

Semicontinuous

Jer. 8:18–9:1

Ps. 79:1–9

Complementary

Amos 8:4–7

Ps. 113

1 Tim. 2:1–7

Luke 16:1–13

Pray for Everyone

Goal for the Session *Children will accept the invitation to pray for others in 1 Timothy and practice such prayers.*

■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

Focus on 1 Timothy 2:1–7

WHAT is important to know?

—From “Exegetical Perspective” by Mitchell G. Reddish

The instructions in 2:1–7 stress the universality or inclusiveness of Christian prayer. Readers are exhorted to pray “for everyone,” including “all who are in high positions,” because God desires to save “everyone” and Christ gave himself a ransom “for all.” Some interpreters have suggested that this emphasis on inclusiveness reflects an intentional corrective to gnostic attitudes that one should pray for only certain people (those in possession of special knowledge, or “gnosis”); others have proposed that the author was exhorting the readers to pray for individuals in their community who were teaching false doctrines and encouraging errant lifestyles.

WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective” by Stephanie Mar Smith

This passage points us toward the theological basis for prayer and intercession: the mediation of Christ. The word “intercession,” *deēseis*, is derived from a verb with the meaning “to have the good fortune to be admitted to an audience [with a king].” Verse 5 spells out the basis for this good fortune: “there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus.” Prayer is not something we perform in our own autonomous will. Rather, like intercession, prayer is an act resulting from the good fortune that Christ intercedes on our behalf (Heb. 6:20; 7:25–28; 8:1–6).

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective” by Jane Anne Ferguson

Our parishioners will be called by the God of 1 Timothy to love and to pray for those outside churches as well, those who are radically different from themselves and those who may frighten them. It is not easy to pray for the terrorist who plots against our country or the rapist who assaulted a loved one, but if we are fervent in our prayers we will be called to see that person as a child of God, a person created in God’s own image just as we are, a person God desires to save. Our prayers will change us.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “Homiletical Perspective” by William P. “Matt” Matthews

There is a barrier between this text and us. When Paul invites Timothy to give thanks for “everyone,” there is a presumption that there is something in “everyone” for which to be thankful in the first place. Not everyone believes this is true. In a world of mean-spirited, us-them, simplistic right-wrong thinking, our flock needs reminding that “everyone” for whom we pray is worthy of God’s help and blessing and, likewise, our prayers for them are decidedly worth our breath.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 2:1–7

YOU WILL NEED

- green cloth
- Bible
- offering basket
- candle and matches or battery-operated candle
- Color Pack 1, 2, 7, 27, 30
- envelope of gems from Color Pack 3, 4
- Singing the Feast*, vol. 3; CD player
- Resource Sheet 1

For Responding

- option 1: Color Pack 8, Resource Sheet 2, newsprint, marker, (optional) bulletin with order of worship
- option 2: Resource Sheet 2, copier paper (variety of colors), fine-tip markers, yarn, tape, (optional) sturdy cardboard
- option 3: copies of Resource Sheet 3, pencils, string or nylon lacing, assorted beads (plastic or wood), fabric tape measure, scissors
- option 4: *Singing the Feast*, vol. 3; CD player

Focus on Your Teaching

By the time children in the church have reached church school age they know something about prayers, especially prayers at mealtimes or at bedtime. They probably define prayer as how they talk to God. Certainly, prayer is the first spiritual discipline or practice that children learn and use. This session will extend prayer beyond those first prayers to praying for others, even people they do not know. For children who are ready, they can pray using their own words. Most importantly, they will practice praying for others.

Listening God, may my preparation for this session broaden my prayer life to include others and be offerings of praise to you. Amen.

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, for option 2 in Responding, wrap a cabinet door or a section of a door in the learning space (about 24") with yarn or heavy string, creating many “rows.” Secure the top and bottom pieces of yarn to the surface with masking tape to keep them in place. For a portable loom, wrap the yarn around large piece of sturdy cardboard. Cut colorful copier paper into strips about 1" x 11", eight per child. Greet the children as they arrive. Invite the early arrivals to set up the worship table with a green cloth, a Bible, an offering basket, and a candle. Place Color Pack 2 on the table and the envelope with the gems nearby.

When everything is ready, gather at the worship table. Review this season of Ordinary Time, using the information on Color Pack 1. Light the candle.

