

Jesus Prays for Us

FOR THE TEACHER:

This week's story shows us a scene of Jesus praying, but Mark offers little comment on what is happening or why it is significant. To understand it fully we have to think about who Jesus is as he is revealed in the whole of scripture. For example, if Jesus is God to whom does he pray? This is where the doctrine of the Trinity is vital to our understanding. It is not sufficient to simply say Jesus is God, we have to understand that he is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, in the flesh, and therefore when he prays he is God the Son doing what he has always done - enjoying relationship and conversation with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus' identity as fully God and fully human also helps us understand what his life of prayer means for us: because Jesus is God the Son praying from within our human nature we see his priesthood for us and how he is the one who prays for us and with us, enabling and empowering our prayers. When we pray "in Jesus name" we are making a literal statement about how Jesus is sharing his prayer life with us.

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are part of the Trinitarian Catechism.

FIRST ACTIVITY: Have three kids be the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They link arms and form a huddle where they can whisper to each other. Everyone else has to guess what they are whispering about. Then the one playing the Son looks over his shoulder and tells everyone else what they are talking about. As God the Son, Jesus has been in a conversation with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. When he prays, as in today's story, he is continuing that conversation and he is the one who tells us what the conversation of the Trinity is all about.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Ask for a helper to pass out a bible to each child. Have them all turn to Mark 1:35-39. For older kids, have them take turns reading.

1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

1:36 Simon and his companions went to look for him,

1:37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

1:38 Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

1:39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

**Who are the three persons of God? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

**Which person became the man Jesus? The Son*

So, when Jesus prays to whom is he praying? The Father and the Holy Spirit. Do you ever find it difficult to pray? Jesus helps us pray, he prays for us and through the Holy Spirit he gives us the words we need to pray. This is why we finish praying by saying "in Jesus' name".

PRIMARY LESSON: Jesus prays for us and carries our prayers to the Father.

SECOND ACTIVITY: Have three kids huddle together again as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They whisper to each other as before. What would it take for someone else to be a part of their conversation? They have to open up their "huddle" and include others. Have the kid playing the Son reach out and bring another kid into the huddle so that he can now be part of the conversation too. This is how Jesus, the Son of God, includes humanity in his prayer life, i.e. his conversation with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The kids can take turns playing the different roles of the Father, Son, Spirit, and humanity.

PRAYER: For older kids, have one of them pray this prayer (or come up with their own). For younger kids, have them repeat after you as you read the prayer.

Father in heaven, thank you for sending Jesus to adopt us as your children and include us in the relationship you have with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Jesus, thank you for praying for us and helping us to pray. Holy Spirit, help us to believe that our Father loves us and that Jesus is always praying for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.