



## **RE Unit for Years 5 / 6**

### **Title: When, how and why do Christians pray?**

Sandwell SACRE

Support for the Agreed Syllabus



This unit is one of a series of examples written for Sandwell SACRE and teachers of RE by consultant Lat Blaylock of RE Today Services. Contact Lat for support and guidance on the syllabus via email: [lat@retoday.org.uk](mailto:lat@retoday.org.uk)

## TITLE: When, how and why do Christians pray? Year 5/6

### ABOUT THIS UNIT:

This unit explores the meaning and practice of Christian prayer. The idea that prayer is an expression of worship rather than a shopping list is shown through the examination of the Lord's Prayer. Christians pray in different ways for different things – prayers may be praise, thanksgiving, confession, requests for themselves or for others. The value of expressing gratitude and needs is becoming well researched in the 21<sup>st</sup> C, and so the opportunity to evaluate the power and impact of prayer, the value of praying for believers, and the relevance of prayer to those who do not have a religious faith, make good connections for learning from religion.

**Estimated time for this unit: 6 hours.**

### Where this unit fits in:

This unit builds on work done on Christianity in lower KS2, and also connects with the unit on prayer in Islam and Judaism

### KEY STRANDS ADDRESSED BY THIS UNIT

- Religious practices and ways of life
- Questions of values and commitments

### ATTITUDES FOCUS: the unit provides opportunities for the development of these attitudes:

- understanding the value of expressing gratitude on their own well-being
- recognising ways in which many Christians and others put their faith and trust in a higher authority
- being prepared to examine claims for the efficacy of prayer with open minds

### Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils:

This unit enables pupils to develop:

- Spiritually by looking at their own situation and being able to express thanks and consider how they might need to change or develop to deal with the demands of life
- Morally by considering the best way to live
- Socially by recognising the value of community, as shown in much Christian prayer
- Culturally by seeing a diversity of ways in which people express their faith

<b>EXPECTATIONS At the end of this unit</b>	
<b>Nearly all pupils will be able to... (L3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ describe how prayer is used and exemplified by believers</li> <li>▪ compare aspects of their own experiences and those of others</li> <li>▪ describe some ways in which Christians pray using religious vocabulary</li> <li>▪ make links between what Christians believe about God and how / why they pray</li> <li>▪ identify the impact of prayer on believers' lives</li> <li>▪ talk about what they respect and how they show that compare their thoughts on prayer with those of Christians</li> </ul>
<b>Many pupils will be able to...(L4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ describe how Christians pray and show understanding of these practices are linked to teaching from the Bible.</li> <li>▪ understand some similarities and differences between Christian ideas on prayer, describing how these beliefs affect how Christians live.</li> <li>▪ ask questions about prayer and share their own ideas about it.</li> <li>▪ describe what commands their respect and why</li> </ul>
<b>Some pupils will be able to ... (L5)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ use an increasingly wide range of religious language to explain the impact of beliefs about God on how people pray and the impact of prayer on the believers' lives</li> <li>▪ express thoughtful views on questions like 'why is there unanswered prayer?' 'Does answered prayer show that God loves us?'</li> <li>▪ relate the values and commitments shown in Christian prayer to their own lives, values or commitments thoughtfully.</li> </ul>

**ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS: A Possible final assessment task:**

It is good practice to set activities at different levels throughout the teaching of this unit, so that there is on-going assessment for learning. This final activity is an opportunity to confirm teacher assessments done through the series of lessons.

Give pupils the following five Biblical quotations:

- But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." [Matthew 6:6](#)
- Repent of wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such thoughts in your heart." [Acts 8:22](#)
- I pray that out of his glorious riches God may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being." [Ephesians 3:16](#)
- "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise." [James 5:13](#)
- I was in terrible trouble when I called out to you, O God, but from your temple you heard me and answered my prayer." [Psalm 18:6](#)
- Read these quotations carefully in pairs, then answer these questions:
- When should Christians pray? Why should they pray? What should they pray for? What impact might they expect prayer to have in their lives? Why might prayer be important for Christians?

