Lesson 4: The Holy Spirit Intercedes

Overview:

Key Focus: The Holy Spirit helps us pray.

Bible Story: Holy Spirit Prayer Partner

Scriptures: Ephesians 2:18; Romans 8:26–27; John 11:33, 38, 41–44; 1 John 5:14–15; James 4:3

Memory Verse: Romans 8:27 (NKJV) Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Prep:

Materials Needed:

- Three extra chairs
- Beanbags and 2 laundry baskets or trash cans

Engage:

Each week we are busy with school, sports, and church. During the week you might meet with someone, such as a doctor's appointments or counselor appointments. What are some of the appointments that you go to? Who goes with you? Allow time for several responses.

Would you rather go to an appointment alone or with someone to help you and do most of the speaking? Have the children share their answers. **Today we are going to learn that we have someone who goes with us to a very special appointment.**

Memory Verse Activity:
Display the verse on the board with space to write on it. **The first pronoun He refers to God.** Write (God) above the pronoun on the board. **This verse tells us that God knows the mind of the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit is part of God. The Holy Spirit is part of God who lives in us when we believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. The next pronoun He refers to the Holy Spirit.** Write (Holy Spirit) above the pronoun on the board. **The Holy Spirit makes intercession or prays for saints or believers because He lives inside believers.**

Select a volunteer to choose and lead a motion or action, such as pretending to swim, clapping, or jumping jacks, while everyone says the verse together. Repeat several times with a new leader and new motions or actions.

Memory Verse: Romans 8:27 (NKJV) Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Bible Story:

Set out two chairs. **There are some appointments that you go to with your parent and some appointments your parent attends for you.** Point to the two chairs for the parent and the teacher only because the child isn't at the meeting. **When your parent goes to school for a parent-teacher conference, your parent meets with your teacher and discusses your progress, your grades, and any problems the teacher sees. They meet because they want to help you have a successful school year and learn everything you need to know. How do you feel knowing your teacher and parents are talking about you?** Choose several children to respond. **After the conference, your parents might see that you need extra help with math or reading and get a tutor or spend more time helping you at home. Because your teacher and parent talked and want to work together, they can help you better.**

The Trinity works together to help you, too. Who are the three parts of God? (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) **When you believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside you. Your spirit can't be seen, but it is inside and that is the home of the Holy Spirit. We talked about how the Holy Spirit is a treasure and you are the treasure chest that holds Him. The Holy Spirit has many different jobs, and today we will learn about a special job that happens each time you pray. What are some things you pray for?** (Possible answers: health, safe travels, parent to get a job, find a place to live, passing a test) **When you pray, who do you pray to?** (God the Father) Read Ephesians 2:18. **This verse tells us that the Holy Spirit is like an escort to God's throne in heaven when we pray.**

The Holy Spirit doesn't go to God like a parent-teacher conference and talk about you without you being there. The Holy Spirit is your prayer partner who works with you while you pray. Add a third chair to show that prayer is the Holy Spirit with you talking to God. **It might seem scary to think about talking by yourself to the God who created the universe. When you have the Holy Spirit inside you, each time you pray the Holy Spirit is right there with you helping you to pray. Have you been asked to pray and didn't know what to say or what to pray for?** Let several children respond. **You aren't the only person who has felt like you didn't know what to pray, in fact, the verse right before our Memory Verse talks about prayer.** Read Romans 8:26. **We don't know what God's plans are, but the Holy Spirit does.**

The Holy Spirit won't do your praying for you. Sometimes a parent might buy something that you wanted even though you never asked for it. The Holy Spirit partners with you in prayer. Picture yourself starting your prayer, "Dear God," and as you say the words the Holy Spirit and you sit in two of the chairs and God is in the third chair. Take a child by the hand and go sit in two of the chairs while you tell the rest of this illustration. **We know your body doesn't go to heaven each time you pray, but this illustration helps us try to understand spiritual things. As you are praying to God, it is like the Holy Spirit translates it or says it better. Have you ever said something and your teacher or parent corrected it so it sounded much better?** Have the children nod their heads to answer. **Your teacher or parent understood what you were trying to say and helped you say it in a much clearer way. The Holy Spirit does the same thing, but this verse tells us the Holy Spirit intercedes or prays through groans not using words.** Have the child return to his seat.

