

PERSISTENT FRIEND

LUKE 11:1-13



**NEVER GIVE
UP PRAYING**

Teacher's Devotional

If the check-out clerk were to ask, "What's the biggest reason you pray?" how would you answer? After all, people in every religion pray. Why do we pray? What makes it any different for a follower of Jesus Christ to pray? Is it that we pray longer? With more words? With more faith? In a different posture? No. All human-effort-based religious methods soon wear us out—then we quit praying altogether!

When we followers of Jesus pray, the difference is not in the amount of faith we have, nor the right words or even lots of words (in Matthew 6, Jesus ridiculed this kind of thing, remember?). The difference is to whom we pray! We aren't sending out a vague wish to some higher power nor a faint hope on the farthest star—no! We are talking directly to the maker of the stars, the omnipotent God of the universe—and our dear Father! This is the reason Jesus' followers were so fascinated with Jesus' kind of prayer: They were used to addressing the Ruler of the Universe in formal religious prayers (in a certain way, at a certain time)—but to think that this mighty King was also their Father? Revolutionary! The very name "Father" spoke of an intimacy in prayer that they had not known before.

This is the reason Jesus told us to keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking—because when the answer doesn't come right away, it's only because our loving Father is up to something we can't yet see. He is working something beyond our comprehension and bigger than our lives. We pray, confident that He will hear and answer because we know Him—He is good, He wants to hear from us and He has an answer that will surprise and delight! So, pray—expectantly!

GOD'S WORD

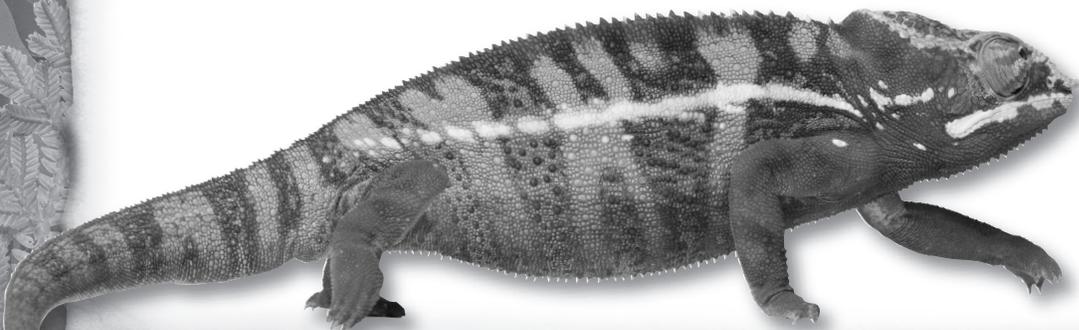
"Call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."
Jeremiah 29:12

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:

"Pray to God and he will hear you."

GOD'S WORD & ME

Never give up praying, because God promises to hear and answer our prayers.



PLANNING PAGE

Choose which centers you will provide and the order in which children will participate in them (see pp. 14-18 for schedule tips and pp. 24-25 for guidelines in combining older and younger children). Also plan who will lead each center (for staffing tips see pp. 19-21). Use the reproducible planning sheet (p. 238) to record your plans.

BIBLE STORY CENTER

BIBLE STORY

Persistent Friend • Luke 11:1-13

ADVENTURE BOX (YOUNGER CHILD)

Use props (blanket or shawl, an unsliced loaf of bread, bread knife and bread board) to demonstrate story action

ADVENTURE BOX (OLDER CHILD)

Use props (blanket or shawl, a flashlight, an unsliced loaf of bread, a bread knife, a bread board, a plastic snake or scorpion) to demonstrate story action

ART CENTER

YOUNGER CHILD OPTION

Make faces in play dough and talk about various times to pray to God

MATERIALS

Bible, play dough

OLDER CHILD OPTION

Make toucan spinners to take home as reminders of praying to Jesus

MATERIALS

Bible, Lesson 8 Pattern Page (p. 154), card stock, scissors, markers, hole punch, thread or fishing wire

GAME CENTER

YOUNGER CHILD OPTION

Practice listening while playing a fun game and then talk about God's promise to listen when we pray

MATERIALS

Bible, construction paper in two colors (one paper for each child)

OLDER CHILD OPTION

Roll paper balls to score points and to talk about places to pray to God and things about which children may pray

MATERIALS

Bible, masking tape, scratch paper in a variety of colors (one color for each team of up to six players)

