

# Praying for What God Wants

**OBJECTIVE:** *To explore what God's will is and to learn to pray God's will.*



## WORSHIP

Sing praise and worship songs as well as songs about prayer that are familiar and meaningful to your group. Here are some suggestions.

"Anywhere With Jesus"

"God Is So Good"

"Kum Ba Yah"

"Only by Grace"

"Seek Ye First"

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

"Whisper a Prayer"

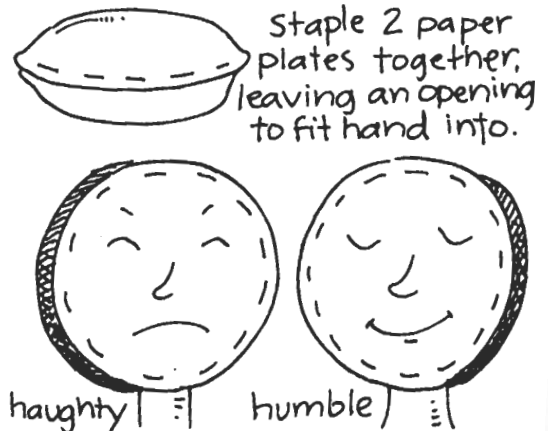
"Yes, Lord, I Choose to Say Yes"

## STORY

The Pharisee and Tax Collector, Luke 18:9-14

- The Pharisee prays, telling about how good he is.
- The tax collector asks God for mercy.
- Jesus says that the one who exalts himself will be humbled. The one who humbles himself will be exalted.

Make two paper plate puppets by stapling two paper plates together for each puppet, leaving a space to place your hand in between the two plates. Draw a haughty face on one and a humble, prayerful face on the other. (See illustration.) Use these to tell the story, or ask two children to work the puppets while you tell the story.



## MEMORY VERSE

"O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; . . . Teach me to do your will, for you are my God" (Psalm 143:1, 10).

Discuss the meaning of the word *mercy*. Help the children remember the verse by singing it to the tune of "Old McDonald Had A Farm" (page 58).

## ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to support the story and to provide a springboard for discussion.

**KING FOR A MINUTE.** Cut plain white paper or construction paper in half with a lengthwise zig-zag cut. Make a crown, taping short ends together and forming a ring to fit someone's head. Place the crown on someone. Ask: "If you were king (queen), what one law, decree, or proclamation would you make?" (Dessert must be eaten first, swimming pools for everyone, and so on.) Announce the law: "Hear ye, hear ye, King (Queen) \_\_\_\_\_ declares \_\_\_\_\_." After everyone has a turn, tell that what the king (queen) wants, decrees, desires, or commands is his *will*. Say: "God wants us to pray for his will. How do we know what God's will is?"

**POSTCARDS.** Let each person make his own postcard of your city. Give everyone a large index card and markers or crayons. Ask them to color something they might see in your city. On the back, they can write a prayer for your city. (Younger children can dictate to someone who can write.) Talk about sending messages through the mail and sending messages to God by praying. Ask: "What is God's will for our city?" Pray for your city.

**A HEART FOR PRAYER.** Using safety pins, pin large paper hearts onto two big, old shirts. Form two teams in lines opposite each other. The first person on each team puts on one of the shirts and holds the hand of the second player. When you say, "Go," the other team members try to take the shirt off the first player and put it on the second player without making them let go of their hands. Then another player holds the second player's hand and the shirt is changed again. Do this until all have had the shirt on and off. Talk about the heart going from one person to another. Say: "When we know God's heart and his will, we can share that with each other and join each other in praying God's will."

**FATHER, MAY I?** Choose one person to be the father. That person stands at the finish line. The other players are side by side at the starting line. The father tells one player what kind of steps to take and how many. The player asks, "Father, may I?" The father answers, "Yes, you may." Then the player steps forward the way he was instructed to. If the player forgets to ask, "Father, may I?" then he must return to the starting line. The player who reaches the father first becomes the father for the next round of play. Talk about asking God what his will is when we pray, and then praying his will.

**IMPORTANT THINGS.** Take an "important things walk" around the house where you are meeting. Show the actual items you talk about. Make it a game. Ask: "Is money the most important thing in life? Is TV the most important thing?" Do the same with many of the items around the house. Then switch roles and let the other players ask you, "Is this the most important thing?" You answer, "No." Finally, ask, "Then what is the most important thing?" Say: "Loving God with all our hearts, souls, and strength is the most important. That means we will want what God wants. How do we know what God wants? How do we pray God's will?"

## QUESTIONS

1. What was the difference between the Pharisee's prayer and the tax collector's prayer?
2. What does Jesus' story tell us about how God wants us to pray?
3. What is someone's will?
4. What are some things you know are God's will? How do you know?

## KIDS' COUNCIL

### BRING IT HOME

- Read and discuss Romans 12:2. What's one way to know/prove God's will?
- What does it mean to be transformed? How can our minds be transformed as suggested in Romans 12:2?
- How will you learn God's will this week? (You may want the children to turn to Scriptures like Romans 12:9-21; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 5:22, 23; Ephesians 4:25-32; Philippians 2:14.) What do these verses tell you God's will is?
- This week, what will you pray that you know is God's will?

### SHARE AND PRAY

- Ask the children to share their concerns and pray for each other.
- Ask God to show them what his will is.
- Practice praying God's will as shown in Scripture. For example, "Help me to hate what is evil and cling to what is good. Help me to honor other people above myself. Make me into a person who lives at peace with everyone." (These are found in Romans 12:9-21.)

## ADULT STUDY QUESTIONS

- Read Luke 18:9. Who did Jesus tell this story to? What's wrong with being "confident of their own righteousness"?
- Read 2 Samuel 22:28; Psalm 18:27; Proverbs 3:34; Daniel 4:37; Luke 18:14; James 4:6, 10. What is God's principle about humility? How does a person humble himself?
- Can you be confident and humble at the same time? How?
- Read and discuss Isaiah 42:8; Isaiah 26:12; 1 Corinthians 15:10. What do these have to do with humility?
- Read and discuss Romans 12:1, 2. How do we know and prove what God's will is? How can we transform our minds?

## SNACK AND FELLOWSHIP

**Transformed Cookies.** Make sugar cookie dough or use ready-made dough. With a cookie cutter, cut all cookies the same shape. Bake. Let everyone have a couple of cookies on a plate. Say: "All these cookies conform to the same shape. Doing what everyone else does means you conform." Then let everyone put frosting on their cookies and top them with whatever they want: red hots, chocolate candies, cake decoration sprinkles, and so on. Talk about how each person transforms his cookies into something special. Read Romans 12:2. Ask: "How does Paul say we can know/prove God's will? How can our minds be transformed?"

