

BreakThru

From Catechism to *Christ*

INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER

LEARNING EVENT MAKE-UP

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Have a conversation about prayer in general. Use the questions below to guide your conversation, and jot down some notes in the space below.

What is prayer?

What do you think about when you think of prayer?

Where, when, and how do you pray?

MOVIE CLIP

Meet the Parents is a movie about the first time Greg (Ben Stiller) meets his girlfriend's parents. What should be an easy, fun weekend turns into one mishap after another leaving, Greg looking like a horrible match in the eyes of his girlfriend's family. Maybe you have already seen this movie, but for those who haven't, this scene begins as Greg, his girlfriend, Pam, and her parents are sitting down for dinner for the first time. Pam's dad asks Greg to pray for dinner...and that's where the train jumps the tracks. Let's take a look at what happens next.

Watch the movie clip here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHrw3AFW0Z0>

Wow, it was obvious that Greg could not wait for that prayer to be over with. I think everyone at the table was feeling the same way! Lots of people are intimidated by prayer. We often think the best prayers are the ones that last a long time and include a bunch of churchy words. But are those the kinds of prayers that impress God, or is He looking for something more real from us?



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What were some signs that Greg was not used to praying?
- When you are called on to pray for dinner, how do you do it?
- Is prayer something that comes easy to you, or do you feel more like Greg?
- Why do you think prayer seems easy for some people, and for others it's a challenge?
- For you personally, what about prayer is the biggest struggle?
- In your opinion, what are a few things that make up a good prayer?
- Where do you think we got the idea that long prayers full of big words were what Jesus preferred to hear from us?

BIBLE TIME: MATTHEW 6:5-8

Grab a Bible and read through Matthew 6:5-8 with a parent. Then discuss the questions below:

- Based on these verses, what are the two types of people Jesus does NOT want you to pray/act like?
- What do these two groups of people do that turns Jesus off?
- Reread verse 6. How does Jesus want us to talk to Him?
- What does Jesus mean when He says "babbling like the pagans"?
- So, based on this passage, is it wrong to pray in groups or in public?
- Why are people tempted to use really big words or churchy phrases when they pray?
- How will Matthew 6 change the way you pray going forward?

The New Testament is filled with verses telling us to never stop praying. We should be saying prayers of thanks for the good stuff in our lives, as well as praying about the stuff we need God's help with. Prayer was never intended to be something we do just before dinner, or before we go to bed at night. Jesus wants us to be talking with Him all day long about everything.

But Jesus wants us to be real when we pray. In the clip we watched, we saw Greg, a regular guy from the city, turn into the King James Version prayer dude. He was throwing in "thees" and "thous" like they were going out of style. He had one voice and one set of vocabulary words for his friends...and a whole different voice and vocabulary with God. Why was that?

Think about your best friend for a moment. What kind of relationship would you have with them if you only spoke for one minute, one time a day? Or, what kind of relationship would you have if you used a bunch of fake words with them?

Jesus wants to do life with us. Talk to Him in the shower, while you're eating breakfast, on the bus, walking to class, in the car, while you're doing chores, anytime. He doesn't care where you are, He just wants YOU...the real YOU!!

In the book of Psalms, King David is constantly talking about going to God for everything. He talks to Him about his fears and worries, his disappointments, his times of happiness, and most importantly, he tells God about how much he trusts Him and knows that He is listening to him. King David talked to God in real and raw terms. My encouragement to you is to take some time this week and read some of King David's prayers in the Book of Psalms. It just might inspire you to be as real and open with God as David was.

PRAYER SKILLS - A.C.T.S.

Practice writing and praying your own prayer using the A.C.T.S. structure outlined below. Write a sentence or two for each part, and then pray your prayer together with your family.

A = Adoration – tell God what you love about Him

C = Confession – tell God how you have messed up

T = Thanksgiving – name some of the gifts God has given you that you are thankful for

S = Supplication – make requests of God