Question 39

With what attitude

Should we pray?

Answer

With love, perseverance, and gratefulness.

**Big Idea:**

When we pray, our attitude matters.

 **Virtue: Perseverance**

**Aim**

To help children consider how what we know about God should influence the attitude with which we pray.

**Bible passage**

Philippians 4:4-9

**Memory Verse**

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known by God.” (Phil. 4:6)

**Teaching Outline**

Explain to the children that what we know about people affects our attitude around them. God has revealed himself to us in his Word, and what we know about him should determine out attitude when we talk to him.

Read Philippians 4:4-9.

Explain to the children that Philippians is found in the New Testament and that Paul wrote to Christians in Philippi. Explain to the children that Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison enduring difficult circumstances. Ask the children if they would be able to write words like Paul’s id they were in prison.

Explain to the children that these few verses will teach a lot about God and how to approach him in prayer. In verse 4 Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice.” Explain to the children that Paul is encouraging Christians to find joy in the Lord. This is because he is trustworthy, sovereign, and good God who loves his people and saves them from judgment, death, and hell through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus. Despite the fact that Paul is in prison, he is able to say “Rejoice!” not because his life or circumstances are good, but because he fully places his trust in God. Encourage the children to look at the second part of verse 5 and to realize that God in near to his people. He is not a far-off distant deity, but he is near, intimately and lovingly involved in the lives of his children. Help the children to see how. Amazing it is that the Creator of the universe wants to know his creatures and longs for a relationship with them.

In verse 6 Paul encourages Christians to bring their prayerful requests to God. Explain to the children that this should encourage them to recognize that God loves to hear and answer his people’s prayers: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Ask the children if they can imagine living a life without ever worrying about anything. You might want to ask them what kind of things they worry about.

Paul knows firsthand that life can be difficult, and yet he says that we can bring our worry and anxiety directly to God. Things might still feel scary and we might want to give in to worry, but God wants us to let him take care of the things that make us anxious. Paul is encouraging Christians to trust God in each and every situation, from the really tricky ones to the everyday occurrences. The passage encourages Christians to be frequent and persistent in prayer. The way to fight off our anxiety is to pray about everything and ask God to replace worry with this peace.

Ask the children if they noticed the attitude Paul is encouraging Christians to have in bringing their prayers and petitions to God. Christians are to have and attitude of thanksgiving in their relationship with God. Christians should have hearts that are thankful that God saves, that God is in control, that God in near, and that God hears and answers the prayers of his people.

What does Paul say will happen as we pray and trust God? Ask the children to read verse 7 aloud with you: “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds Christ Jesus.” Explain to the children that as Christians learn to pray and understand God’s will, they will be able to know peace, because they are confident that God is in control and that he is working for their good and his glory.

**Questions do discuss with your children.**

**Why does it sometimes seem like God isn’t hearing or answering our prayers?**

* Read Matthew 7:7-11 with the children. This passage teaches us to believe that God hears us, and we can expect him to answer us. He wants to give us good gifts. Ask the children, based on the analogy that God is a good Father, what a good father does when a child asks for something harmful of that would be too old for them. In the same way, God sometimes tells us “no” or “wait,” but he always hears us.

**Are some situations too unimportant to pray about?**

* There is nothing too insignificant for prayer. God loves to hear from us about the smallest details of our lives.

**What will having the peace of God look like?**

* Explain to the children that the peace of God means our worries and fears get crowded out by faith in God and hope in his goodness. Explain that the peace of God is sometimes immediate, but sometimes it grows slowly, like a seed turning into a tree. We need to continue persevering in prayers to feel God’s peace.

**Ask the children what praying with perseverance might look like? What kind of things should we pray with perseverance about?**

**Prayer: Spend some time praying together with a focus on gratitude and praying through any needs or requests you may have.**