COLORING/PUZZLE CENTER

YOUNGER CHILD OPTION

Review the Bible story while completing coloring page

MATERIALS

Lesson 8 Coloring Page (p. 155) for each child, crayons

OLDER CHILD OPTION

Review Jeremiah 29:12 while completing puzzle page

MATERIALS

Lesson 8 Puzzle Page (p. 156) for each child, pencils

WORSHIP CENTER

FOR THE YOUNGER AND OLDER CHILD

Participate in large-group activities to review Bible verse and to worship God together

MATERIALS

Bibles, *Parable Quest* CD-ROM and CD player, song charts (pp. 248-249), large sheet of paper on which you have lettered the words of Jeremiah 29:12, small colored candies such as M&Ms® or Skittles® or small squares of colored paper, several small disposable bowls, index cards, pen

BONUS THEME IDEAS

Bonus Theme Ideas can be used at any time during this session: as an additional activity center, to extend the session for a longer time, or for added theme excitement.

FROGGY SNACKS

Ahead of time prepare green Jell-O® in shallow bowls. Make one bowl for each child. Give each child two banana slices to place as eyes and either M&Ms® or raisins for pupils. Child places apple wedge on Jell-O to form mouth. Provide plastic spoons for children to use in eating their Froggy Snacks.

Post a note alerting parents to the use of food. Also, check registration forms for possible food allergies.



RAINFOREST ANIMAL LINEUP

Have children stand in a circle, square or triangle. Assign each child the name of a rainforest animal (toucan, parrot, gecko, pink dolphin, frog, monkey, butterfly, leaf cutter ant, ocelot, jaguar, sloth, etc.). Each child thinks of a sound or action to represent his or her animal. At your signal, children move around the room. When you call "Rainforest Animal Lineup," children race to return to their places and make the appropriate actions and/or sounds. Repeat as time permits, assigning different animals to children.

CREATURE CAMOUFLAGE

Talk with children about how God has made animals with coloring and/or patterns to help them hide in their habitats. Briefly describe the layers of the rainforest: the dark forest floor, the understory with brightly colored flowers, the canopy and emergent layers with green leaves and brown branches. Children draw their own rainforest animal creations and then choose the layer of the rainforest in which their animals will live. Children color their animals to give them camouflage. Display animal creations.



BIBLE STORY CENTER

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN • LUKE 11:1-13

INTRODUCTION

Welcome your rainforest explorers by inviting them to play a color-finding game: **People wearing red like a strawberry dart frog, hop!** Children respond. **People wearing blue, pretend to be butterflies. Flap your wings!** Continue with other colors and actions (crawl, spin around, etc.), ending with “Sit down” as the action. Then show Adventure Box. **What do you think is in our Adventure Box today? Let’s find out!** Untie box. Remove items from box and use them to demonstrate story action as you tell the story and/or lead children in suggested motions.



ADVENTURE BOX

In a cardboard or wooden box labeled “Adventure,” place a Bible, a blanket or shawl, an unsliced loaf of bread, bread knife and bread board. Tie rope or brown yarn around the box or crate.

TELL THE STORY

When Jesus lived here on Earth, He helped many, many people! One day, Jesus’ friends asked Him to help them learn to pray. So Jesus told a story to help His friends know they should pray and not give up!

Late one night, a man heard a loud knock at his door! He sat up and wondered, *Who could that be?* Then he heard the voice of his old friend! The man opened his door. “Welcome, welcome!” he said. “I’m glad to see you! Let me get a bed ready! Have you eaten?”

“No—and I’m VERY hungry,” his friend said. *Oh, no!* thought the man. *I’m out of bread. I don’t have food!* He didn’t have any bread—but he DID have an idea!

“Dear friend, stay right here! I’ll go to ask my neighbor for some bread. He will give me food.” He put on his cloak, took his lamp and hurried to his neighbor’s house. *(Put blanket or shawl around shoulders.)*

Tap, tap, TAP! He tapped on the neighbor’s door. *(Knock on a table or door to illustrate story. Invite children to knock along with you.)* It was quiet. So—knock, knock, KNOCK! He knocked a little louder. This time, he heard his neighbor whisper, “Shh! We’re ASLEEP!”

“Please listen, neighbor! My friend came to visit just now. I don’t have ANY bread for him. Please lend me some,” the man asked. But his neighbor answered, “I can’t even get UP. The children are all sleeping around me.”

Bang, bang, BANG. The man knocked again, a little louder! He said, “Dear neighbor, my friend is VERY hungry!” The neighbor said, “Look, if I get up, EVERYONE will wake up! The door is locked . . . can’t you wait until morning?”

BANG, BANG, BANG! The man knocked a little louder. “No! My friend is hungry NOW!” he said.

