

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Bible Verse

Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock. Matthew 7:24

Did You Know?

This week, we take a look at the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The intended audience for this parable is described rather than named. "Jesus told this parable to certain people who had convinced themselves that they were righteous and who looked on everyone else with disgust" (Luke 18:9). Jesus was talking about the Pharisees. The Pharisees were a group of religious leaders who studied the religious laws and followed them exactly. Jesus saw beyond their law-abiding exterior to their hearts. The Pharisees failed to take care of people in need and looked down upon people who did not follow the law exactly as they did. The other character in this parable was a tax collector. Jesus often spoke about tax collectors. Tax collectors had to give the Roman Empire a set amount of money; anything collected above that amount was theirs to keep. It was a system designed for corruption. The tax collectors usually collected more than was demanded by Rome. They were seen as traitors and considered unclean.

Jesus' parable reports on the prayers of the Pharisee and the tax collector. People in Jerusalem often went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood by himself to pray. Pharisees separated themselves from other people in an attempt to maintain their purity. The Pharisee's prayer was focused on himself rather than God. He did not request anything from God, but reported on his own faithfulness. Completely secure in his own righteousness, he even thanked God that he was not like other people. It was as if the Pharisees were praying as a performance, rather than praying to be in relationship with God. The tax collector, in contrast, stood at a distance, feeling unworthy to come farther into the temple. The tax collector did not even feel worthy to look up, but simply bowed his head and made a single request, "God, show mercy to me, a sinner" (v. 13). The contrast between the prayers and attitudes of the two men is striking. Jesus concludes by noting that the tax collector went home "justified." Used here, the term *justified* means "made right with God." This parable reminds us that when we come to God in prayer, the focus is on God, rather than on ourselves.

Bible Story

Luke 18:9-14

Anchor Point

We can learn from the stories Jesus told.

Your Lesson

JUMP IN:

- Welcome
 - Kids Stuff:
 - Prayer Cards
 - Exploration Station:
 - Body Prayers
- ### DIVE DEEPER:
- Bible Story Time
 - Experience the Story:
 - The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Look It Up!

My Thoughts

GROW STRONGER:

- Life Connection: *Yertle the Turtle*
- Learn & Serve with the Deep Blue Kids: Chess and Checkers
- Craft Activity: Prayer Beads
- Spiritual Practice: Prayer

WORSHIP:

- Gather, Sing, and Sign
- Praise and Reflect

 Requires preparation.



JUMP IN!

The following activities may be done in learning centers as the children arrive or may be done with the entire group.

WELCOME

Supplies: Class Stuff—pp. 16-17, CD, DVD (optional), CD player, DVD player (optional), television (optional), markers, offering basket, tape



Continue to display Attendance Chart and obtain offering basket.

- Play “My Stories for You” and greet each child as they arrive.
- Let children mark their attendance and place their offerings in the basket.

KIDS STUFF: PRAYER CARDS

Supplies: Kids Stuff—pp. 19-20, binder rings, paper punches, scissors

- Distribute Prayer Cards.
- Let children cut out the Prayer Cards.
- Punch a hole in the cards and place them on the rings.
- Encourage children to use their prayer cards during the week.

SAY: There are so many ways to pray. The Bible story today teaches us God loves everyone, and that no one’s prayer is better than anyone else’s.

EXPLORATION STATION: BODY PRAYERS

Supplies: space to move

ASK: Did you know there are several ways to pray? One way to pray is by moving our bodies. Let’s all practice moving our bodies in prayer.

- Invite children to stand up, and lead them in the following spiritual prayer practice:
Plant both feet firmly on the floor. Raise both hands forward, then upward above your head. Look up toward the sky.

SAY: Thank God for creating you.

Bring your arms back down by your sides. Then stretch your arms outward, away from the body, with palms up. Bend your head down and look at the floor.

SAY: Remember Jesus who teaches us how to live.

Wrap your arms around yourself, giving your body a big bear hug.

SAY: Thank the Holy Spirit for being with you.

Bring your hands back down by your sides and stand firm and strong on your own two feet.

SAY: Amen.

DIVE DEEPER

BIBLE STORY TIME

Supplies: DVD, DVD player, television

- Place DVD in the player and cue Session 8, then watch video.

ASK: What did the tax collector do? What did the Pharisee do? What did Jesus say?