Sing “Glory to God” (track 8 on *Singing the Feast*, vol. 3), and sign *glory, God, and highest* (see Color Pack 27).

Pray, inviting the children to echo each phrase after you:

Dear God / be our guide / as we seek / to learn more about you / and how to follow / in the ways of Jesus. / Amen.

All: Amen! (Clap twice.)

Extinguish or turn off the candle.

Show Color Pack 7 to the group. Ask:

- ✠ What is this family doing?
- ✠ When do you pray to God?
- ✠ What do you say in your prayers?

Tell the group that advice to a new church pastor long ago included praying for everyone.

Glory to God

Glory to God,
 Glory to God,
 Glory to God in the highest!

Repeat three times

Inviting others in the congregation to play a special role, such as telling the Bible story, helps children get to know more church members. It is also a way to include persons who cannot teach on a regular basis.


**EASY
 PREP**

If the children are never or rarely in congregational worship, arrange for them to be present for the prayers of the people.

EXPLORING

Ask a child to get the Bible from the worship table. Help her or him locate 1 Timothy in the Table of Contents and turn to it. Explain that many of the books of the New Testament are letters written to a church or an individual to help them understand the message of Jesus Christ and to live in God's way. Invite the person portraying Timothy to tell the story on Resource Sheet 1 (Remember to Pray) or assume the character yourself and tell the story. After the story, ask:

- ✪ What advice does Paul give Timothy in this part of the letter?
- ✪ Why do you think Paul said to pray for kings and people in power?
- ✪ Who do you think taught Timothy to pray?

The children may remember from the story that Timothy's mother and grandmother were Jewish Christians.

Show the children Color Pack 30 with the lyrics for "Do Lord, O Do Lord." Read the first two lines of each stanza. Then listen to the song (track 1 on *Singing the Feast*, vol. 3). Ask:

- ✪ When we sing this song, what are we asking God to do?

Explain that the Responding options will help them to pray for everyone as Paul instructed Timothy.

RESPONDING

Offer at least two options so the children have a choice. One might be more challenging to interest children who can work on their own.

1. **Prayer** Writing a prayer for the congregation to pray in worship will help the children put praying for everyone into action. Show Color Pack 8. Ask:
 - ✪ Where are these people?
 - ✪ What are they doing?

Talk with the group about times of prayer when your congregation worships together. If the children are not in worship on a regular basis, show them a worship bulletin. Find times when the congregation prays. Explain that praying together in worship is time that we pray for others.

Read aloud the prayer starter words on Resource Sheet 2 (Talking with God). With the group, finish each set of words with a prayer request. Then, suggest that they complete each set of words with prayer requests for families. For example, Dear God, please bring my grandmother safely for a visit. Dear God, I'm worried about my big brother away at college. Dear God, remember my uncle in the army. Dear God, thank you for my mom and dad and brothers and sisters.

Next, complete the prayer starter words with your congregation in mind. Write their ideas on newsprint under each prayer starter. After the session, type it, changing only those prayers that might be too personal, and give it to the worship leaders to include in the prayers of the people next Sunday.

2. **Prayer Weaving** The prayer weaving will help children visualize their prayers for everyone. Show them the loom you made according to the directions in Gathering. Distribute colorful strips of copier paper and fine-tip markers. Read together the prayer starter words on Resource Sheet 2 (Talking with God). To model what they will do, have the group complete two or three of the starter words to create prayers that you write on strips of paper. Then ask older children to help younger children write their prayers on the paper strips. Show them how to weave the prayer strips into the yarn rows, alternating over and under. Strips can overlap. Have each child write one or more prayers to add to the weaving. Remind them that Timothy was told to pray for everyone. Ask:

- ✠ How can we use this prayer weaving to help us pray here each week?
- ✠ How can you make prayer reminders at home?

3. **Prayer Beads** This tactile bead string will help children remember to pray for others at home. Provide copies of Resource Sheet 3 (Prayer Beads). Explain how they will make their string of prayer beads. Encourage them to use their prayer beads each day.

To simplify the process for younger children, write the number of the bead next to the identification on the resource sheet, with 1 being the first bead they put on the string.

4. **Song** Children may need to remember to pray when away from the church school group. Read the first stanza of “Do Lord, O Do Lord” (track 1 on *Singing the Feast*, vol. 3). Ask:

- ✠ When do you want God to remember you?