Jesus prayed that same way when His friend Lazarus died. Read John 11:33 and 38. **Jesus groaned in the Spirit means that the Holy Spirit was doing battle with Jesus against death and what was keeping Lazarus in the grave. We see that the Holy Spirit was Jesus' prayer partner also.** Read John 11:41–44. **Jesus prayed aloud so the people would understand that God hears our prayers and answers them. God answered the prayer to raise Lazarus from the dead because it matched God's will. Jesus wanted God to get the glory for the miracle and so did the Holy Spirit.**

Let's review our Memory Verse. Say Romans 8:27 together. **We see again that the Holy Spirit helps us pray because He wants God's will to happen in our lives. The Holy Spirit knows how to take our needs to God the Father even when we don't know what God's will is. The Bible tells us how important it is to make our prayers match with God's will. The Bible actually tells us how to get our prayers answered.** Read 1 John 5:14–15. **This verse says we have confidence. Notice it doesn't say sometimes or maybe if we are lucky God will hear us. No, we have 100% confidence that God will hear our prayers when we ask for something that is His will. We know that God's Word, the Bible, tells us God's will. When you read a verse and pray for it to happen, God will say "yes" because you match what He says. Suppose you read Ephesians 4:32 which says to be kind one to another. You know that after lunch your cousin is coming over to play, but he can be very angry and mean. What should you pray that would match God's will?** (You should pray that God will help you be kind to your cousin.) **When you pray to be kind, God will always give that prayer a "yes" answer and help you be kind.**

Praying for things the Bible tells you that God wants for you is the way to have your prayers answered. The Holy Spirit will prayer partner with you because He wants God's will. Let's see what the Bible says about how not to get your prayers answered. Read James 4:3. **When you pray selfish prayers or for something against what God says, you won't get that kind of prayer answered. What might be a selfish prayer?** (Possible answers: to get more Christmas presents than your brother, to get a higher grade than someone else, to have lots of candy) **What are some prayers that aren't what God says?** (Possible answers: to steal something and not get caught, to disobey your parents, for your sister to get in trouble) **The Holy Spirit helps you pray, but you can read the Bible and learn things that are God's will. The Holy Spirit prayer partner wants you to get "yes" answers to your prayers, so He helps you pray!** Lead a cheer for the Holy Spirit prayer partner.

Bible Story Questions:

- **Does the Holy Spirit say your prayers so you don't have to pray? Why or why not?** (No, the Holy Spirit partners with your prayer.)
- **Why does the Holy Spirit help you pray?** (Possible answers: The Holy Spirit helps you pray because He knows God's will; He wants you to get your prayers answered; He wants God's will in your life.)
- **What unusual way does the Holy Spirit intercede or help our prayers?** (The Holy Spirit intercedes or prays through us. When I pray in tongues—it is words that God understands.)
- **When did Jesus and the Holy Spirit partner in prayer?** (Jesus and the Holy Spirit partnered in prayer when Lazarus died.)
- **What type of prayers get a "yes" from God?** (Prayers that match God's will and God's Word get "yes" answers.)
- **How does knowing the Holy Spirit helps you pray encourage you to pray more?** (Possible answers: I want to pray for things that are God's will so I get a "yes" answer; I don't go to God alone so I want to pray for more people.)

Bible Story Activities:

Games:

- Divide the class into two teams and give each team beanbags. Set a laundry basket or trash can opposite each team, or teams can share the basket. Within each team, have the children line up in pairs. **The Holy Spirit is your prayer partner. For this relay, you and your prayer partner are trying to get your prayers, which are the beanbags, to be answered, which happens when beanbags make it into the basket. Each time you and your partner get a beanbag into the basket, your team gets a point.** Give a signal and partners both hold onto the beanbag and work together as they throw the beanbag, just like the Holy Spirit partners with your prayers. Keep score and play several times. Depending on your group, you may want to alter the distance of the basket.

Discussion:

- Ideas for Working with Younger Kids:
  Set a chair at one side of the room and gather the children at the opposite end of the room. Choose a child and say, “Let’s pray for you to be kind today.” Take the child by the hand and walk together to the chair representing God. Have the child repeat the prayer, “Dear God, help me be kind today. In Jesus’ name, amen.” Walk the child back to the group. Continue until all children have participated. Depending on the time, pray other things, such as to be loving or obedient.