Here are three responses to prayer:

1. I'm a Christian. I find that prayer helps me to stay close to God. It makes me remember to be grateful for all the good things God has given me. It also makes me think carefully about others and what they need. It reminds me that sometimes I need to be the answer to prayer - it's not just about sitting and talking with God; sometimes it makes me get up and go and help others. God doesn't always answer my prayers, but he has changed me through my prayer - sometimes that is the answer I need.
2. I'm a psychologist. I have been researching the impact of prayer on people's lives. Even those who do not have a religious faith often find themselves praying. The idea that there is someone listening who understands what we are going through can be very helpful when people are going through difficulties. Research shows that saying thank you for things can really make you feel better. Prayer gives people a chance to do that.
3. I'm an atheist. I don't mind if people pray, but I really think it is just like talking to yourself, as I believe there is no God. People pray, and then every now and again, a coincidence happens and they think the prayer is "answered". Clearly, if there was a God, then we would see much more evidence in prayers being answered.

Talk together. Ask pupils to work in groups to come up with arguments for and against the following statement: "Prayer is a complete waste of time." They should use the ideas they have encountered in the passages above and in the earlier lessons, and take different points of view, including a Christian perspective.

<p><b>Prior learning</b></p> <p>It would be helpful if pupils have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ learned about Christian belief in God, and Jesus as God incarnate</li> <li>▪ explored the idea of worship</li> <li>▪ know about Christian churches</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p><b>The Christian religion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bible,</li> <li>▪ prayer</li> <li>▪ thanksgiving</li> <li>▪ worship</li> <li>▪ God</li> <li>▪ obedience</li> <li>▪ worship</li> </ul> <p><b>Religious and Human Experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ thankfulness</li> <li>▪ relationship</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>Teachers might use:</p> <p><b>Artefacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collect some Christian artefacts associated with prayer. Religious artefacts for Christianity are available to purchase from: Articles of Faith (Tel: 0161 763 6232) Religion in Evidence (Freephone 0800 137525)]</li> <li>▪ You will need the texts of the Lord's Prayer. Choose a contemporary version in simple language for understanding.</li> <li>▪ Collection of Prayer cards (often found in churches, Christian bookshops, from Christian Aid). This could be a resource you might ask your local church to help you collect.</li> </ul> <p><b>Web</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An interesting flash presentation of the Lord's Prayer: <a href="http://www.interviewwithgod.com/playprayer.htm">www.interviewwithgod.com/playprayer.htm</a> Use this with the lesson ideas below.</li> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.cleo.net.uk">http://www.cleo.net.uk</a> is the main site for the Cumbria and Lancashire Education Online, and offers access to an expanding range of high quality resources for RE topics.</li> <li>▪ RE Jesus: <a href="http://rejesus.co.uk">http://rejesus.co.uk</a> is a site about Jesus.</li> <li>▪ RE:Quest: <a href="http://www.request.org.uk">www.request.org.uk</a> is a good source for work on prayer</li> <li>▪ 'Tell me' by Andras Simon – image available on <a href="http://www.freeweb.hu/mkdz1/simon.andras.galeria/indexa.html">www.freeweb.hu/mkdz1/simon.andras.galeria/indexa.html</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts">www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts</a> contains a great range of pupil art work inspired by spiritual life, including prayer</li> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.theresite.org.uk">www.theresite.org.uk</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/schools/">www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/schools/</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk">www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk</a> is the Welsh Virtual Teacher Centre. It contains some good materials for teaching to this age group.</li> <li>▪ The National Society supports RE with some books and this website on 'Encountering Christianity' <a href="http://www.encounterchristianity.co.uk">www.encounterchristianity.co.uk</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Visual and books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided fantasy from 'Don't just do something, Sit there!' by Mary Stone (RMEP) or Reflections edited by Rosemary Rivett (RE Today).</li> <li>• Teaching about Jesus Anthony Ewens &amp; Mary Stone (RMEP)</li> <li>• Jesus J Aylett &amp; R Holden-Storey Hodder &amp; Stoughton</li> <li>• The Life of Jesus, D Stent, Blackwell</li> <li>• Lion Story Teller Bible</li> </ul> <p><b>Video and visual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miracle Maker Warner Home video / DVD – an almost indispensable help to teaching about Jesus, this 90 minute animated life of Jesus is supported by web based teaching ideas from the Bible Society UK <a href="http://www.biblesociety.org.uk">www.biblesociety.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Pathways of Belief videos and teachers notes. BBC</li> </ul>
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Key questions	LEARNING OBJECTIVES Pupils should learn:	TEACHING AND LEARNING	LEARNING OUTCOMES Pupils to be able to say "I can..."	WIDER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES / POINTS TO NOTE
<b>What does it mean to pray?</b>	<p>To reflect on the nature of prayer</p> <p>To understand that prayer is an important part of what it means to be a Christian</p>	<p><b>What does it mean to pray?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask pupils to think of the person they turn to when things go wrong for them. A parent? Grandparent? Their best friend? An older brother or sister?</li> <li>• Ask them to pick the sentences which best describe what happens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 'This person magically solves all my problems' or 'This person gives me a hug and helps me to feel better',</li> <li>○ 'This person makes sure nothing bad ever happens' or 'This person really cares about me',</li> <li>○ 'We never bother to talk to each other' or 'We like spending time together'?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pupils could write down the sentences which most apply and draw a picture of that person.</li> <li>• Make the point that we talk to the people we are closest to because they love us and look after us, which helps us feel good: they don't grant magic wishes for us.</li> <li>• Introduce the idea that believers talk to God for the same reasons: this is called praying. While it might be tempting to think that God grants magic wishes, prayer is really about friendship, love and support. For many religious believers, God is like their mum, best friend and big brother all rolled into one!</li> <li>• At the bottom of their pictures, pupils could add in their own words that believers pray because they feel the same way about God.</li> </ul>	<p>L3 I can ask questions about what prayer means to believers, making links with my own understanding</p> <p>L4 I can suggest answers to questions about the value of prayer for believers and others.</p>	<p>Note that this opening lesson matches the one in Unit 2.12 on Jewish and Islamic Prayer</p>

