

“Identity: God Hears You”

(Part of the Identity Series, and a follow up the “Job Identity” lesson)

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

By Katie McRee

Key verses:

1 John 5:14-15, various other verses about answered prayers

Objectives:

- Learning stories of people who’s prayers were answered
- To consider that God can hear the intention behind our prayers, not just the specific request.

This is part of a series that will be presented throughout the school year, and a follow up to the “Job identity” lesson that was posted in February of 2016.

The Set up: Minimal

The Plan:

- **Hook: Listening Quiz** (10 mins): Youth will be listening to a recording and then given a quiz to see how much they remember.
- **Book: Stories of Answered Prayers** (10 mins): Breaking into groups and reading several Bible stories of people who’s prayers were answered by God.
- **Look: Opportunity for Answers** (5 mins): Watching a clip from “Evan Almighty.”
- **Took: Bell Prayers** (5-10 mins): Making bracelets/key chains/door hangers with bells that remind us that God hears us.

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- A way to play the audio recording in Hook
- Copies of the “Listening Quiz” and pens/pencils (one per student)
- Simple prizes (optional)
- Bibles
- Copies of the “Prayer Stories” page (one per group, at least 5)
- AV equipment to show “Evan Almighty” clip
- Bells
- String/cord/yarn/etc.
- Scissors

(Open in prayer, announcements, and any other start of gathering traditions.)

Listening Quiz (Hook, 10 mins)

The youth will be listening to a recording of a lady in a store and then taking a short quiz to see how much they heard and remembered.

- Explain to the students that you are going to have them listen to a recording and then give them a quiz to see how much they heard and remembered.
- Before listening hand out the pens/pencils and the quiz FACE DOWN (back of lesson). Make sure they know NOT TO TURN IT OVER or TAKE NOTES until you tell them to do so.
- Play the audio recording of a lady shopping for clothes:
<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice/shopping-clothes>
 - As you play the recording, you may want to add another layer of difficulty by making sounds or doing something distracting (coughing, going in and out of the room, writing things on the board, show the other teacher a picture of your puppy, etc.)... this would be particularly affective if you act casual about it and they don't even know that you are trying to distract them.
- Once recording is over, have them turn their page over and give them 30 seconds to take the quiz. (Answers below)
 - 1. Four, 2. Medium, 3. No, 4. Red, 5. Yes, 6. 10.95, 7. Cash
- Have them trade their paper with someone and quickly grade them.
- Award prizes to the people who scored the highest (optional).

Discussion Questions:

- What facts were easy for you to remember?
- Which ones were difficult to remember?
- Was anyone distracted by other activity in the room?
- Why are these sorts of exercises so hard?
- Were there any facts that you couldn't recall hearing, even after you were given the answer?

Transitional Statement, say something like:

This exercise was obviously designed to be difficult, but it does make a good point... it can be REALLY HARD to pay attention to what someone is saying or what is going on. Let's take a look at God's listening skills...

Stories of Answered Prayers (Book, 15 mins)

Looking at various stories from the Bible of people who made requests of God.

PART 1:

- Break them into small groups of 3 to 4 and pass out the group worksheet located at the end of the lesson. If you have a large group, you may have to assign more than one group the same passage, and if you have a small group, you have them work in pairs.
- Assign each group a different passage, making sure they circle their passage at the top of their page so that they do the right one. Below is the list of passages, as well as the answers to the questions:
 - **1 Samuel 1:2-11, 20...** Hannah asked for a son even though she was barren and God gave her EXACTLY what she asked for- a son.
 - **1 King 3:1-15...** Solomon asked for wisdom and was given a BETTER version of what he requested: wisdom AND riches and honor.
 - **Job 6:8-11, 42:10-16...** Job prayed for death (because he had lost everything and was miserable), and God did not let him die BUT restored his health and wealth and let him have more children.
 - **Luke 22:39-44, 2 Cor. 5:15-19...** Jesus asked that he not have to die, and although he did die on the cross, he was given strength AND his death gave the world something BETTER- it reconciled the world to God.
 - **2 Corinthians 12: 7-10...** Paul asked for the thorn in his flesh to be removed and it was not, BUT he had a change of heart and was able to see how God is glorified through his own weakness.
 - **There are loads of other examples that would work... feel free to add your own.**
- ADULTS- wander and help... some of these are hard to figure out because there is the assumption that they know a little bit about the backstory of the character!
- Give them about 5 minutes to work through the page, and then have everyone come together to share their findings.
 - As you go through, take note of how God answered the prayers, or responded in another, loving way that was better in the long run.

