

**Teacher's Guide
to
Prayer
(Madhava Class)**

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Compiled by:
Tapasvini devi dasi

Hare Krishna Sunday School Program sponsored by:
ISKCON Foundation

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Introduction

Prayer is a very important aspect of spiritual life. It is one of the nine processes of devotional service. We may take it for granted that children can pray naturally. We ask them to say their prayers, yet we do not teach them how. We encourage them to open their hearts and speak to Krishna, yet we don't show them how He answers our prayers. We take too much for granted and leave too much unsaid.

How do we expect children to develop a close and loving relationship with their father Krishna while reciting memorized Sanskrit prayers or rote prayers in someone else's words? We must physically, emotionally and spiritually teach them of Krishna's faithfulness and willingness to hear and answer prayer. They must learn that prayer, as a communication with the Lord, guides us to accept Krishna's love in times of greatest need.

Imagine coming to our best friend each day and repeating the identical things you said yesterday and the day before. After a few such repetitions, your friend would no doubt offer you a strong vitamin supplement for your failing memory and also feel genuine hurt that you were no longer sharing your innermost feelings. How does Krishna feel when a rote prayer is offered rather than a prayer from the heart -- a prayer that's sparkling new and shiny each time we come before Him. Children's needs and emotions change daily, even hourly, and so must their prayers change to reflect sincerely open, honest hearts before God.

In this session we will learn of five different parts of prayer: worship, confession, thanks, needs of others and our needs. We will talk about Krishna's answers to our prayers and practice praying alone and together, silently and out loud.

There is no student workbook for this session. Rather, the children will make and keep a Prayer Journal. Since the story of Gajendra is highlighted in this session, there are also instructions for making individual books about Gajendra, which can be taken home at the end of the session.

You will need the following materials for making the prayer journals:

- one 3-prong pocket folder for each student and one for yourself
- construction paper, preferably lighter colors
- stickers or adhesive stars for students to record their prayer progress

You will need the following materials for making the Gajendra books:

- crayons, colored pencils or markers
- glitter
- green sequins and other assorted colors
- blue fabric paint
- construction paper
- cotton balls
- flower stickers or tiny silk flowers
- toothpicks

Lesson One

Prayer is Communication with Krishna

1. Introduce the verse for the session. It is Bhagavad Gita 10.10.

*tesam satata-yuktanam
bhajatam priti-purvakam
dadami buddhi-yogam tam
yena mam upayanti te*

Translation: To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.

This should be written in advance on a large chart paper or chalkboard that can be seen by all the children. Teach it the same way we learn a Bhagavatam verse -- first having students repeat each word, then each line, as you lead. With younger children, it helps to point to each word as you chant, so they can gradually recognize the word and eventually read it on their own. Chant three or four times with them responding, then ask for volunteers to lead the chanting. As students lead, the rest of class still chants responsively. