



LESSON 12

Prayer



Learning Objectives

In this lesson you will:

- Explore what Jesus taught about prayer.
 - Learn that prayer not only helps us grow in friendship with God, it also helps us lead moral lives.
 - Summarize ways that Maronites pray at home, in Church, and throughout the day.
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Opening Prayer

O Lord, let my prayer rise up like incense before your throne. And may my lips always sing your praises. Amen.



Opening Activity

Scan the QR code to access the online resources.

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Introduction

After we meet God in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays as we saw in the third commandment, we should seek to talk to him every day. Prayer keeps us united to God throughout the week, for prayer helps us follow Jesus and become his friend.

Prayer is at the heart of everything we do. Jesus would often go to the mountains or a quiet place away from everyone. In the Gospel according to Luke, it says that Jesus “went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God” (Lk 6:12). In St. Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians, he says, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (5:16–18).

Reflection Questions

1. *When and where do you like to pray?*
2. *How do you like to pray?*



Point 1

What Is Prayer and Why Do We Pray?

Some people think prayer is magic or wishing on a star. They think God is a magician who will do whatever they ask. But Jesus gave us a different understanding of prayer and God. Real **prayer** is a form of communication: It is talking to God and listening to him.

Jesus told us never to stop praying, even when it seems that our prayers are not being answered. Genuine prayer brings us closer to God and helps us discover ourselves. Prayer also teaches us about life. It helps us understand what God wants. Prayer makes us strong so that we can choose what is right, rather than what is wrong. The goal of prayer is to grow closer to God in friendship.

Point 2

How Prayer Helps Us

God is a loving, caring Father who listens and responds to us. God always answers our prayers. But sometimes God answers in ways we do not understand. That is because God knows what is best for us. His answer will always be what we really need. That is why all prayers, in some way, help us.

Prayer helps us seek forgiveness when we make wrong choices and forgive others when they sin and hurt us. Prayer not only helps us to grow in friendship with God, but also guides us to lead moral lives. Prayer strengthens us to resist temptations and protects us from harm and evil.

Point 3

How We Pray

As Maronites, we pray with our Church family. We have a special calendar called the **Church Liturgical Year**. This calendar celebrates the life of Jesus. Our highest form of prayer is the *Qorbono*, also known as the Divine Liturgy. At the Divine Liturgy, we take part in all types of prayer — praise and adoration, thanksgiving, forgiveness, and **petition**. The **Eucharistic Prayer** is the Church's great prayer of thanksgiving. To celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest may choose one of several Anaphoras. The word **Anaphora** means “offering, to lift up.” Finally, we also pray by taking part in special devotions.

A **devotion** is a prayer that helps us lift our hearts, as well as our minds, to God.

God calls us to pray at home, in Church, and throughout the day.

Activity 1

Look Closely

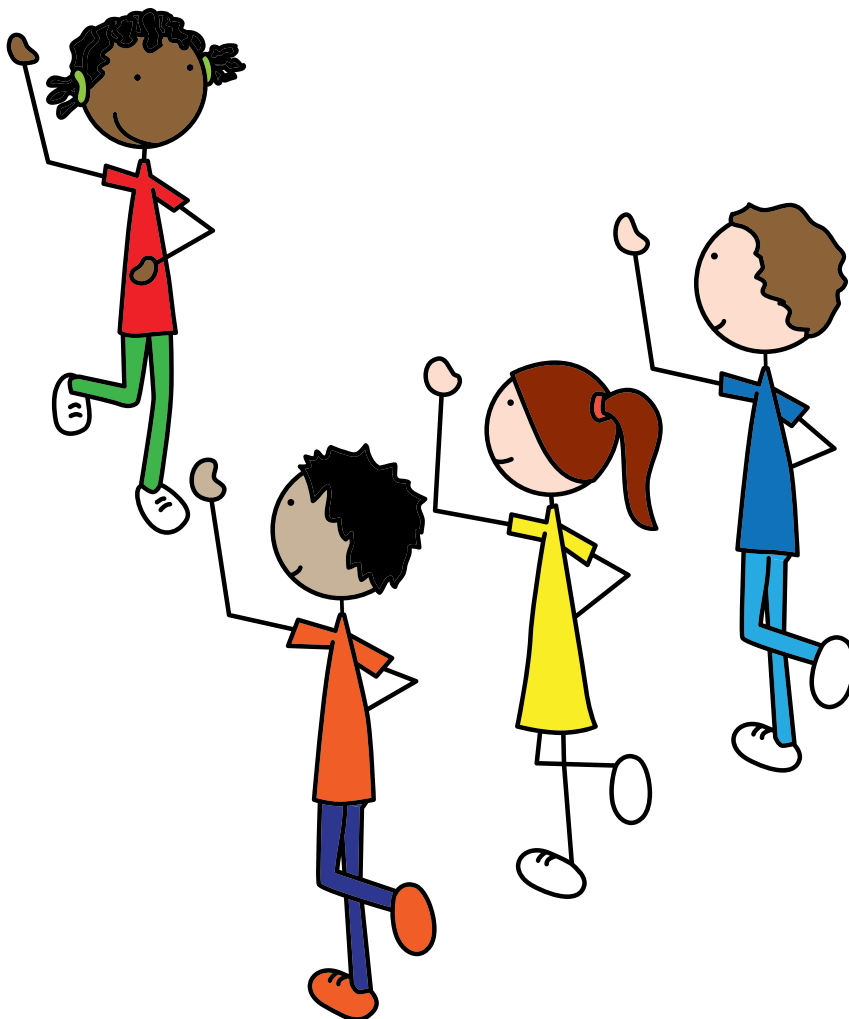


List three things you see in this painting.