The man waited. Would his neighbor help him? Then, the door OPENED! And his neighbor said, “Here! Here’s the bread you need.” *(Show loaf of bread; cut bread into cubes and invite children to taste.)*

Jesus wanted us to know that when we ask God, He will listen to us. He is glad to help us. God is NEVER too busy or sleepy to answer our prayers. Jesus said that God is like the very best dad EVER. When a boy asks his dad for a fish, his dad gives him a fish, right? A good dad would not give him something that would hurt him, like a snake! Giving his son what he needs is one way a good dad shows love! He is glad to help his son.

GOD’S WORD & ME

The Bible says, “Pray to God and He will hear you.” Repeat verse several times together. Then lead children in saying this poem, clapping in rhythm: **God loves to listen when we pray! He’ll answer us in the very best way.** Repeat several times. Then pray, **Dear Jesus, thank You for helping us know to pray. Thank You that God listens to us and will answer in the best way. Amen.**



NEVER GIVE
UP PRAYING

BIBLE STORY CENTER

FOR OLDER CHILDREN • LUKE 11:1-13

INTRODUCTION

Let's play a game with our names. Create a sentence in which each word begins with the letters of your first name in order. It doesn't matter if your sentence makes sense. I'll start. My name is Lily:

Like Inventing Little Yo-yos! Volunteers continue the game; if desired, give small prizes for the funniest or most creative. **Here's a clue to what our story is about today. If I were to say, "Paint Really Awful Yellows," what would the word be?** (Pray.) **That's right!**

What do you think is in our Adventure Box today? Let's find out!

Untie box. Remove items from box and use them to demonstrate story action as you tell the story and/or lead children in suggested motions.



ADVENTURE BOX

In a cardboard or wooden box labeled "Adventure," place a Bible, a blanket or shawl, a flashlight, an unsliced loaf of bread, a bread knife, a bread board, a plastic snake or scorpion. Tie rope or brown yarn around the box or crate.

TELL THE STORY

When Jesus lived here on Earth, there was usually a crowd of people surrounding Him. But when the crowds went home, Jesus spent time praying to God. Praying and talking with God was the way Jesus "charged up" for another day of hard work!

Jesus' friends wanted to learn how to get "charged up" by God like Jesus did. So they asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray!" Jesus was glad to do that! First, He prayed for them a prayer that they could follow. This prayer is now known as "The Lord's Prayer."

Jesus prayed, "Father in heaven, You are holy and good. Help us do Your will here on Earth as it is done in Heaven. Please give us the food and other things that we need. Forgive us our sins. We forgive those who have sinned against us. Please protect us from temptation to do wrong things and help us to do what is right instead."

After praying this prayer, Jesus told this parable about the WAY we should pray.

One night at around midnight, a man heard a loud knock at his door! He sat upright, WIDE awake! *Who could that be?* Then he heard the familiar voice of an old friend! The friend had stopped by to visit, even though it was VERY late! (Remember, in those days people mainly traveled by foot or on a donkey—which meant you didn't always know when you'd get to where you were going!)

Quickly, the man got up and opened his door. "Welcome, welcome!" he probably said. "I'm delighted that you are here! Let me get a bed ready for you! Have you eaten?"

"Well, I've been walking all day long! I'm VERY hungry," his friend said, rubbing his rumbling stomach. *Uh, oh!* thought the man. *I've eaten the last of my bread. I really don't have anything to feed him!* He didn't have any bread—but he DID have an idea!

"Dear friend, I'm so sorry—I'm out of bread! But I'll be right back. I'm going to my neighbor's house. I'm sure they'll give me some bread." He put on his cloak, lifted his oil lamp to light the way and headed out the door toward his neighbor's house. *(Put shawl or blanket around shoulders; pick up flashlight.)*

Tap, tap, TAP! He tapped on the neighbor's door. *(Tap on doorframe or table to illustrate story action.)* It was silent. There was no voice, no answer.

Knock, knock, KNOCK! He knocked louder. This time, he heard his neighbor quietly mutter, "Go AWAY. We're ASLEEP!"

"No! Please listen, neighbor! My friend has come to visit and I don't have ANY food to give him. Please, lend me some!" the man pleaded.

"I can't even get UP for all the sleeping children around me. Can't you come back in the morning?"

Bang, bang, BANG. The man knocked again, a little more determined! He called a little louder. "Neighbor, dear friend, I can't leave until you give me something. I know it's late but my friend is so VERY hungry!"

The neighbor whispered loudly from inside, “Look, we are all in bed. If I get up, EVERYONE will get up! I’ll give you something in the morning, I promise!”

BANG, BANG, BANG! “But my friend is hungry NOW!” the man persisted. “I can’t wait until morning.”

