

Prayers Are Answered in the Best Way

Lesson

18

Purpose To help each child understand that Heavenly Father always hears our prayers and answers them in the best way.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Luke 1:5–17. See also *Gospel Principles* (31110), chapter 8.
2. Prepare to sing or say the words to all three verses of “Quickly I’ll Obey” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 197). The words to this song are included at the back of the manual.
3. Prepare to share a personal experience when Heavenly Father helped you in answer to a prayer.
4. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible.
 - b. Picture 2-34, Naming of John the Baptist.
5. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities you want to use.

**Suggested
Lesson
Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Follow up with the children if you encouraged them to do something during the week.

We Can Pray for Help

Attention activity With the children, sing or say the words to all three verses of “Quickly I’ll Obey.”

- Why should we obey our parents and Heavenly Father? (Because they can help us do what is best for us.)

Story Tell the following story:

Meredith had a bad dream one night. She dreamed she was lost and frightened. When she woke up, she began to cry.

- What would you do if you were Meredith?

Meredith called for her father, and he came in and gave her a hug. Meredith felt better and soon went back to sleep.

- Why did Meredith call for her father? (She needed help and she knew he would help her.)

- Whom do you call when you need help? (Answers may include Heavenly Father, parents, other family members, and friends.)

- How do we call Heavenly Father and ask for his help? (Pray.)

Story	<p>Tell the children the following story about John A. Widtsoe, who grew up to become a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:</p> <p>John's father died when he was young, and John's mother worked hard to support her children. John wanted to get a job to help her. It was not easy to find a job he could do after school, but he finally found one. One day the man he worked for told him he had done a good job for several weeks and paid him with a five-dollar gold piece.</p> <p>John said: "Five dollars! That was money! I was jubilant! I would give half of it to my mother; I would buy a new book, and save the remainder. Into the pocket of my trousers went the bright new gold piece, and off I ran to tell my mother of my good luck.</p> <p>"On the way home, I put my hand in the pocket to feel . . . the money. It was not there! I felt all through the pocket again. The gold piece was not there! Instead, I found a hole in the pocket through which the coin had slipped. It was terrible! I was so sorry that I sat down by the ditch bank and cried."</p> <p>John walked back along his path, looking for the gold piece. The sidewalk he had been walking on was made of planks (boards), and he searched the cracks between every plank. But he could not find the money. He finally decided the money was lost for good.</p>
Activity (optional)	<p>Have the children pretend they are John looking for the lost coin and walk around the room slowly for a few seconds as if searching for it. Then have them return to their seats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were John, what would you do next?
Story continued	<p>John said: "Then I remembered that the Lord knew where that gold piece was, and that if he would help me, and wanted me to find it, it could not be lost for long.</p> <p>"So I got down on my knees [in] back of a big tree, and told the Lord all about my trouble, and asked him, if he thought it was the best thing for me, to help me find [the gold piece]. When I got up I felt so much better. I felt sure the Lord had heard my prayer.</p> <p>"[It was getting dark]. One could not see anything on the ground very clearly, especially a small piece of gold. But I walked right on, not so slowly this time, for I knew the Lord was helping. About half way up the second block, there in the grass lay my lost five dollar gold piece. . . . I almost shouted with joy. How glad my mother would be, and how I would enjoy that book I had planned to buy. I leaned up against the fence and said, 'Thank you, O Lord, for finding my money for me.'</p> <p>"Since that time I have known that the Lord hears prayers. And, since that day, I have been careful to have no holes in my pockets" (from John A. Widtsoe, "The Lost Gold Piece," <i>Children's Friend</i>, Sept. 1947, p. 369).</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many times did John pray about his coin? • What did John pray for the first time? (To ask Heavenly Father to help him find his money.) • What was the answer to John's prayer? • Why did John pray the second time? (To thank Heavenly Father for helping him.) • How has Heavenly Father helped you when you have prayed?

Teacher presentation Emphasize to the children that just like our earthly parents, Heavenly Father loves us and wants to help us. When we ask for help, Heavenly Father will hear us. Tell the children about a time when Heavenly Father helped you in answer to a prayer.

Prayers Are Answered in Different Ways

Scripture story Hold up the Bible and tell the children that the next story is from the Bible. Display picture 2-34, Naming of John the Baptist, and tell the story found in Luke 1:5–17.

Explain that Zacharias and Elisabeth were both righteous people, and they had prayed for a baby for many years. Now they were both old, and they still did not have a child.

Explain that Zacharias was surprised and a little frightened when he first saw the angel in the temple. Read aloud what the angel said to Zacharias from Luke 1:13–14. Explain that what the angel promised did happen, and Zacharias and Elisabeth had a baby boy.

Emphasize that Heavenly Father had heard all of Zacharias and Elisabeth's prayers. Until now, though, it was not time for their child to be born. The angel told Zacharias that the baby, John, would grow up to be a great prophet, John the Baptist. John was born at this time so that he could prepare many people to believe in Jesus Christ and follow him.