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<p><b>Why is the Lord's prayer important for Christians?</b></p>	<p>To examine a key Biblical text for Christians today</p> <p>To apply their learning to understand how Christians behave</p>	<p><b>Why is the Lord's Prayer important for Christians?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask pupils to silently think of something they want today. It might be a material thing, like chips for dinner, it might be an emotional thing like a hug from their mum, or just something they want to do like walking the dog or playing football after school.</li> <li>• Ask for volunteers to mime to the rest of the class what their need or wish is: they are not allowed to speak.</li> <li>• Make the point that sometimes we can't put into words what we want or need. This can be frustrating!</li> <li>• Next show the class a big bag of sweets (or an appealing alternative!). It will go to the person who asks in the best way: how will each pupil ask for it?</li> <li>• Discuss afterwards how it is sometimes difficult to say what we want, and it is sometimes difficult to know how to say the best thing. Tell the class that Jesus' disciples had the same problem when they wanted to talk to God, so Jesus taught them a special prayer. Read the prayer to them (see Matthew 6.9-13).</li> <li>• This prayer is important to Christians because Jesus taught it. Then break the prayer down and give it to pupils divided into simple sentences on one side of the sheet with space for them to write and draw or stick pictures on the other side.</li> <li>• Discuss what each verse might mean, putting each one into pupils' own words on the board for them to copy: e.g. 'give us this day our daily bread' might become 'give us all the food we need'.</li> <li>• Use a book like 'The Lord's Prayer' published by Lion as an aid. Give pupils time to fill in their sheets with words and collage. What might a Christian pray for today in each of these categories?</li> </ul>	<p>L3 I can make links between the Lord's prayer and Christian beliefs about God and Jesus</p> <p>L4 I can describe the impact of the Lord's prayer on the lives of Christians</p> <p>I can compare what makes me act in the way I do, with the motivation Christians get from the Lord's prayer</p>	

