

**TEXT** Joshua 10:12-14; Matthew 26:36-46; Genesis 12:1-4; 17:1-4,19-21; 21:1-3

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to explain that God always answers prayer . . . sometimes Yes, sometimes No, and sometimes Wait.

**MEMORY VERSE** Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. — Isaiah 65:24

# Yes, No, Wait

## MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

**BEFORE THEY CALL** — Place both hands to sides of mouth as though calling to someone.

**I WILL ANSWER** — Put right hand to lips and move away from face.

**AND WHILE THEY ARE YET SPEAKING** — Hold right index finger in front of mouth, then roll it forward in a circular movement.

**I WILL HEAR** — Hand cupped around back of ear.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Our memory verse for this week is illustrated by two people talking to God. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the five sections on the heavy black lines. Reassemble the picture with your group as each portion of the verse is learned.

## BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Show your class a traffic light made from construction paper, as given in the patterns for this unit. Ask them to identify what each color means in relation to traffic laws. Then compare it to the three ways God answers our prayers.

1. God answered Joshua's prayer with a YES.
2. God answered Jesus' prayer with a NO.
3. God answered Abraham's prayer with a WAIT.

Climax: God always answers our prayers.

Conclusion: God may not always answer prayer the way we would like Him to, but His answer will always be what is best for us.

Response: Your students will be able to tell the three ways God answers prayer.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Created in the image of God, man is incurably religious; "Atheists are made, not born." Prayer recognizes man's dependence on some higher power, and people of all times and places seek a propitious relationship with a higher power no matter what their understanding of that may be.

Living in a precarious world, surrounded by the vast and often terrifying forces of nature, people in despair or anguish cry out spontaneously to God. In times of crisis often the instinctive nature of prayer is disclosed.

The Bible reveals the religion in which prayer is the focus of personal piety. To be a Christian is to be one who prays. "Thou then art not a Christian that art not a praying person," is a judgment of Bunyan. And Luther is credited with saying, "As a shoemaker makes a shoe, and a tailor makes a coat, so ought a Christian to pray. Prayer is the **daily business** of a Christian."

Prayer is not reduced to mere supplication or **petition** to which God responds sometimes Yes, sometimes No, sometimes Wait. Prayer is a many-faceted phenomenon, but most essentially **communion**. Prayer is also **adoration**, the praise of God because of His greatness and goodness. And prayer is **thanksgiving**, our outpouring of gratitude to God for His mercy, grace, and love. For the sinful man coming to God in his need, it is **confession** and **repentance**. Prayer may be **intercession** in behalf of others.

Prayer at its highest level is **submission**, as Christ Himself taught, to the will of the Father, man's abandonment of his own desires and will to God. This is the exact opposite of the primitive concept of prayer which believes that the supernatural may be wheedled, coerced, shamed or bribed into doing man's will.

The one praying in complete submission to the will of God and in perfect obedience to His Word can be sure God hears and answers his prayer.

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Prepare a prayer wheel for each child (see Patterns). Attach a spinner to the center of each wheel. Have the children spin their spinners and take turns telling the class what each selection means to them. If it lands on one of the Yes, No, or Wait spaces you might help

them to know that these are some of the answers God gave to people, and that they will be learning more about them in the weeks to come. If their spinner lands on one of the other spaces tell them that these are ways of praying to God which don't necessarily require answers, but God is very pleased when we come to Him in these ways.

Make some flip-sided stick puppets to use in presenting this lesson (see Patterns). Attach a popsicle stick between the front and back of each puppet. Prepare a short sentence about each picture, then ask the children what they think God's answer was. For example, when you show the picture of Joshua, you might say: "Joshua wanted the sun to stand still in the sky so that Israel would have light while they fought their battle. He knew that if darkness came they might be defeated. How did God answer his prayer?" Or, when you show the picture of the cars on the street: "Kevin loved to ride his skateboard. His mother had told him he could take it over to his friend's house but not to ride it in the streets. His friend lived several blocks from his house and he didn't want to have to stop at every street corner and carry the skateboard across the street. So Kevin prayed and asked God if he could disobey his mother, just this one time. All together now, 'God's answer was — NO!' " Do this with each of the stick puppets. Be sure to turn the puppets over so the children can see the answer to each situation.

Make a milk-carton traffic light. Rinse and dry a quart or half-gallon milk carton. Cut black construction paper to fit sides and top of the carton. Then tape or glue it in place. Cut twelve circles — four red, four yellow, four green. Glue them to the sides of the carton. Print the words NO — YES — WAIT on the circles. Use as a prop in class or make enough traffic lights to send home with the children at the end of the unit.

Bring to class a series of cards with a question on the front of each. Let your students write an appropriate response on the reverse side — YES, NO, WAIT. Read the cards aloud and have each student explain the response he wrote. Emphasize that God is all-knowing and chooses the best answer for our prayers.

## QUESTIONS

Explain prayer and why it is important.

Compare how praying to God is like going to a parent or teacher for advice. (They know more than we do.)

Tell about a time when your mom or dad said yes when you asked for something. Tell about when they said no. Tell about when they said wait.

Why is it important that we pray about everything?

Is there any prayer too hard for God to answer?

Is there any prayer too small for God to be bothered with?

Can we get ahead of God by making our own decisions?

What things could hinder God's hearing and answering prayer?

Talk about a prayer God answered for you.

Has God ever answered No to one of your prayers? How did you feel about His answer? Does God always answer quickly? Explain.

Sometimes we have to be patient. Tell of a time you had to wait.

How did God answer Jesus' prayer in the Garden? Why do you think Jesus' prayer was answered in this way? What does it mean to be *in God's will*?

## PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Give each child a copy of the PRAY TODAY dot-to-dot poster (see Patterns) and a crayon. Help them to "read" the words as they repeat with you. Tell them to display this poster at home and let it remind them that they should pray every day.

Bring a play telephone for children and one for the teacher. Have them take turns asking for something. Then the teacher will answer Yes, No, or Wait. Adapt answers to requests.

Give each child a pair of the hands cut from felt which can fold in prayer (see Patterns). On the hands print the words, GOD ALWAYS ANSWERS PRAYER. Encourage them to talk about the prayers they have prayed.

To illustrate three possible answers to a request, use dolls to act out a child who is asking for a cookie. Mother would answer Yes if it were after dinner, No if he had already eaten a dish of ice cream and a piece of cake, or Wait if he can have one after dinner but not now.

For each child prepare a cut-out telephone (see Patterns). Print the pattern on heavy paper and cut it out. Fold on the dotted lines and staple together on the right and left just above the dial. The receiver will then fit between the two slips of paper. Talk about how sometimes when we call Grandma on the phone she doesn't answer — maybe she is not at home. But Jesus is always there when we talk to Him, and He will always answer.

## REVIEW IDEAS

List a number of items that God may or may not answer with a Yes. For those that are Yes, include salvation, comfort, peace, guidance, loving your neighbor, help in trouble. For No, include picking a fight, playing a mean trick on somebody, or getting even. For Wait, include growing up, getting a new bicycle, visiting Disneyland, getting married, etc.

Make three large, colorful posters. One should say YES in large letters, another NO, and a third WAIT. Arrange

three volunteers to come and tell your group about incidents in their lives when they prayed and God answered. Have the volunteers hold the poster so the children cannot see what the answer is until they get to that point of the story.

## COORDINATING SONGS

"Whisper a Prayer"

"God Can Do Anything but Fail"

"Why Worry, When You Can Pray"

## MEMORY VERSE SONG



Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.



Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

