
“The Parable of the Persistent Widow and the Unjust Judge”

Sunday School Lesson from Luke 18:1-8



In Just Keep Asking?? Sunday School Lesson on The Persistent Widow Parable

The story of the persistent widow can be a little tricky for kids. Are we teaching youngsters to beg for things, or telling them that God will give them anything if they ask enough? What kind of lesson should be emphasized? The main element of this parable is that God loves us and wants to bless us with wonderful things. Not only that, but we are His children and should talk to Him at all times, whether asking for something or not. We can be assured that God hears our prayers and that He is a good father.

Lesson focus: God is a good Father who wants to bless our lives and cares for us. We know that He will listen to our prayers, and even if we don't always get what we think we want, we know that God has our best interests in mind. He always loves us and hears us.

Passage: Luke 18:1-8; Luke 11: 5-13; Matthew 6:7-13; Philippians 4:6-7

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (See notes for specific age modifications)

Materials Needed: Construction paper; staples; stickers; glue; tape; scissors; decorative supplies; Bibles

- [Prayer Coloring Pages](#) and [P is for Prayer](#) from our Bible Alphabet Series
- [Prayer Hands activity for kids](#)
- Compare the [Persistent Widow's Prayer message](#) from Sermons for Kids
- See our entire series and free coloring book [The Lord's Prayer for Kids](#)



Lesson Introduction: Activity Games for Kids

Depending on time, audience, and resources, open with a couple of games that will get kids thinking about asking, or in a way, manipulating...

- (Younger students) “Don’t crack up!” Have students sit in a circle. Designate one student to be the “cracker” and go in the middle of the circle. Give that child a phrase to say, and have them walk around trying to make the others laugh. The first person to laugh goes in the middle of the circle and does the same thing. OR have students pair up and see if they can make one another laugh.
- “What will it take to....” Form groups of students, and select one person from each group to be the “task doer”. Encourage the other kids to make the task student do something (stand on one foot, make a silly face, turn around and cluck like a chicken, etc.). Encourage kids to use words and polite phrases to get people to do what they want. See what it takes to force students into action (this works for multiple age groups).
- (Older students, if outdoor facilities are available) Split students into two teams and play a classic game of “red rover”. Have teams face one another with arms linked. Call one student at a time to try and break through the other side. If they are unsuccessful, they will join that line. Alternatively, have students link arms in a circle and pick one at a time to break into or out of the circle. *Disclaimer: carefully monitor these games, as overly rough linking can lead to injury!

Tell students that today we will talk about someone who was trying to get something to happen. Sometimes we think prayer is like a vending machine, and that if we put in enough we will get what we want out of it. Fortunately, God is not like that, and this lesson will help us understand His love and goodness no matter what.



Sunday School Lesson (Luke 18:1-8)

Parable of the Persistent Widow

Talk to students about prayer. What is prayer? Why should we pray, and how should we pray? And does God really listen every time we talk to Him? Kids may have varying ideas about what prayer is and means. Share with them a couple of intriguing parables from Jesus about prayer.

Tip: These can be fun to act out. Have students play the parts of “knocker” and “sleeper” or “widow” and judge.” Or if you have a large group, you can split them and have some students “plead” while others “deny” or give in, as you are sharing the parables:

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ² He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” -Luke 18:1-8

Talk with kids about what is going on here. Does this story seem a little strange? The wicked judge refuses to give the widow what she needs...but after enough pestering, he relents. Does this mean we should just beg and plead for things we want until we get them? Not quite. Jesus is making a point using contrasts.



You might need to address for **younger students** what a contract is: talk about opposites and how sometimes things show up more when there is something near them that is significantly different, like dark and light. The contrast here has to do with both characters, really...

Ask **older students** what they think the judge might represent or be contrasted with...He is (or rather, is not) God.

The judge was pretty much a bad guy, but even he gave the lady what she wanted eventually. God is not a bad guy at all. In fact, unlike the widow in the story (who the judge did not know), God knows us very well and loves us very much. So how much more will God give us the things that we need?

This story also reminds us to be diligent in prayer. Note what this does NOT mean: It does not mean only talk to God when we want something.

- It does not mean God will always give us what we think we WANT (but He gives us what we need!)
- It does not mean we should ask our parents for things over and over and over and over....
- But this DOES mean God wants to hear from us as His beloved children, and we can rest assured that He will listen and bless us with what is truly best for us.

Give students another example from Jesus:

And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened



to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ 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!” -Luke 11:5-13

Note again, a couple of things are happening here. We see the lesson of persistence and steadfast faith (or at least determined activity), as the friend continues to knock until he is answered. But there’s also the contrast in father figures. Jesus describes how even earthly fathers, who are sinful and make mistakes, will still give their children good things. God is so much greater than an earthly father—or than a judge, as in the first parable. The widow had faith, even in that mean judge. The friend had faith in his sleepy neighbor.

