

Lesson 7.9 Yoked to Christ Jesus: ACTS Prayer

**Topic:** Model for Peacemaking

**Subtopic:** ACTS Prayer

1A. God the Creator and Father

2A. Prayer

**Class:** Standard VII (Grade 7)

**Objectives:**

**Knowledge:** Students will be able to write a prayer using the ACTS prayer model.

**Attitude:** Students will desire to praise God and use the ACTS principles.

**Materials Needed:**

Blackboard and Chalk

Exercise book

**References:** Matthew 11: 25-30;

Psalms 9:1-2

**Memory Verse:** Matthew 11:30 “For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.”

### Teacher Activities

**Introduction:** *Optional: Worship time with prayer and song.* Start with a word of praise for each student then ask, “How do you feel when somebody notices you have done something well and they tell you what a great job you did?”

**Bible Story:** Readers read scriptures and then the class discusses the questions

Matthew 11:25-30 What does it mean to be yoked together with Jesus?

Psalm 9:1-2. *Do you ever praise God that way?*

The author of Psalms knew how important it was to praise God.

**Application:** We find it easy to tell God our wants but forget to give God praise for all He does. We need to praise God with our whole heart. It may help if we use a pattern so we don't get bogged down only in asking God for things. One reminder is to use the acronym ACTS. Write ACTS on the board and explain

*Adoration* (for His kindness, justice)

*Confess* (the wrongs we have done),

*Thank Him* (for His blessings)

*Supplication* (request His help)

**Evaluation:** Is your classroom a place where you and the students praise each other often? Do student leaders use praise in their prayers?

### Student Activities

**Introduction:** Students share responses to opening question. Have you ever thought that praise has power?

**Bible Reading:** Student reads the Scripture. Jesus says we should be yoked to Him.

Discuss Matthew 11:25-30 and Psalms 9:1-2

**Application:**

Listen to the discussion about the ACTS prayer model.

Write a prayer (in journal) using the 4 steps of the ACTS prayer model

**Evaluation:** Were students able to write a prayer using the ACTS prayer model? Do the students understand that praise helps to lift our burdens?

**Extension Activities:** *Worship.* You may want to have the worship time at the end of class today. Then you can incorporate praise and prayer into the worship (see *Practice Praise* below.)

*Practice Praise:* Write these verses on the blackboard: Psalm 106:1-2; Psalm 103:1-2; I Chronicles 19:10-13; Psalm 57:9-10; Psalm 66:1-4; Psalm 150:1-6. Ask your students to look up one of them and consider how they can pray that passage of praise back to God. Tell them that in five minutes you will gather in a circle (if possible) and adore God together. They can use expressions from these passages or give God praise from their own hearts. Close this prayer time by saying: “Accept our words of praise to you, O Lord. Amen.” Then sing a song of praise. If not everyone has a Bible: pick one passage and read it to the class. Work together to rewrite it as a prayer of praise. Then pray it in unison together. Your student leaders might want to use this praise prayer in opening the class next week.

*Prayer Walk.* Is there a way to put feet on your prayers? One suggestion would be to take a walk together. As you walk focus on things you are passing and give God praise for each thing as you walk. It will make you aware of the many things God provides every day that we take for granted. It will also offer the opportunity to become more aware of God’s presence as we walk through life.

### Notes for Teacher

Last week we learned that peacemakers sometimes face rejection and difficulty. Prayer, particularly praise, can give us the strength to go on when we are discouraged. The author of Psalms recognized how important it is to praise God, especially for youth. He tells us in Psalms 8:2, “With praises from children and from tiny infants, you have built a fortress. It makes your enemies silent, and all who turn against you are left speechless.”(CEV) In other words, God says that when we praise Him, it has power over His and our enemies. In this lesson students will review the ACTS prayer model which was taught in earlier classes and the importance of praise will be emphasized.

Key Concept: Praise invites the presence of God into our lives and our situation. We should include praise as part of our prayers.

Introduction. Start your lesson by making a kind comment to and about each student. Maybe you know one has done well in a music contest or played in a sports event. Maybe you have noticed an act of kindness done for an older person by one of your students, or maybe one has come today looking especially nice. Make a comment to each of them. (If your class is too large to praise each student, you can have each student tell the person on their right one thing they appreciate about him or her. Make sure each student gets one word of praise.) When you are done, ask: **How do you feel when somebody notices you have done something well and they tell you what a great job you did?** *Invite responses---maybe they will even give an example.*