As the man lifted his hand to knock and ask one more time, the door suddenly OPENED! There was his neighbor! In his hand was the bread the man had asked for! “Here!” he said. “Here’s some bread.” (*Show loaf of bread. Cut up bread into chunks as you talk; invite children to sample bread.*)

Jesus wanted His disciples and everyone to know that when we ask Him, God is much MORE willing to help us than that sleepy, grumpy neighbor was!

But Jesus wasn’t finished! He said, “Ask and it will be given to you. Keep on looking. Keep on knocking—because God is a loving Father. He will answer. He wants to help His children!”

Jesus went on, “Some of you here are fathers yourselves. If one of your children asked you for a fish, would you hand him a SNAKE instead? Of course not!” (*Show snake or scorpion.*)

“If your child asked for an egg, would you give him a scorpion? No father would give a scorpion to a child who asked for an egg! That would be CRUEL! You fathers understand that giving a good thing when your child asks is a way you show love! Now, think about this! How much more will your heavenly Father give good things to YOU when you ask Him? He loves you more than the very best father on Earth!”

GOD’S WORD & ME

Jesus wants all of us to know that we can trust God. He is a good Father and He wants to hear from us. God loves us and will help us when we ask Him! Sometimes God answers our prayers with a yes, or a no, or maybe He wants us to wait for the answer. Even when we don’t understand God’s answer, however, we know that He wants what is best for us and will answer in the best way possible for us.

- **When is it hard to remember to pray?** (When hurt. When surprised or scared. When in a strange place.)
- Invite a child to read Jeremiah 29:12 aloud. **What does God promise us?** (He will listen.) **What are some ways to remind ourselves to pray?**
- **Take a moment to choose one of those ways to remember. Let’s ask God to help us remind ourselves to pray in that way.** Pray with children, asking to help them remember to pray and keep on praying.



**NEVER GIVE
UP PRAYING**

GAME CENTER

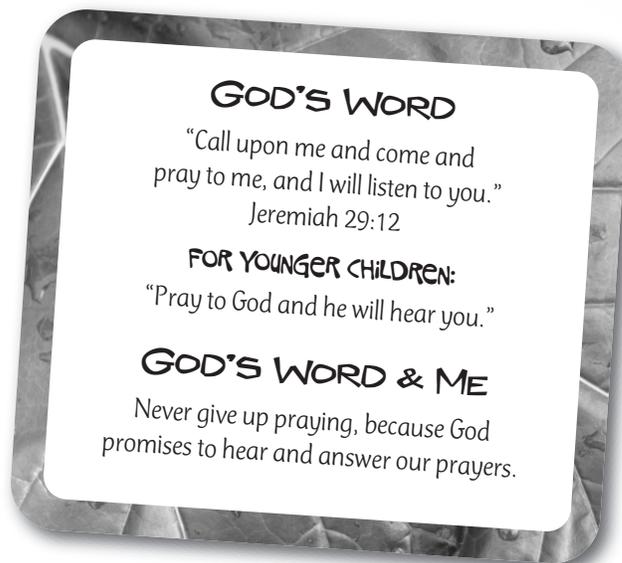
FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN • LUKE 11:1-13

COLLECT

Bible, construction paper in two colors (one paper for each child); optional—*Parable Quest* CD-ROM and player.

DO

1. Set out sheets of paper in a circle on the floor, alternating the colors.
2. Children stand in a circle around the papers. As children walk around the circle, clap your hands. (Optional: Play "Call Upon Me" from CD-ROM.) After 10 to 15 claps, stop clapping and call out "hands." Children place their hands on paper nearest to them.
3. Repeat as time and interest permit, calling out other body parts—knee, elbow, ear, foot, etc. You may also vary the game by naming a color before naming the body part. Only the child standing by the named color places his or her body part on the paper.



TALK ABOUT

• **In our game today, you listened to what I said. You were good listeners. The Bible tells us that God listens to us: "Pray to God and He will hear you." God hears us when we talk to Him. What are some times we can talk to God?** (Before dinner. At bedtime.)

• **Sometimes when we pray, we thank Him. What are some things you can thank God for?** (My friends. My pet dog. My toys.)

• **Sometimes when we pray, we ask God for help to do good things. Tell children what you have asked God to do. What is something you would like to ask God to help you do?** (Take turns. Be kind to my brother. Help my mom.) Pray briefly, Dear God, thank You for listening to us when we pray. Please help us to do good things. In Jesus' name, amen.



FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Provide a marker by each paper. Play music as children walk around the circle of papers. Stop the music after 10 to 12 seconds. Each child writes his or her answer to the question, "What can you thank God for?" Repeat activity. After several rounds, ask a different question such as "What can you ask God for?" or "Who needs God's help?"

GAME CENTER

FOR OLDER CHILDREN • LUKE 11:13

COLLECT

Bible, masking tape, scratch paper in a variety of colors (one color for each team of up to six players); optional—sidewalk chalk.

PREPARE

Make a masking tape X at one end of an open playing area. (Optional: Draw X outdoors on playground.)

DO

1. Help children form teams of up to six players each. Give each team one color of scratch paper to tightly crumple and form into paper balls—one ball for each player.
2. Teams line up in playing area on opposite end of where the X was formed. First player on each team takes a turn to roll his or her paper ball toward the X. Player whose ball ends up closest to the X scores 10 points for his or her team. Next player scores 5. All other players score 1 point each. Be available to help teams keep score records.
3. Repeat until each player has had a turn, or as time permits. Teams total their points. Team with the most points tells places where they can pray to God. Team with the fewest points tells things for which they can thank God. Other teams tell reasons it is good to pray to God.

TALK ABOUT

• Read Jeremiah 29:12 aloud. **What does this verse help us learn about God? About praying to God?** (God wants us to pray to Him. He promises to listen to our prayers.) **God promises to answer our prayers in the best way possible.**

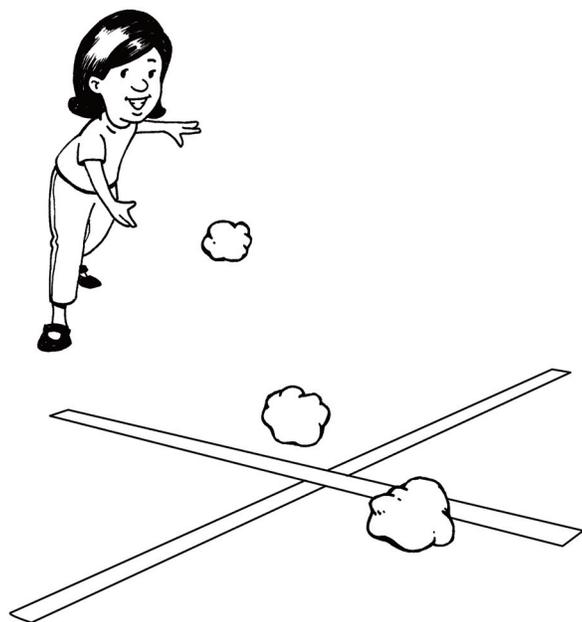
• **Why do some people forget to pray to God?** (They are too busy to take the time. They don't know God will really hear and answer.)

• **How many reasons can you think of for praying to God? When are some times when kids would benefit by praying to God?** (When they are worried about something. When they need help to obey the Bible. When they don't know the best choice to make.)

• Tell children when you pray to God (before bed, in the morning, etc.) and invite children to tell when they can pray to God. Lead children in prayer, asking God's help in remembering to pray to Him and thanking Him for always hearing our prayers.

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Instead of recording points, lead children to repeat the words of the Bible verse before rolling their balls toward the X. During later rounds of the game, children may tell people, pets, foods, etc. for which they want to thank God.



ART CENTER

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN • LUKE 11:1-13

COLLECT

Bible, play dough; optional—play dough toys and rollers.

DO

1. Give each child a fist-sized lump of play dough. Children play with dough.
2. Form your dough into a flat circle and mark a simple happy face in the dough. Talk with children about things that make them happy for which they can pray and thank God. Invite children to make happy faces with their dough, too.
3. Continue making other facial expressions with your dough (sad, worried, scared, angry) and talking with children about times to pray to God.

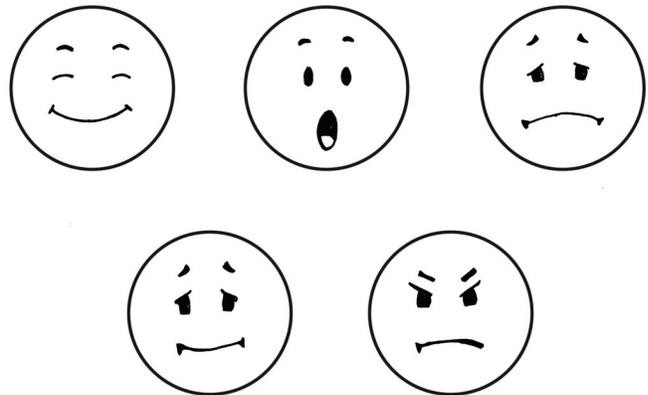


TALK ABOUT

• **Look at the happy face I made in my dough. When I am with my family, I am happy. I like to pray and thank God for my family. What makes you happy? What do you want to thank God for?**

• **Sometimes we might feel sad. Look at the sad face I made in my dough. When I feel sick, I am sad. I ask God to help me feel better. What makes you feel sad? (When I fall down. When someone is mean to me.) God listens to you when you pray.**

• **The Bible says, "Pray to God and He will hear you." No matter where we go or what happens we can talk to God. We can tell Him how we feel and ask His help. God says He will always listen to our prayers.** Lead children in a brief prayer time, inviting them to pray to God and thank Him or ask His help.



FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Children use dough or air-drying modeling clay to form scenes that portray times kids their age can pray to God (child who needs help to do his or her best while playing soccer, child who needs help to play fairly with a friend, child who wants to thank God while playing at the beach, etc.).

ART CENTER

FOR OLDER CHILDREN • LUKE 11:1-13

COLLECT

Bible, Lesson 8 Pattern Page (p. 154), card stock, scissors, markers, hole punch, thread or fishing wire.

PREPARE

Photocopy Lesson 8 Pattern Page onto card stock, making one page for each child. Make a sample spinner following directions below.

DO

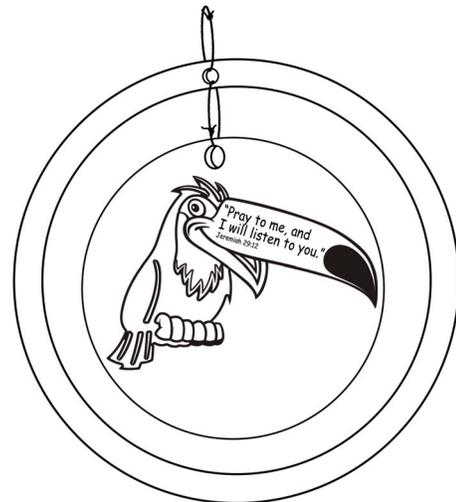
1. Give each child a Lesson 8 Pattern Page. Children color the circle and animal and then cut them out.
2. Children punch hole in circle and in top of toucan circle as marked.
3. Be ready to help children insert a loop of thread or fishing wire through both holes and tie so that toucan circle spins. Children insert a second thread or fishing wire through the hole in the circle and use to hang their spinners at home.

TALK ABOUT

- Read Jeremiah 29:12 aloud. **Why do you think God wants us to pray to Him?** (He loves us and wants to help us. He wants us to remember to depend on Him.)
- **How might it help a kid your age to talk to God first thing every morning? At night before bedtime? Before a meal? What are some other times it's good to talk to God?**
- **What is something you and your family have prayed about? How has God answered your prayer?** Children respond. **Sometimes it might seem like God doesn't hear our prayers because He doesn't answer the way we want Him to. But we can know that because God loves us so much, He always wants what is best for us. God will answers our prayers in the very best way.** Lead children in a brief prayer, thanking God for always hearing and answering our prayers.

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Use a photocopier to enlarge the toucan circle on Lesson 8 Pattern Page. Cut out the circle ahead of time. Children color shape, punch hole in top and insert thread or fishing wire. Tie thread or wire to make a hanger.



WORSHIP CENTER

Luke 11:1-13

COLLECT

Bibles, *Parable Quest* CD-ROM and CD player, song charts (pp. 248-249), large sheet of paper on which you have lettered the words of Jeremiah 29:12, small colored candies such as M&Ms® or Skittles® or small squares of colored paper, several small disposable bowls, index cards, pen.

PREPARATION

Put candies or papers in bowls.

TEAM GAME

Pass bowls around the room with each child taking two pieces of candy or two papers. After all children have two candies or papers, announce that all children with (red) candy or paper need to jump up and shout out their favorite food. Repeat with other colors and shout outs (favorite sport, favorite game, favorite TV show, etc.).

BIBLE VERSE GAME

Display the paper on which you have lettered the words of Jeremiah 29:12. Read verse aloud with children. Then lead children to play a game like Charades. Ask children to guess which word is represented by this motion: point to yourself. Repeat motion until children guess the word "me." Then invite children to create and show motions for additional words in the verse (hands to mouth for "call," point to someone for "you," beckon for "come," folded hands for "pray," hand behind ear for "listen").

SONG

You, or another leader, lead children in singing "Call Upon Me," adding motions and/or clapping if desired.

PRAYER

Invite children to suggest prayer requests for themselves or others. As each request is mentioned, write it on an index card. Give index cards to children who will pray for these requests at home. Lead children in prayer, mentioning the requests.

