



OPEN DOORS

Disciples & Early Church • U8#4 1st-3rd Gr. • Mar.2, 2025

Concept

God opens doors for the gospel.

Goal

Students will learn that prayer is the way we plug into God, who is our spiritual power source.

Passage

Colossians 4:2-6

Key Verse: "... praying... that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ..." Colossians 4:3

Planning Ahead

| Lesson Supplies | Craft Supplies |
|--|---|
| <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CD Player</i> • <i>Any CD (VBS CD or other kids music- preferably something the kids would recognize)</i> • Alternative: <i>lamp or other item that requires being plugged in* (teachers supply)</i> | <p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's a Big, Big World Atlas</i> • <i>You Can Change the World, Jill Johnstone</i> • 3 folded road maps • Printed flat globe, 1/student • Printed door & key verse, 1/student • Glue sticks • Scissors |

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

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"Prayer is not the only thing we do, but it is the first thing we must do if anything else worthwhile is to follow. It leads to strategic involvement... By its nature, prayer feeds a new work of God before that effort becomes visible, as a baby is fed in the womb for months before it is pushed out.

"In a powerful statement, Sanders says, 'Paul did not regard prayer as supplemental, but fundamental-not something to be added to his work, but the very matrix out of which his work was born. He was a man of action because he was a man of prayer.'

"Perhaps we have underestimated the role of prayer both in ministry and in our own personal spiritual growth. The ironic thing is that we often feel we are too busy to pray. This attitude reflects what we deem useful and important. If we are too busy to pray, then we must believe that prayer does not impact the world as much as our frenzied activity. I suppose we would have time to pray if we thought it was a primary ingredient in shaping of lives. Thus, I am suggesting that it is not a denial of the importance of prayer that hurts us, but the lack of a practical prioritized emphasis that prayer receives in the average Christian's life. Are those in positions of leadership in the church stressing and modeling a proper emphasis on prayer? Often the last place we look to explain problems in our service to others is prayer. In *Walking in Victory* Dennis McCallum addresses this problem:

'A ministry weak in prayer will tend to be overly strong on human effort. What we cannot accomplish via the power of God, we will try to supply through our own power. As we lose faith in the effectiveness of the prayer, we will succumb to the temptation to use force and compulsion on people in an effort to bend them to our will.'

"...What is even more subtle in the gradual erosion of our prayer life is the fact that it is often due to the attention we give not to wasteful, but noble, goals:

Naturally, in striving for a time to pray, there will be arguments concerning our mission, duty, and responsibility. Some people will consider such devotion to prayer as neglecting our mission, forsaking our duty, and impairing our responsibility... The enemy will use such matters as duty and mission to create his best arguments for stopping our prayer."

Set Up

Instructions: Set up the CD player with the cord obviously draped on or around it (not plugged in) for the Introduction. Make sure CD is in the player ahead of lesson. **ALTERNATIVE: use a lamp or other electronic item that requires being plugged in!**

Incorporation Lg. Group

Activity Stations:

- **Prayer for the World**
 - **Instructions:** Choose a people group from You Can Change the World, find the location of their nation in It's a Big, Big World Atlas and pray for them.
- **Craft – Open Door**
 - **Instructions:** Give each student a door, key verse and a printed flat globe. Cut shapes out of a map and glue them to the inside of the flat globe to form a collage. Cut out the door and fold along the dotted line. Glue the folded edge to the globe. Cut out key verse and fold like a fan. Glue one end of the verse to the door and the other end to the globe with the verse facing outward.

Introduction Lg. Group

Object Lesson (Alternative: use a lamp or other electronic item with plug)
Our key verse this week is, "... praying... that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ..." (Colossians 4:3). How does this verse tell us to get open doors? (allow kids to answer)

I wonder what's wrong with this? It won't turn on. Maybe there's no CD in it? Would someone see if they could find the CD for this?

Instructions: Because it is obvious, the children should notice that it is not plugged in and will try to tell you. But ignore them and keep trying to figure it out. Tap it on the side, flip the switch again, etc. Finally, ask one of the children if they can help you. By now everyone should be well aware that it's not plugged in.