EXPERIENCE THE STORY: THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles; Bible Stories & Stuff—Session 8, p. 2

- Direct children to locate in their Bibles Luke 18:9-14, then read the Scripture aloud.
- Call on a volunteer to read the story aloud.

LOOK IT UP!

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles, Bible Stories & Stuff—p. 3 (top), pencils

SAY: This unit's Bible story is about prayer. Let's explore what the Book of Jeremiah says about prayer.

- Invite children to locate in their Bibles Jeremiah 29:12.

ASK: Is it important to pray? Why or why not?

MY THOUGHTS

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles, Bible Stories & Stuff—p. 3 (bottom), pencils

ASK: Our video and Bible story talk about bragging. What does it mean to brag?

- Invite children to journal their responses.

GROW STRONGER

LIFE CONNECTION: YERTLE THE TURTLE

Supplies: Bible Stories & Stuff—p. 4

SAY: The Bible story Scripture says, "All who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those make themselves low will be lifted up" (Luke 18:14).

ASK: What do you think this means?

- Invite children to read Life Connection: *Yertle the Turtle*.





You could put these games out each week as children gather, and invite them to play together.

You can find a chess board and pieces on pp. 90-91.

LEARN & SERVE WITH THE DEEP BLUE KIDS: CHESS AND CHECKERS

Supplies: Leader Guide—pp. 54, 91; Class Stuff—pp. 2-3, 31; world map or globe

SAY: The Deep Blue Kids are in Armenia!

ASK: Can you find Armenia on the map?

SAY: Popular games in Armenia are checkers and chess. Also, our new friend Armen likes to play chess.

ASK: Have you ever played checkers or chess?

- Photocopy and distribute the checkerboard and playing pieces.
- Encourage children to find a partner and play the game.

CRAFT ACTIVITY: PRAYER BEADS

Supplies: beads, scissors, string

SAY: One way to pray is with beads. Let's make prayer beads to use when we pray.

- Invite children to cut some string.
- String the beads. Leave room for beads to move.
- Tie a knot at the end of the string.

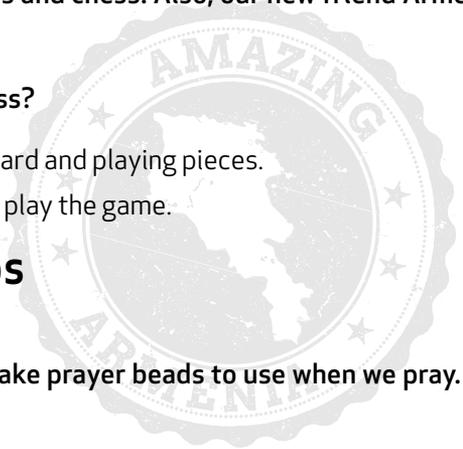
SAY: You can spin, move, or touch your beads as you pray. It is just a simple way to recite your prayers to God.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: PRAYER

SAY: Today we learned about some different ways to pray.

ASK: How do you pray?

SAY: Spend some time this week being in prayer with God. You can try a new way to pray or pray how you are most comfortable. The most important thing is that you spend time reflecting and talking with God.



WORSHIP

GATHER, SING, AND SIGN

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bibles, Bible Stories & Stuff—Songbooks, Leader Guide—pp. 86 & 87, CD, DVD (optional), CD player, DVD player (optional), tape, television (optional)

- Write on the board Matthew 7:24. Review the Unit 2 Bible verse American Sign Language, using pages 86 & 87 as a guide. Photocopy those pages for children.
- Distribute songbooks. Play the song “My Stories for You” one time, letting children follow along. Then sing the song together. Set aside songbooks to collect later.
- Teach children the Unit 2 Bible verse sign language, then say and sign the verse.

PRAISE AND REFLECT

Supplies: Deep Blue Kids Bible; Class Stuff—pp. 12 & 21, 5-6; 8 & 25; glue stick; model pieces; tape

- Continue to display on the board Matthew 7:24. Display Poster: Animals of Armenia. Obtain Fact Book: Animals of Armenia.

SAY: Let’s learn more about God’s wonderful creation and the animals you might find in Armenia.

- Invite a child to choose an animal on Poster: Animals of Armenia. Then read about the animal in Fact Book: Animals of Armenia.

SAY: Today’s Bible verse says, “Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock” (Matthew 7:24).

- Invite children to say the Bible verse with you.

SAY: Let’s find the next piece to build our house.