So why do we sometimes think God might not hear us or care about us? He is our creator, savior, and Heavenly Father. We can rest assured that He will take care of us. We can talk to Him anytime and know He hears. So how do we go about praying? Fortunately, Jesus gave us instructions in this, too! Share with kids the example of the Lord’s Prayer:

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this:

*“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.^[a]*

*¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,^[b]*

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,^[c]

*¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*



*¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. -Matthew 6:7-13*

This does not mean that we have to pray these exact words each time we approach God. However, it does make for a great model for our prayers, and an example of how and what we should say when we talk to the Lord. There's even greater news, too, because when we offer prayers and thanksgiving, we have a great promise given:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:6-7

Close with prayer and thank God for giving us all that we have. Ask Him to help us serve and thank him always, even when things are difficult.



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Craft Activities on the Persistent Widow

Prayer chains and/or Bible bookmarks

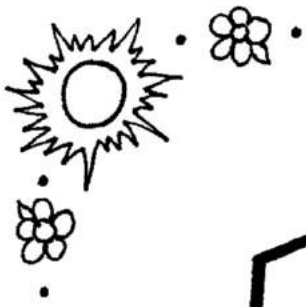
Encourage students to make a prayer chain as a visual reminder of the need for constant prayer:

- Cut several strips of paper out of multi-colored paper.
- Have students write names of people or specific things they want to pray for.
- Decorate papers, if desired.
- Link the strips together using tape, glue, or (highly recommended) staples.
- Encourage students to hang in a prominent place and pray without ceasing!

Bible bookmark or prayer card

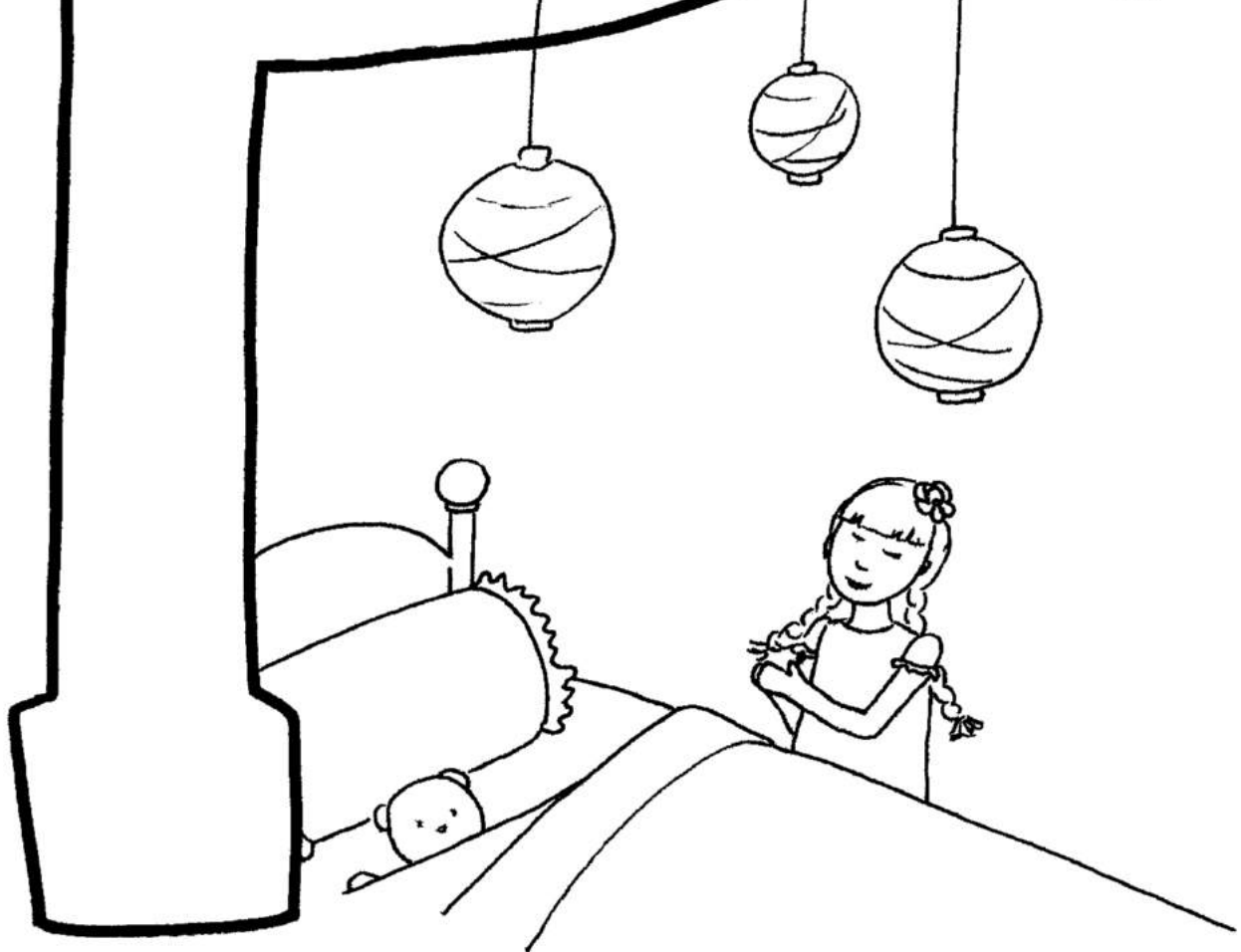
- Cut paper or card stock into strips, approximately 3-4 inches wide by 8-9 inches long.
- Have students decorate the strips using Bible verses, stickers, pictures, or prayer topics.
- Add a string or ribbon for decorative flair.
- Encourage kids to place in Bibles or devotional book for easy access and prayer reminders.