SONG

You, or another leader, lead children in singing "All of the Time," adding motions and/or clapping if desired.

GOD'S WORD

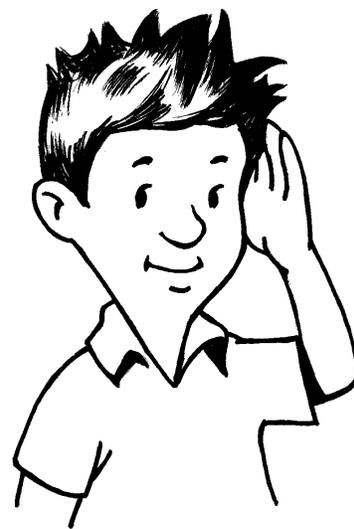
"Call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."
Jeremiah 29:12

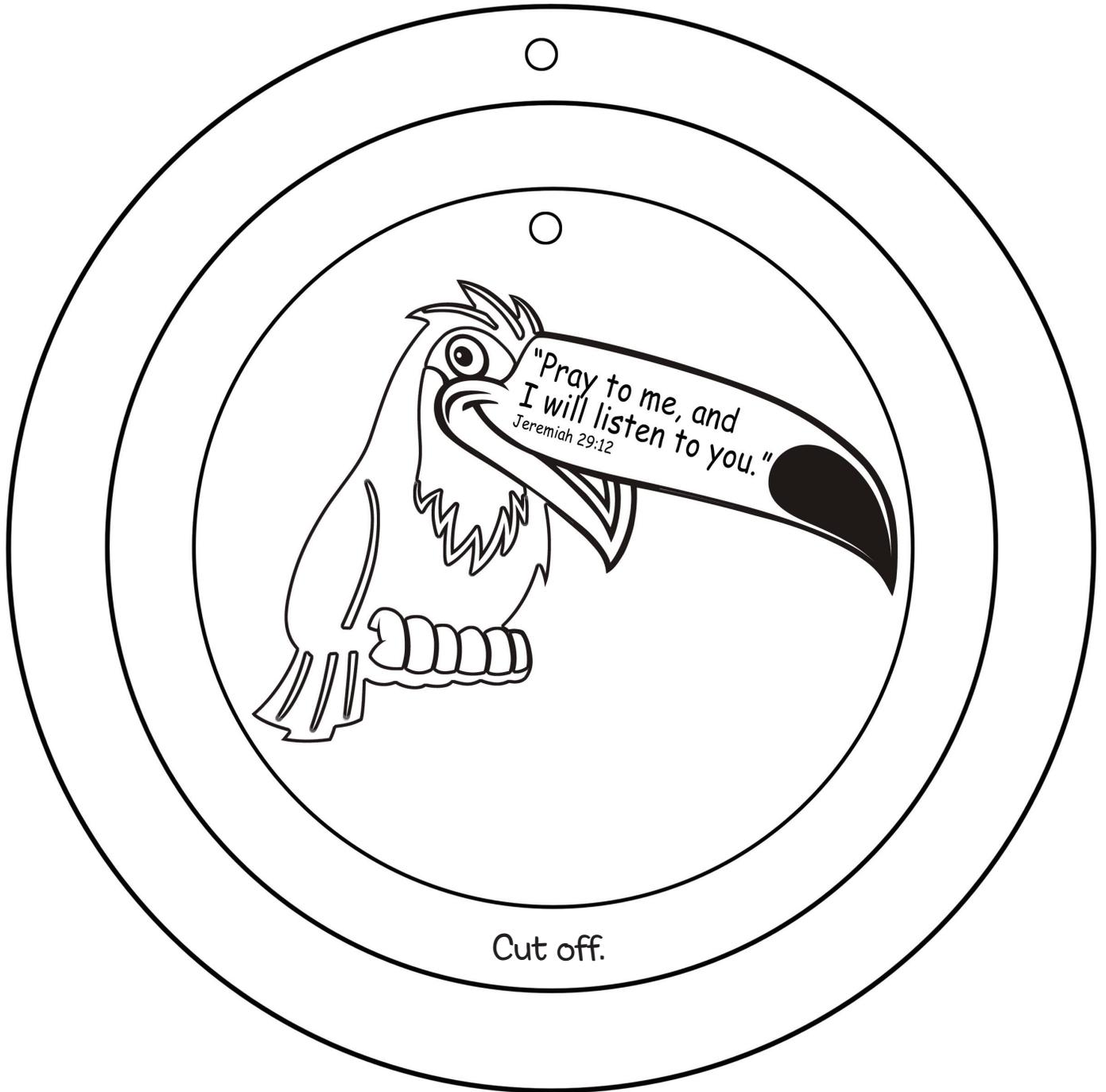
FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:

"Pray to God and he will hear you."