Teacher presentation Explain that sometimes, like Elisabeth and Zacharias, we pray for something that will be good for us later but not yet. Heavenly Father hears all our prayers and answers them in the ways and times that are best for us.

Remind the children that when John Widtsoe prayed about his lost gold coin, he remembered that Heavenly Father knew where the coin was and would help him find it "if he thought it was the best thing for me." John found the coin right away because it was best for him to find it.

Explain that sometimes we might ask our parents for something they know is not good for us, and they have to say "no." Similarly, we might pray for something that Heavenly Father knows would not be right for us, and he has to say "no."

Story Tell the following story in your own words:

While Michael was indoors with a bad cough, it snowed—the first big snowfall of the winter. Michael begged his mother to let him play outside in the snow, but she said "no." She was afraid his cough would get worse.

Michael really wanted to play in the snow, so he prayed that Heavenly Father would make his mother change her mind. When his friend Alex came and asked if he could play in the snow, Michael said that he had to eat lunch, but that he would be able to play after lunch because he had prayed that his mother would let him play in the snow.

After lunch Michael again asked his mother if he could play outside. He told her he had prayed that she would let him go outside. Michael's mother looked unhappy. She asked Michael if he thought Heavenly Father would want him to go out and play in the snow today when it might make him more sick.

- Do you think Heavenly Father heard Michael's prayer?
- How did Heavenly Father answer the prayer?

When Alex came back, Michael said he couldn't go outside. Alex said that Heavenly Father didn't answer Michael's prayer. Michael explained that Heavenly Father did answer his prayer, but the answer was "no."

Summary

Testimony

Bear your testimony to the children that Heavenly Father knows what is best for each of us, and he always answers our prayers in the best way. Sometimes he says "yes," sometimes "no," and sometimes he asks us to wait awhile before we receive what we prayed for.

Review

- How did Heavenly Father answer John Widtsoe's prayer?
- How did Heavenly Father answer Elisabeth and Zacharias's prayers?
- How did Heavenly Father answer Michael's prayer?

Encourage the children to accept Heavenly Father's answers to their prayers, even when the answer is "no" or "not now."

Invite a child to give the closing prayer.

Enrichment Activities

Choose from the following activities those that will work best for the children in your class. You can use them in the lesson itself or as a review or summary. For additional guidance, see "Class Time" in "Helps for the Teacher."

1. Tell the children that they are going to pretend to be parents and decide what is best for their children. Ask them to answer "yes," "no," or "not now" to each request their children make. Describe some things that children might ask for, using the situations below or some of your own. Discuss which response is best for each situation.
 - a. It is almost dinnertime. Your child is hot and hungry and wants to eat an ice cream bar.
 - What do you say?
 - Why do you say that?
 - b. It is a cold, rainy day. Your child wants to wear a swimming suit out to play.
 - What do you say?
 - Why do you say that?
 - c. Your children have finished all their work. It is early in the afternoon. They ask if they can go play outside.
 - What do you say?
 - Why do you say that?

- d. Your child has been saving money for a toy and finally has enough. He asks to go to the store right away to buy the toy. You (the parent) are going to the store in just a few minutes.
- What do you say?
 - Why do you say that?
- e. Your child loves horses and asks to have a horse for her own. She is only five years old.
- What do you say?
 - Why do you say that?
- f. Your children are not careful with their toys or books. Rather than take care of the toys and books they have, they want to buy new ones. At the store they see one of their favorite books and ask if they can have it.
- What do you say?
 - Why do you say that?

Explain that parents want to do what is best for their children. Heavenly Father also wants to do what is best for his children. Heavenly Father always answers our prayers, and he answers them in ways that are best for us. Just as our earthly parents sometimes say “yes,” sometimes “no,” and sometimes “not now,” our Heavenly Father answers our prayers sometimes with “yes,” sometimes with “no,” and sometimes with “not now.”

2. If it is available in your area, show *Beginning Course Videocassette*, volume 1, segment 16, “The Lost Gold Piece” (53178, 3:08), instead of telling the story about John A. Widtsoe.
3. With the approval of your Primary president, invite a few guests to sing “A Child’s Prayer” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 12) for the children.
4. Sing or say the words to “Tell Me, Dear Lord” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 176) or “I Need My Heavenly Father” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 18).

Tell Me, Dear Lord

Tell me, dear Lord, in thine own way I pray,
 What thou would’st have me say and do today.
 Teach me to know and love thy will, O Lord;
 Help me to understand thy loving word.

I would be guided by thy loving hand;
 Would hear thy voice, obey thy blest command.
 Each moment just to know that thou art near
 Will strength impart and banish every fear.

I Need My Heavenly Father

I need my Heav’nly Father
 To help me ev’ry day.
 He wants me to be happy
 And choose the righteous way.
 He wants me to be happy
 And choose the righteous way.