We especially like to hear it from people who mean something to us, like a teacher, mother or father, or even a friend. **Do you know what it is called when someone says something nice to or about another person?** It is called praise. Sometimes we say it is a compliment. Or when we talk about God, we say we adore Him. **How do you think God feels when we adore (give praise) to Him?** Sometimes we accept all the things God does for us but never think to give credit to Him. God does these things because He loves us, but it pleases Him when we notice what He does and give Him praise. I think He likes to hear it just like we do. *It*

*might be helpful to point out that praise is different from thanks because it focuses on who God is—His character—rather than just what He does. We thank Him for what He does but we praise Him for who He is (good, righteous, holy, and just).*

Last week we learned about the rejection and problems that we sometimes face as peacemakers. In the Gospel of Matthew we realize Jesus faced challenges in his ministry. Jesus faced criticism from the Jewish religious leaders for eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners who were considered unclean. Jesus would preach and perform miracles but towns would not repent and believe. Nevertheless, Jesus shared with his disciples that when we face frustration, it is important to remember we are “yoked” with Christ Jesus, “For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.” (Matthew 11:30) **What do you think it means to be “Yoked with Jesus”?**

A yoke is used so two oxen can work together. If we are partnering with Jesus our work for peace will be easier. We do not have to carry the load alone. An important part of this principle is learning the principles of prayer! Through prayer we partner with Jesus and invite Him to help us.

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, he taught them what we know now as the Lord’s Prayer. In the King James Version, this prayer starts out, “Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name...” That word “hallowed” means to honor or praise as holy. **Jesus says it is important to honor God when we come to Him in prayer. A good way to begin our prayers is by giving adoration or praise to God. Can you think of special things about God that you can praise Him for?** (*Let the students name as many as they can---His love, He is everywhere and knows all things, He is righteous and just, He is merciful and loving, He is faithful and true, and any others they can think of.*)

**Have you ever thought that praise has power?** Some of you may have played football. **Have you wanted to play a certain position, like being the goalie or offense instead of defense, but another player was chosen to do that?** Did it hurt a little bit? How did you feel toward that person? Were you jealous, angry? **Have you tried praising that person?** Once you do that, you will understand the power that praise can have. It develops your character and many times a lasting friendship can develop because the other person likely knows that it took courage for you to do that.

When we talk with God, starting our prayers with praise to Him is a wonderful way to begin. It puts our focus on the One we are speaking to and takes it off ourselves. Think about it. **When you visit a friend, do you go to that friend and talk only about yourself – what you want, what you’ve accomplished, or where you are going? What happens if you do that?** Usually the friend will choose to find other friends and leave you alone. Friendships mean that you are both interested in each other and want to know your friend and care about your friend.

Maybe you don’t know what to say when you go to praise God. The author of Psalms knew how important it was to praise God. It strengthened his faith when he acknowledged God, even when he may have been going through some bad times. **You can take some words from Scripture and pray those words back to God.**

Let a Reader read Psalms 9:1-2: *“I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart and tell about the wonders you have worked. God Most High, I will rejoice; I will celebrate and sing because of you.”*

**What are the key words in these verses that express praise to God?** (*praise with the whole heart, tell of the wonders God has worked, causes me to rejoice and sing to celebrate God*). It reminds us that we need to praise God with our whole heart, not just with words. Praising God with our whole heart may need to be expressed by lifting your arms in praise to honor Him as you give your heart in praise. These words then offer the possibility of giving God praise for the wonders He is working and you can name those in your prayers. **How can you personalize these words to express your own praise to God? Where have you seen Him working on your behalf or the behalf of others?** Acknowledge that before God. Giving praise to God brings us into celebration of Him. What better way to celebrate is there than to sing our praises to Him? Is there a song that comes to your mind that has the words you want to say to God? Sing that song to God as a prayer.

So your prayer based on these words from the Psalmist might be something like this: I lift my hands to honor you as I praise you with my whole heart. I acknowledge the wonders you work today. (*Name them---bringing daylight out of darkness faithfully, providing for my needs--maybe there is something specific---or answers to prayer for others*). You are God Most High. You make me rejoice. I burst out in song because of you. (*Sing to God the song that comes to your mind*). Amen.

Application: For many of us, we find it easy to tell God our wants but forget to give God praise for all He does. Sometimes it helps us if we use a pattern so we don't get bogged down only in asking God for things. One reminder is to use the acronym ACTS.

A – Adoration

C- Confession

T – Thanksgiving

S – Supplication

As we learn to form our prayers, we start by giving Adoration to God which is what we are thinking about today, then Confess the wrongs we have done, Thank him for his grace and blessings, and request his help through Supplication.

*Journal Writing*: Write a personal prayer to God using all four of the ACTS steps. Your prayer should be at least 4-5 sentences in length. It may be longer. You may want to use a verse from Psalms for the Adoration part of your prayer.