Read the second stanza. Ask:

- ✠ When do you know you need to pray?

Read the last stanza. Ask:

- ✠ How do you think God can help you to pray?

Sing the song together. Encourage the group to pray often during the week, remembering this song and that God is with them.

CLOSING

Gather at the worship table. Light or turn on the candle. Sing “Do Lord, O Do Lord” (track 1 on *Singing the Feast*, vol. 3.)

Add the gem with “prayer” from Color Pack 3 or 4 to the treasure box on Color Pack 2. Together read the words on the gems in the treasure box.

Pray, using any aids prepared in the Responding options. Encourage the children to speak their own prayers. Close with this benediction:

Pray for everyone this week. Your prayers will please God.

Tell the children you hope to see them next week.

Do Lord, O Do Lord

Do Lord, O do Lord,
O do remember me.
Do Lord, O do Lord,
O do remember me.
Do Lord, O do Lord,
O do remember me,
Way beyond the blue.

Yes, Lord, O yes, Lord,
I know I need to pray.
Yes, Lord, O yes, Lord,
I know I need to pray.
Yes, Lord, O yes, Lord,
I know I need to pray,
Way beyond the blue.

Do Lord, O do Lord,
O do help me to pray.
Do Lord, O do Lord,
O do help me to pray.
Do Lord, O do Lord,
O do help me to pray,
Way beyond the blue.

Remember to Pray including 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Greetings, my name is Timothy. I lived thousands of years ago, so all this is very strange to me. Perhaps you can answer my questions later, but I came to tell you about my life as a Christian in the early church.

My father was a Greek Gentile, which means he was not Jewish. My mother and my grandmother were Jewish Christians. They taught me the Hebrew Scriptures, I think you may call them the Old Testament. They told me the stories about Moses, Esther, and David from the time I was very young.

You may have heard of Paul, the apostle. He thought of me as a son. I traveled with him on some of his missionary journeys. Do you know that Paul and I were the first Christians to go to Europe? True, it is really true. I was with Paul as his constant and faithful companion during the last years of his life, especially when he was under house arrest in Rome.

For a time, though, Paul sent me to help in churches that he started. When we were apart, he still helped me. He sent letters with good advice for me as the pastor and for all Christians, really. Two of those letters are still read today, thousands of years later. Amazing!

This is part of what he wrote to me in the first letter:

*First of all, I ask you to pray for everyone. Ask God to help and bless them all, and tell God how thankful you are for each of them. Pray for kings and others in power, so that we may live quiet and peaceful lives as we worship and honor God. This kind of prayer is good, and it pleases God our Savior. God wants everyone to be saved and to know the whole truth.**

So I try to do that. I try to pray for everyone, including rulers and people in power. I hope you do too.

*1 Timothy 2:1-4 from Contemporary English Version, Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.



Talking with God

Dear God,
Please . . .

Dear God,
I'm worried about . . .

Dear God,
Remember . . .

Dear God,
Thank you for . . .

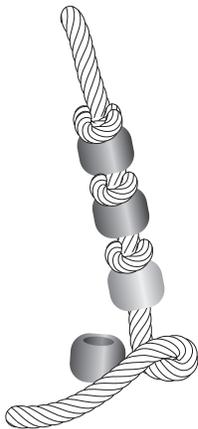
Prayer Beads

YOU WILL NEED

- string or nylon lacing
- assorted beads, plastic or wood
- fabric tape measure
- scissors

1. Use a tape measure to determine a good length for your beads and cut a piece of string or plastic lacing to this length. Make sure to add length for tying knots.
2. Select beads to go on your string. Below, make a chart of what each bead will remind you to pray. Here are some suggested people for whom to pray:

Pray for:	Which Bead Reminds Me of This:
Family	
Friends	
Your Church	
All Christians	
National Leaders	
Those Who Need Food or Clothing	
Those Who Are Sick	
Those Who Are Homeless	
Those Who Live or Work in Harm's Way	
Those You Think of as Enemies	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	



3. Tie a knot 1" from one end of the string, and then thread your beads onto it. Tie a knot in the string after each bead you add to keep the beads from scraping each other.
4. Make the last bead on your strand one that will remind you to pray the Lord's Prayer.
5. Tie a knot at the end of the strand.