GOD'S WORD & ME

Never give up praying, because God promises to hear and answer our prayers.





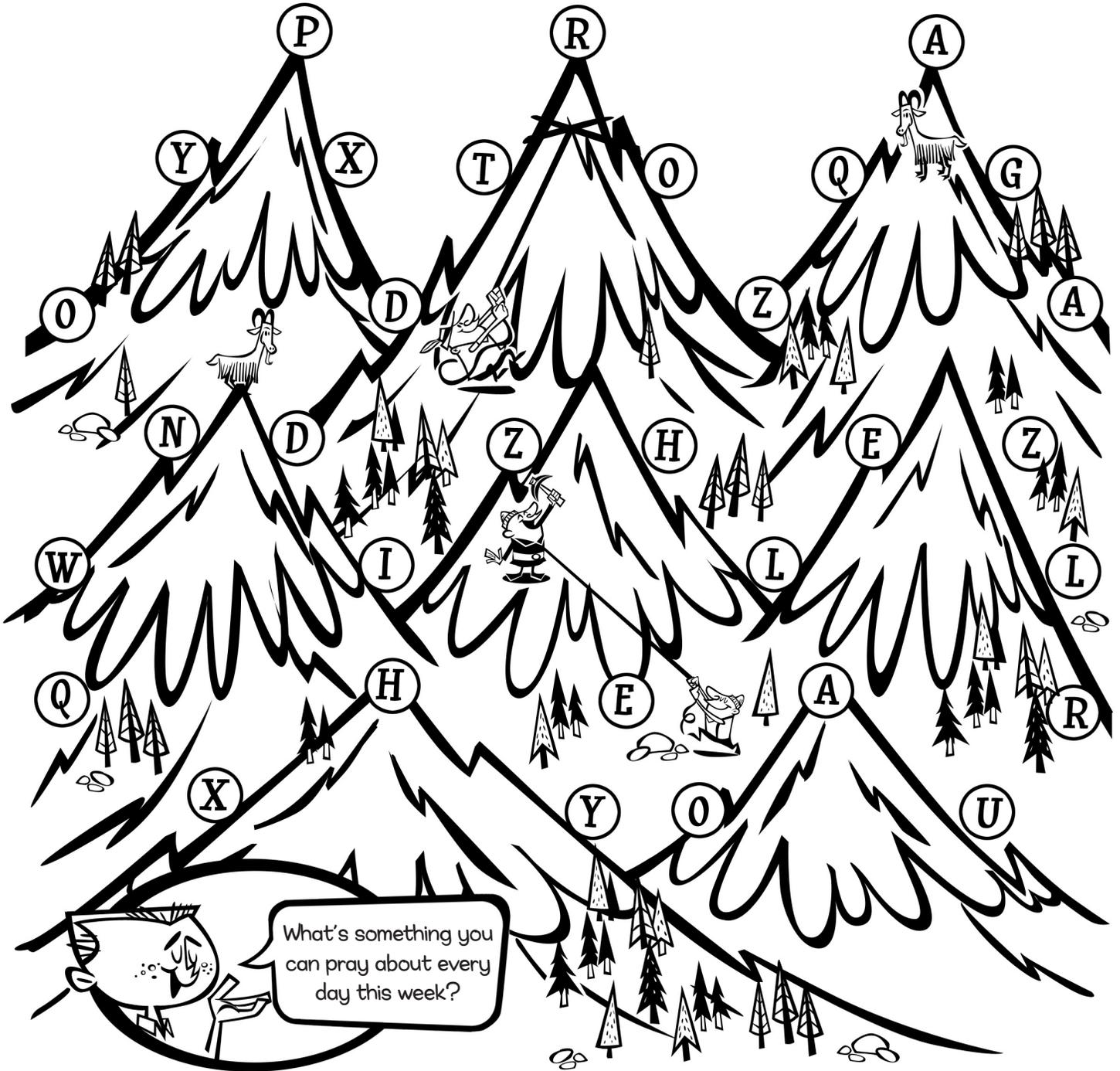
Jesus' friends learn to pray.
Luke 11:1-3



When can you pray to God?

Make a MOUNTAINOUS EFFORT!

Crack the code to discover what these mountain climbers (and you) should keep on doing! Cross out the Qs, Xs and Zs. Then read your way across the mountains. Write the letters in order below, and divide them into words.



“ _____ ”
