

# Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

## INQUIRY SESSION: PRAYER

### Inquiry Session (Approximately 60 minutes)

#### Prepare

For this session you will need copies of the words of the Our Father for each child in the group.

Read through question 4 under **Gather**. Determine the additional supplies you will need: a flip chart or whiteboard; drawing paper; crayons or markers; pencils or pens; a way to play music; and a playlist of familiar Church music.

Set the space with chairs in a circle and in the center place a candle and a Bible. (Mark the Scripture citations noted in the participant materials.)

If needed, have name tags. Have some refreshments available, too.

#### Gather (10–15 minutes)

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Invite each child to share his or her name and something good that happened since the last time the group gathered.

Take time to find out how the children are doing.

Ask whether they had an experience of prayer or church since the last session.

2. Read together the **My Story** section of the participant page and discuss the questions found there.

3. Explore with the children their experience of prayer using these or similar questions:

*Do you pray?*

*When do you pray?*

*How do you pray?*

*Who taught you how to pray?*

*Do you have a favorite prayer or way to pray?*

4. Explain to the children that there are many ways to pray. Invite them to experience two or three such ways by leading them in simple prayer experiences such as the following:

- a. Invite the children to close their eyes and to quiet themselves. Lead a simple prayer of meditation using the following or similar words:

*In your heart, picture the people who love you. . . . Ask Jesus to bless each of them. . . . Picture the people you love and tell Jesus something special about each of them. . . . Tell Jesus you love him.*

- b. Invite the children to think of all the things that God has given to us. List their ideas on the flip chart or whiteboard.

Invite them to draw a picture of one of their favorite things and to write a note or a prayer to God to thank him for it.

- c. Invite the children to listen to or sing a song from church. Explain that we can sing our prayers to God, too.

5. After leading the children in the prayer experiences, ask them what each experience felt like to them. Invite them to share which one was their favorite experience of prayer and why.

#### Expand (15–20 minutes)

1. Read aloud the **God's Story** section of the participant page.

2. Highlight the following discussion points:

- Prayer is a conversation with God.
- Prayer is a time to be still with God.
- Prayer can happen at any place and at any time.

- There are many ways to pray, including
    - Memorized prayers of the Church
    - Conversational prayers
    - Asking prayers
    - Thank-you prayers
    - Praising prayers
    - Prayers of sorrow or contrition
  - There is no wrong way to pray.
3. Read aloud each of the Scripture passages listed below. Pause after reading each and invite volunteers to share what each Scripture passage tells us about prayer.
- 1 Samuel 3:1-11** (Revelation to Samuel)
- Mark 1:35** (Jesus Leaves Capernaum)
- Luke 11:9-13** (The Answer to Prayer)

### ***Our Response (15–20 minutes)***

1. Distribute copies of the Our Father. Explain that this prayer is one of the prayers people most often memorize, and that it is prayed at Mass and when praying the Rosary.
2. Invite the children to read through the words of the Our Father. Ask whether they have any questions about the words, and offer explanation if needed.
3. Point out that the Our Father contains two of the types of prayer you spoke of earlier in today's session. Ask the children whether anyone can name the two types of prayer. (*praising prayer and asking prayer*) Invite volunteers to name the phrases of the Our Father that are words or prayers of praise, and the phrases of the Our Father that are asking prayers.

4. Invite the children to slowly and reflectively pray with you the Our Father.
5. If they do not already know the words of the Our Father by heart, encourage the children to memorize the prayer. Suggest that they do so by memorizing the prayer one line at a time. Invite them to take the copies of the prayer home with them, and to put their copy in a place where they will see and review the prayer each day.
6. Point out the ***Faith Words*** section of the participant page. Review the faith words with the children.
7. Invite the children to listen to the story of a saint who was known to have a gift for prayer. Use the participant page, or in your own words tell the story of Saint Teresa of Jesus (Saint Teresa of Ávila).

### ***Pray (2–3 minutes)***

1. Today's concluding prayer is an intercessory prayer. Explain that in intercessory prayer we are praying for the needs of others. This is the type of prayer we pray at Mass when we pray the Prayer of the Faithful.
2. Invite the children to respond to each prayer with the words: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our families, we pray . . .

For our friends, we pray . . .

For children who are hungry, we pray . . .

For people who have no homes, we pray . . .

(Invite the children to add their own prayers.)