Well, I guess this CD player won't work unless it's plugged into a power source, will it? Now that I have plugged it in, it works and we can listen to music! Allow the kids to listen to a song- it can be a VBS or Oasis song, etc.

Transition

Let's gather together and read Colossians 4.

Lesson Lg. Group

Listen as I read **Colossians 4:2**. It says, "Devote yourselves to prayer." What do you think it means to devote yourself to something? (It's more than something you do only once in a while; you are very committed, diligent.) In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Paul says "pray without ceasing." Obviously Paul understands the importance of prayer. Prayer is like the cord on the CD player. We have to plug the cord into the power source to make the CD player work.

Lesson Continued

In the same way, it's impossible for us to do spiritual work without being plugged into the spiritual power source. Prayer is the way we plug into God, who is our spiritual power source.

Because we are born separated from God, we aren't plugged into Him. Romans 3:23 says we have all sinned and fall short of God's glory. Romans 6:23 tells us the consequence of sin is death – judgment and eternal separation from God. However, in His great love God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the penalty for our sin. He died in our place, taking the punishment we deserve. When we personally accept the forgiveness God offers we become God's children, also known as Christians. Then we can talk to God all the time in prayer.

Now listen as I read **Colossians 4:3-4**. Paul asks the people in Colossae to pray for him.

- What does he specifically ask them to pray for? (He asks for an opportunity to preach the truth about Christ and the Holy Spirit to speak clearly through him.)
- Why would Paul ask the Colossians to pray for these things? After all, Paul of all people had lots of experience and success persuading others about the truths of God. Why would he need prayer? (He knew his work was useless unless he depended on God through prayer.)

Our key verse today is Colossians 4:3, "...praying... that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ..." God is the one with all the power. He knows exactly what people need and how to convince them of His love. He wants to work through us to tell people about Jesus and He knows when others are ready to hear. If we ask Him, God will open the doors of opportunity to tell people about Him and the mystery of Christ. The mystery of Christ is that all people everywhere can come to God through Christ.

We're going to see a skit about prayer as a means of being plugged into God.

Skit "Knock? Knock!" presented by Drama Team

Let's get into small groups to discuss this some more and pray.

- What is the key verse? What does that mean?
- In the skit, Steve told Tim to pray for an open door. Have you ever prayed for an opportunity to tell someone about Jesus, the Bible or your faith? What happened?

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Transition

Learning Activity#2 Sm. Groups

Learning Activity# 2 Continued

- When should you give up praying for opportunities? NEVER! It doesn't always happen immediately. Often we have to pray for a long time, even years for that person. One example is of a student in a Bible study. "A student went to Bible study & showed some enthusiasm for learning about God, but when school started stopped coming. Some of the boys in group started praying consistently for him and they regularly asked him to come back. Finally, he did come back. During a teaching about how God wants us to come as we are, regardless of the sins we have committed or how messed up we seem to be, he told his teacher that he didn't like the life he was leading. He wanted to change. He decided to receive Christ's unconditional forgiveness."
- Have any of you had open doors or opportunities to tell others about Jesus? How long did you pray for that person before you had an opportunity?
- Have any of your friends asked you about your Oasis class after you have told them about it? What did they ask you? How did you answer? Has anyone ever asked you to tell them about God, Jesus or the Bible? (Teachers should share an experience they've had with an opportunity God has provided as a result of prayer.)

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray that God would open doors to help us share Jesus with others in our neighborhood, school and family. And let's pray for Christians around the world to have opportunities to share Jesus with their neighbors and friends.

Optional Activity

Game -- "Open the Door, Please" (similar to "Mother May I")

Instructions: Divide kids into groups. Choose a leader for each group. The group will line up side by side about 10' away, facing the leader. The leader will ask each child in turn, "Danny, take four baby steps (giant steps, regular steps, etc.) to my house." Child must reply, "Open the door, please" or return to the starting line. The leaders will make up the instructions until one child reaches and taps the leader. Play a few times so several children get to be the leader.