- Display on the table the model house on its base. Display model pieces. Invite volunteers to locate pieces numbers 3 and 4 (*house sides*). Glue the pieces to the assembled house and return house model to base.

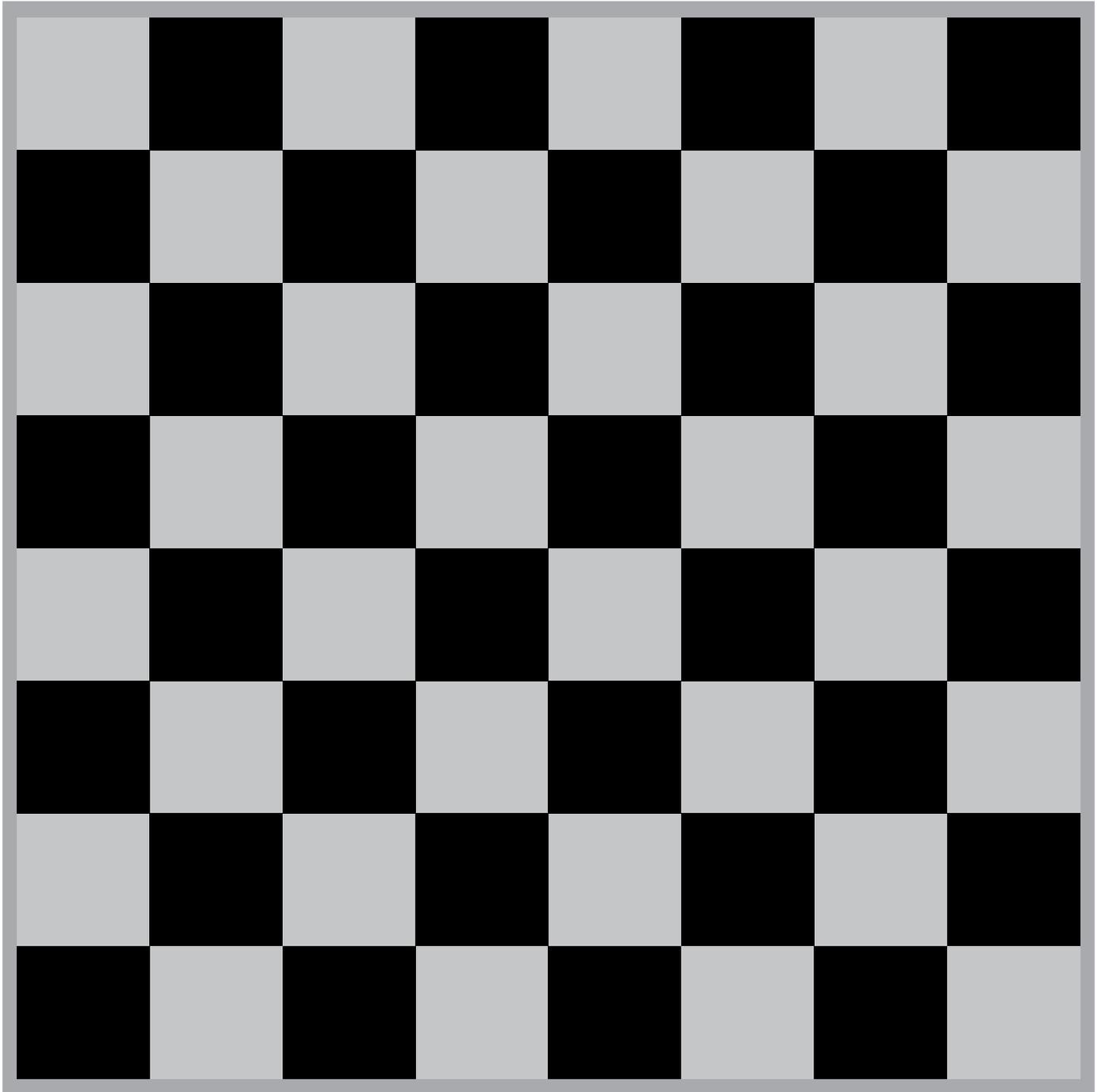
SAY: Great job! Next week we will continue building our house.

- Invite children to name people or situations they’d like to pray for in the closing prayer. Lift up those joys and concerns at the end of the prayer.

PRAY: Dear God, you are so big! Help us to remember you are with us and can help us create your Kingdom and share your love. Amen.



Learn & Serve with the Deep Blue Kids: Checkers (pieces are on page 91)



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