- Ideas for Working with Older Kids:
  Have the children work in pairs to make extensive lists of prayer requests that match God’s will and prayer requests that are selfish or go against God’s Will. Give a signal to start and after five minutes have them stop. As pairs read their lists, have children mark off prayer requests that match theirs. At the end they should have a list of unique requests. The pair with the most unmarked requests wins.

Worksheet:
Read through all of the directions and prayer requests. Guide the children to circle prayer requests that match God’s will and draw a line through requests that don’t match God’s will or are selfish. Then have the children count the number of times they find the word PRAY in the puzzle. On the back of their papers, have them draw or write about them and the Holy Spirit going together to God in prayer.

Affirmation/Declaration:
I pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus.
When I don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit helps me.
The Holy Spirit is my prayer partner.

Make Connections:

Biblical Worldview Connection:
Many people suffering or in desperate need of a miracle are willing to let someone pray for them. As the children learn that the Holy Spirit helps them pray, they should have more boldness and be encouraged to pray for others. When we believe God’s Word and pray God’s Word, we show the world that prayer works!

Missions Connection:
Some countries use prayer flags to help their prayers reach God or pray facing a certain direction. Our help comes from the Holy Spirit interceding and praying with us according to

God's will. Pray for missionaries to see powerful answers to their prayers so the people will give glory to God. Share any prayer requests from missionaries and let the children pray for them.

Remind the children that we pray for people around the world to learn about Jesus and salvation because we know it is in God's Word—so we know it is God's will.

Family Connection:
As a family, make a prayer chart and put it in a common area. Write down each prayer request that is prayed and how it is answered. Talk about which prayers matched God's Word. Conduct an online search or use a concordance and write the Bible reference by the request to show that it matches God's Word. Have your child make a thank you card or picture to the Holy Spirit for helping them pray.

Prayer Points:
Discuss prayer requests the children have that match God's Word and point out that they know the requests match God's will. Set two chairs together and invite a prayer volunteer to sit in one chair and imagine the Holy Spirit in the chair beside them helping them pray.

Name _____

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Circle the prayer requests that are God's will. Draw a line through the prayer requests that are not God's will.

to heal someone

to give you your friend's bike

to help you pass a test that you didn't study for

to show your family where to live

to have boldness to tell your friend about Jesus

to give you a big party with lots of presents

to get a higher score than the kid you don't like

to remember your Memory Verse

to be helpful to your Grandma

to find your lost pet

to be kind when your friend isn't kind to you

to not get caught cheating

The Holy Spirit helps me pray. How many times do you find the word PRAY? ____

P	R	A	Y	H	O	L	Y	S	P	P	I	P	R	A	Y
R	R	I	T	H	P	O	L	Y	R	S	P	I	R	I	T
A	H	O	P	L	Y	R	S	P	A	I	P	R	A	Y	P
Y	R	I	R	T	H	O	A	L	Y	Y	S	R	P	I	R
R	I	T	A	H	O	L	Y	Y	P	R	A	Y	A	S	A
P	I	R	Y	P	R	A	Y	I	T	H	O	L	Y	Y	Y

BONUS: *On the back of this page, draw or write about you and the Holy Spirit going together to God in prayer.*

ANSWERS

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Circle the prayer requests that are God's will. Draw a line through the prayer requests that are not God's will.

to heal someone

~~to give you your friend's bike~~

~~to help you pass a test that you didn't study for~~

to show your family where to live

to have boldness to tell your friend about Jesus

~~to give you a big party with lots of presents~~

~~to get a higher score than the kid you don't like~~

to remember your Memory Verse

to be helpful to your Grandma

to find your lost pet

to be kind when your friend isn't kind to you

~~to not get caught cheating~~

The Holy Spirit helps me pray. How many times do you find the word PRAY? 11

P	R	A	Y						P			P	R	A	Y
R					P				R						
A			P			R			A		P	R	A	Y	P
Y			R				A		Y			R			R
			A					Y	P	R	A	Y	A		A
			Y	P	R	A	Y							Y	Y

BONUS: *On the back of this page, draw or write about you and the Holy Spirit going together to God in prayer.*

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