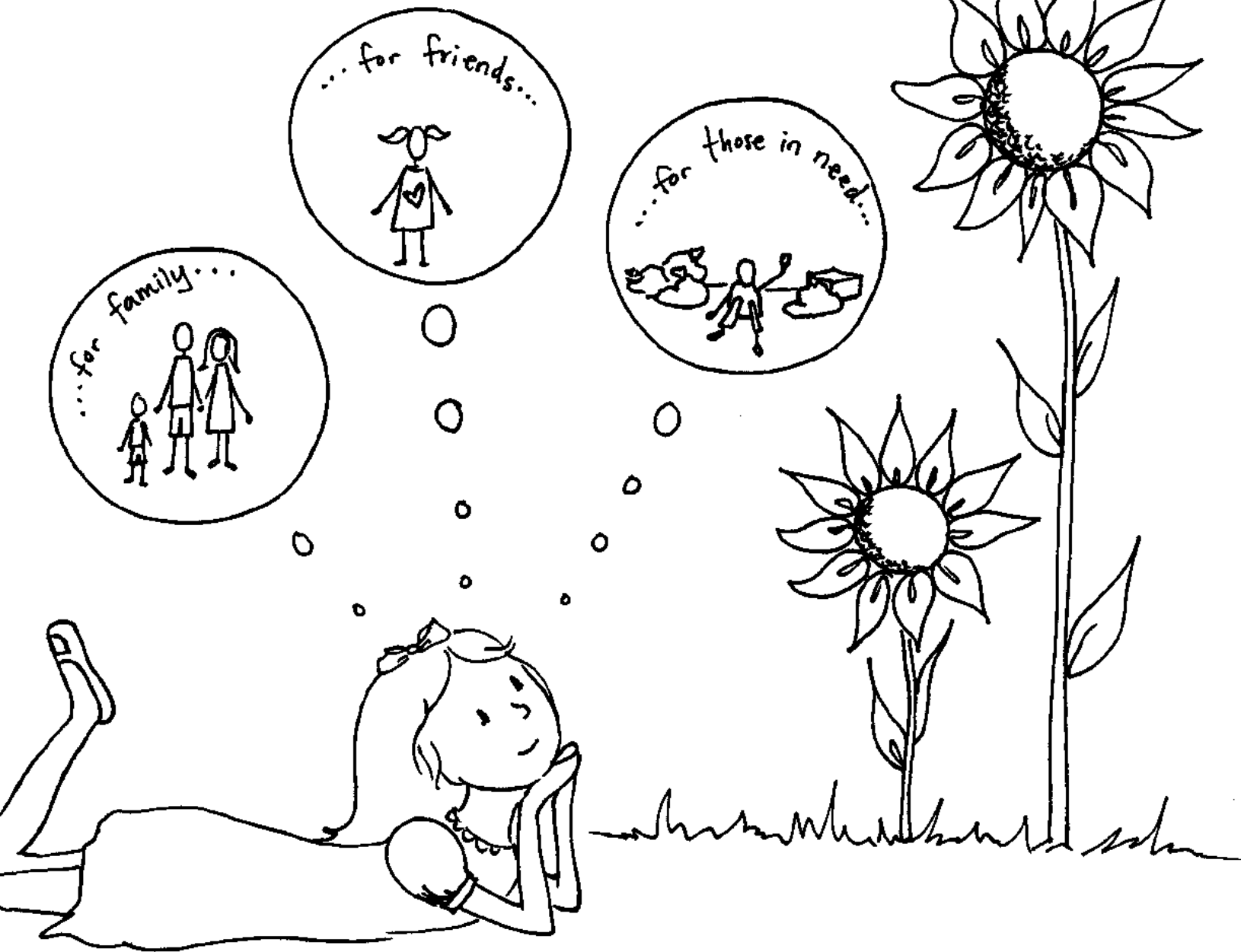


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PRAYER



Time to Pray



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