Activity 2

Prayer Posture “Simon Says”

Prayer is a beautiful way to talk to God. We can fold our hands, stand, kneel, or make the sign of the cross. Now, play a game of “Simon Says”—only do the prayer postures that your teacher starts with ‘Simon says!’





Maronite Wisdom

Congregation:

Have mercy on us, Almighty Father. Have mercy on us.

Celebrant:

O Lord, as we, your sinful children, receive your graces, we thank you for them and because of them.

Congregation:

We praise you. We bless you. We adore you. We glorify you. We profess our faith in you and we ask you: Have compassion on us, O God. Have mercy on us and hear us.

— *Book of Offering: Common to all Anaphoras*





My Role Model

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus

In 1873, Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus was born the ninth child of a Catholic family in Lisieux, France. At a young age, she developed the ability to pray in a very simple way. She just talked to Jesus like a friend. When she was fifteen, she got permission to enter the Carmelite convent where two of her older sisters were nuns. Thérèse soon discovered that life in a religious community demanded generosity and patience. She wanted to pray always, but her days were filled with common tasks, such as sweeping the floor, washing dishes, baking bread, and taking care of the elderly nuns. She did not understand how this ordinary work was “holy.” Then one day Thérèse learned about a new invention called the elevator. Suddenly, she understood the secret power of prayer. She could pray anywhere, anytime, during whatever work she was doing. Prayer “lifted up” her work, like an elevator, to God. From then on, Thérèse put her heart and soul into every chore she did. And while she worked, she joyfully prayed always. Many miracles occurred after the death of Saint Thérèse. The Church honors her on October 1.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, pray for us.

Recall



Match the terms in Column A with the correct descriptions in Column B.

A

- ___ 1. Church Liturgical Year
- ___ 2. Devotions
- ___ 3. Eucharistic Prayer
- ___ 4. Forgiveness
- ___ 5. Petition
- ___ 6. Prayer
- ___ 7. Thérèse
- ___ 8. Temptation

B

- A.** Talking with God
- B.** Prayer helps us resist this
- C.** Saint who is a model of prayer and moral living
- D.** Type of prayer that helps lift our hearts and emotions to God
- E.** Prayer helps us seek this when we make wrong decisions
- F.** Our great prayer of thanksgiving during the Divine Liturgy
- G.** A calendar of prayer based on the life of Jesus
- H.** Type of prayer in which we ask God for something

Weekly Journal



Think about a time when God blessed you with something you really wanted.

Write: A short prayer or note to thank God for all of your blessings.

Concluding Prayer



Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for all the wonderful ways you have blessed us. We thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus, who died for us on the cross. We thank you in a special way for our Maronite Catholic Faith, the Divine Mysteries, our family, and friends. We ask you to send your Holy Spirit into our hearts so that we might become saints. We ask for all of those things we need (say privately) and we pray for all those in most need of your mercy. Amen.

Climbing the Mountain

Bonus Materials for Students & Teachers



Lk 11:5–13

Perseverance in Prayer

And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Reflection

After teaching his disciples how to pray the “Our Father,” Jesus taught them another lesson. He taught them the importance of perseverance in prayer. To persevere means to continue on, no matter what obstacles we face. Prayer is the vehicle that allows us to get to heaven. Above all, prayer is the means by which we ask the Father to send us the Holy Spirit.

Saintly Quote

“Blessed are you if you have to struggle hard in prayer. Say your words, offer up your complaint, seek out your judge.” — *Evagrius the Solitary*

Questions

1. How did the persistence of the neighbor in the story make you feel?
2. Is there something that you have been asking God for a long time?

Reaching the Summit

For Teachers & Parents



“Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God’s commandments.” — CCC 2098

Prayer: What and Why

There are many types of prayers. For example, there are prayers of praise, adoration, and worship. There are prayers of penitence and prayers of thanksgiving. Some prayers involve personal request, or petition. Other prayers are intercessions—prayers for other people. Some prayers involve just thinking about God or about God’s word. Many prayers combine some or all of these types of prayer.

How does prayer help? Here are some ways:

1. Prayer helps us seek forgiveness when we make wrong choices. We ask God to forgive us when we sin.
2. Prayer helps us forgive others when they sin and hurt us. We ask God for the strength to pardon them, just as God pardons us.

3. Prayer strengthens us to resist temptations. In prayer, we ask God to help us stay away from anything that might make us want to sin.
4. Prayer protects us from harm and evil. The more we pray, the more we are filled with grace, God's own life and love. This grace, in turn, brings us more and more virtues. We grow in good habits that help us imitate Jesus.

Devotions

A devotion is a prayer that helps us lift our hearts, as well as our minds, to God. Some devotions include the Adoration of the Holy Cross, Benediction of the Cross, the Christmas Novena, and the devotions in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Discussion Questions

1. How can you create a home where prayer is a priority?
 2. Why do you think many families pray very little together?
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Words to Know



Q. What is an **Anaphora**?

A. The part of the Divine Liturgy that includes the Service of the Word, Eucharistic Prayer, and Communion Rite. The word “anaphora” means “to offer, or lift on high.” During the Anaphora, we lift our prayers to God. We recognize God’s many gifts to us. We thank God for them.

Q. What is the **Church Liturgical Year**?

A. Calendar of the Church that marks the year into special seasons. During the Church Liturgical Year, we celebrate different parts of God's holy Word and also celebrate the lives of saints who are role models in virtue and moral living. Our Maronite Church Liturgical Year begins the first week in November.

Q. What is **prayer**?

A. Talking with God, either alone or with others. Prayer changes us; we grow closer to God and become more like him. Prayer is essential to obey God's commandments.



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