PART 2:

- Now, **have everyone look up 1 John 5:14-15, and ask one person to read out loud:**
(And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.)

- Take some time to talk through the verses, being sure to hit on these points:
 - God hears what we ask for...
 - He gives us everything according to his will... which sometimes means we get a variation of what we asked for.
 - God doesn't only hear what we ask for, but instead he understands the INTENTIONS of what we are asking for... for example, Job didn't really want to die, he wanted relief, and God granted that to him.
 - God sometimes gives us what we ask for, but delivers it in a way that is not what we anticipated.
 - If we love and are following God, it makes it easier for us to understand his response to our prayers. When we ask for something and don't get what we asked for, we are able to see how he is present in that situation.
 - ***Please make sure they understand that God doesn't always give us what we ask for, and in fact, sometimes we don't get anything close to what we want (like when a loved one dies even though you prayed for healing). But that doesn't mean he doesn't hear us. Even when we don't get what we ask for, he is still present and comforting us.

An Opportunity for Answers (Look, 5-10 mins)

Watching a video from “Evan Almighty” that shows how sometimes God answers our prayers in unexpected ways.

- Before showing the video clip from “Evan Almighty,” make sure that the students understand a few things:
 - This is NOT Christian movie, but plays on the story of Noah’s Ark (not all aspects of the movie make sense, theologically speaking, but we can still learn from it!)
 - At the beginning of the movie, the main character, Evan, has begun a political career and is very busy. His wife (the lady in the clip we are about to watch) is worried about the lack of time the family has together and prays that her family would be closer.
 - A little later, God (played by Morgan Freeman) invites Evan to build an ark, even though they are in a serious drought. People think he is crazy and the entire family is stressed about his mental health...
 - And now we will watch the clip of his wife in a restaurant (she doesn’t know that Morgan Freeman character is God)
- Show the video clip from “Evan Almighty”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkes4yPulmI>

Discussion Questions:

- What is the state of mind of Evan’s wife at the start of this clip?
- Did she think that God was with her (at the beginning of the clip)?
- Did “God” show that he had heard her prayer?
- How did her conversation with “God” change her demeanor?
- Had “God” answered her prayer?
- Did “God” respond to her concern in a loving way?
- How is this clip connected to what we just learned?

Bell Prayers (Took, 5 mins)

In this final section, we will be thinking about the requests we want to make of God and putting a bell on a string for each request as a reminder that he hears each request.

- Explain that you are going to be making bracelets/ key chains/ door hangers or something else like that to remind them that God hears their prayers.
- For each concern that they have that they want to give to God, they will put one bell on their string.
- Let them get as many bells as they need and tie them on to their string.
- If they would like, they can share with a friend what their different bells represent.
- Their bracelets might look something like this:



- Close in prayer, THANKING God for listening to all of our concerns and being able to understand the heart of what we are asking for!
- Have them take the bells home and keep them in a place where they will ring regularly and remind them that God is listening to them!

Listening Quiz

(one per student)

1. How many different color T-shirts did the store carry?
2. What size T-shirt did the customer want?
3. Does the shop have a medium size purple T-shirt?
4. What color T-shirt did the customer try on?
5. Does the customer buy the T-shirt?
6. How much does it cost? (in pounds)
7. Does the customer pay by credit card or cash?

Prayer Request Stories

(one per group)

Circle the scripture that your group was assigned so that you don't forget your passage:

- **1 Samuel 1:2-11, 20.**
- **1 King 3:1-15**
- **Job 6:8-11, 42:10-16**
- **Luke 22:39-44, 2 Cor. 5:15-19**
- **2 Corinthians 12: 7-10**

Answer these questions based on your reading:

1. Who in this passage made a request of God?

2. What did they ask for?

3. Did they get EXACTLY what they asked for, a version of what they asked for, or something totally different? (What did they get if it was different?)

4. Was what God gave or did for this person better or worse than what they requested?