cleaner people

At the end, to help children process this activity, ask them to share anything that they particularly enjoyed about the activities or anything that they found difficult.

PULL IT TOGETHER

Take a couple of minutes at the end to bring the whole session together.

Who can tell me some of the things that went wrong in the story?

(Allow the children to respond.)

How did his grandpa help him and what did he suggest Eric do?

(Allow the children to respond.)

There are so many things that we can ask for help with in life.

Sometimes it is hard to ask because we want to be able to do things by ourselves. It is important to ask when we need help though. The most important person to ask help from is God. He can help us to live our lives in the best way.

Pray with children before they leave – a simple prayer is printed at the back of the book:

Loving Father, may your name be blessed. Do things your way 'cos your way is best. Provide us with all that we need for today. Forgive all the wrong things we do, think and say. Help us forgive as we've been forgiven. Protect us from evil and lead us to heaven. Amen.

TAKE IT HOME

It can be good to have something that the children can take home with them to remember what they have been learning. There are two ideas below to choose from.

1. Give the children a copy of one or all of the Eric books to take home as a gift.
2. Give the children a bookmark with the words "Please God" on it to remind He gives us what we need.

ACTIVITY MENU

Would you rather?

Have a list of some options for the children to choose from. Gather the children in a group in the middle of the room and then say "Would you rather have __ __ __ or __ __ __". Encourage the children to make their choice and go to the designated side of the room.

Ideas – Coke or Pepsi/Beach or Mountains/English or Maths/Football or Rugby

There are lots of websites with more ideas of questions or you can come up with a series of your own knowing the children that you have in the group.

Make a list

Put a large piece of paper on the wall for everyone to see. Ask the children to imagine that it is nearly Christmas or their birthday. Have them call out a list of things that they really **want** as presents.

On a second piece of paper, make another list of the things that they really **need** as opposed to just want for their everyday life, e.g. food, water, family, school, etc.

People Tree

You will need: small tree or branch, paper cut into small rectangles, hole-punches, string, pens or crayons

Encourage the children to think of someone in their family that they would like to pray for. Get them to draw the person's picture on a rectangle, punch a hole in the paper and put the string through the hole to make a loop. Hang the picture on the tree and say a prayer for them.

Leaders could be encouraged to ask the children the sorts of things that they were praying to God about and the people they are praying for.

Prayer Wall

You will need: a large flat surface like a wall, post-it notes, pens.

Tell the children that this is your prayer wall. Explain to them that they are to write or draw prayers to God on a post-it and then stick it to the wall. Encourage them that they can ask for or tell God anything.

Leaders could be encouraged to ask the children what they prayed for if they are willing to share.

Jigsaw Prayers

You will need: blank puzzle pieces, (these may be available at a local Poundshop or online), pens

Explain to the children that they should draw or write the name of someone that you would like to pray for that you know on a puzzle piece. Then join it to the next puzzle piece to make a big picture of all the prayers.

Note to leaders: you may want to make sure of the order that the children draw on the pieces to make sure that they quickly and easily join together to make a big puzzle.

Leaders could again ask the children to share who they were praying for if the children are willing to share.

ACTIVITY MENU CONTINUED...

Pipe cleaner people

You will need: Pipe cleaners, a string tied up at each end to hang the pipe cleaner people on.

Have the children make a pipe cleaner person out of one pipe cleaner. This pipe cleaner person is to represent themselves. Hang the person on the string by feeding it on through the loop of the head. Encourage the children to pray for themselves and ask God for something that they would like him to do for them.

Again leaders, if appropriate and the children willing, could ask the sort of things that the children are praying for.



Bible verse game

GUESS THE WORD

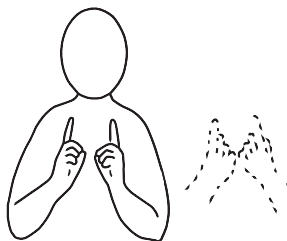
Put a large piece of paper on the wall. Draw one line to represent each letter of each word in the verse, with wider spaces between the words, as you would in a game of hangman. Put the children in two teams and have them take it in turns to guess letters until they can finish the whole verse. Repeat the verse several times until they can say it without looking at the words.

SIGN LANGUAGE

Teach the children the verse using sign language for the words: Father, things, need and ask. Repeat the verse several times until they know it without looking at the words.



Your **Father** knows



the **things**



With flat palm, thumb on side of chest, hand moves down then forward. Repeat for 'needs'.

you **need** before



you **ask** him