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<p><b>How do Christians pray? What kinds of prayers do they use?</b></p>	<p>To understand a range of Christian prayers</p> <p>To recognise the different ways in which prayer can be used in Christian life</p> <p>To reflect on the value of prayer for those who believe and for those who have no particular religious faith</p>	<p>Give out a selection of prayer cards. For example:</p> <p>God, you give us each other Mother, father, sister, brother Teach us always to show that we care Help us always generously to share</p> <p>We remember Jesus who gave his life for us. We remember all our happy days and our sad days too We remember those who have loved us We remember those we have loved</p> <p>In our deepest thoughts we find our true selves. In our deepest friendships we find our chance to love In our deepest troubles we find our true light In our deepest love we may find God.</p> <p>Thank you God for laughter, fun and play Give me the chance today to make other people's lives happy as well as my own life. And give me the love to take that chance and spread laughter, fun and play, Today and every day.</p> <p>Do all the good you can By all the means you can In all the ways you can In all the places you can At all the times you can To all the people you can As long as ever you can <i>John Wesley 1703-1791</i></p> <p>My Lord God, give me once more the courage to hope. <i>Soren Kierkegaard</i></p> <p>O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother, May I know thee more clearly, Love thee more dearly, And follow thee more nearly: For ever and ever. <i>St. Richard Chichester (1197-1253)</i></p>	<p>L3</p> <p>I can identify and describe some Christian beliefs and teachings about prayer</p> <p>I can describe how prayer might be used in some different aspects of Christian community life</p> <p>I can list some similarities and differences between different occasions when prayer is used</p> <p>I can make links between my own ideas about praying and Christian practice.</p> <p>L4</p> <p>I can use the right words to show that I understand how and why a Christian minister prays for different people</p> <p>I can apply the idea of praying as a way of caring for myself</p> <p>I can enquire into the reasons why Christian people pray</p> <p>I can respond thoughtfully to questions about the purpose of prayer</p>	

		<p>The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.</p> <p>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love. According to your great compassion, wash away my sins.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use this collection of Christian prayers / prayer cards to sort into groups – asking (intercession), saying sorry (confession), thanks, praise, help for others.</li> <li>• Imagine that a Christian minister has to meet several groups of people during a week. She has the prayer cards above. Which ones would she choose to give to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents who want their new baby christened?</li> <li>• A young couple who want to get married?</li> <li>• An elderly woman whose husband has died recently?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Imagine that the minister has to talk to some Y6 children about what it means to be a Christian. Give the 9 prayers out and ask pupils to place them in a diamond 9, with the ones that say most about what it means to be a Christian at the top, and the ones that say least at the bottom. Ask them to explain why they have placed them like this.</li> <li>• Imagine the minister has an interfaith meeting to attend. Which prayers might she be able to use? Are there any that would not be suitable? Why?</li> <li>• Some Christians say that prayer is less about what they are asking from God and more about what God is asking of them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which prayers will most change the pray-er? Why?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
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<p><b>How do Christians pray?</b></p>	<p>To understand a range of ways Christians pray</p> <p>Recognise the symbolic nature of rituals Christians use in prayer and worship</p> <p>Weigh up the value of such symbols and actions in people's lives</p>	<p>Prayer is both a community and an individual matter for Christians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the different ways Christians pray and why these might be helpful. Show pictures, or use video clips to illustrate. For example, <a href="http://www.REquest.org.uk">www.REquest.org.uk</a> is a good source of information. Also, the BBC Learning Zone Class Clips library has relevant resources.</li> <li>• e.g. lighting candles (votive candles), kneeling, open hands, incense (as a symbol of prayers rising to God), through music, through silence and meditation.</li> <li>• Give the time for sitting quietly, with music, perhaps focusing on a lit candle. Talk about how they feel during this experience and why it might be helpful to have time for quiet every day.</li> <li>• Show pictures or video clips of some Christian worship, comparing e.g. Roman Catholic or high Anglican liturgy; a Pentecostal celebration; a youth celebration.</li> <li>• What differences and similarities are there? How do the worshippers express their prayers? These can be spoken or sung.</li> <li>• Look at the words of some hymns and contemporary Christian songs. How do the prayers compare with those looked at in the last section?</li> <li>• How do Christians learn through singing these songs?</li> <li>• Can pupils make a connection between the practices of singing, chanting, sitting, standing, kneeling in church and any other experiences they have had in life, or seen? Is there a connection with crowds at football matches, or at the site of an accident or disaster? Why do people express themselves in this way?</li> <li>• Some Christians use the word ACTS to help them in their private prayers. This stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication (asking).</li> <li>• Watch the video clips and try and identify when the worshippers are doing any of these four things.</li> <li>• Imagine a young Christian is asking for help with prayer. Write a letter back to explain why the ACTS pattern might be helpful.</li> </ul>	<p>L3</p> <p>I can describe the key features of prayer in two different Christian contexts, making some links with Christian beliefs</p> <p>I can ask questions about how prayer and worship help a believer</p> <p>L4</p> <p>I can describe how Christian beliefs about prayer are shown in Christian worship, describing similarities and differences between two different Christian traditions</p> <p>I can describe my own ideas about whether there is anything I can learn from Christian practices of prayer and worship</p>	<p><a href="http://www.request.org.uk/index.php">http://www.request.org.uk/index.php</a></p>

Key questions	LEARNING OBJECTIVES Pupils should learn:	TEACHING AND LEARNING	LEARNING OUTCOMES Pupils to be able to say "I can..."	WIDER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES / POINTS TO NOTE
<p><b>What is the point of prayer?</b></p>	<p>What the Bible teaches about prayer</p> <p>Christian and non-Christian responses to prayer</p> <p>To consider the value of prayer</p>	<p>Give pupils the following five Biblical quotations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." <u>Matthew 6:6</u></li> <li>• Repent of wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such thoughts in your heart." <u>Acts 8:22</u></li> <li>• I pray that out of his glorious riches God may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being." <u>Ephesians 3:16</u></li> <li>• "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise." <u>James 5:13</u></li> <li>• I was in terrible trouble when I called out to you, O God, but from your temple you heard me and answered my prayer." <u>Psalms 18:6</u></li> </ul> <p>• Read these quotations carefully in pairs, then answer these questions:</p> <p>• When should Christians pray? Why should they pray? What should they pray for? What impact might they expect prayer to have in their lives? Why might prayer be important for Christians?</p> <p>Here are three responses to prayer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I'm a Christian. I find that prayer helps me to stay close to God. It makes me remember to be grateful for all the good things God has given me. It also makes me think carefully about others and what they need. It reminds me that sometimes I need to be the answer to prayer - it's not just about sitting and talking with God; sometimes it makes me get up and go and help others. God doesn't always answer my prayers, but he has changed me through my prayer - sometimes that is the answer I need.</li> <li>2. I'm a psychologist. I have been researching the impact of prayer on people's lives. Even those who do not have a religious faith often find themselves praying. The idea that there is someone listening who understands what we are going through can be very helpful when people are going through difficulties. Research shows that saying thank you for things can really make you feel better. Prayer gives people a chance to do that.</li> <li>3. I'm an atheist. I don't mind if people pray, but I really think it is just like talking to yourself, as I believe there is no God. People pray, and</li> </ol>	<p>L3 I can describe what the bible teaches about prayer and say how Christians act as a result of what they believe</p> <p>I can make links between religious ideas about prayer and my own experiences in life</p> <p>L4 I can describe how beliefs about prayer might make a difference in the lives of a Christian and an atheist</p> <p>I can present different viewpoints on the value of prayer, including my own responses</p> <p>L5 I can explain the impact of prayer in the lives of Christians and others, describing similarities and differences between people's responses</p>	

		<p>then every now and again, a coincidence happens and they think the prayer is "answered". Clearly, if there was a God, then we would see much more evidence in prayers being answered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk together. Ask pupils to work in groups to come up with arguments for and against the following statement: "Prayer is a complete waste of time." They should use the ideas they have encountered in the passages above and in the earlier lessons, and take different points of view, including a Christian perspective.</li> </ul>	<p>I can explain my own views about the value of prayer</p>	
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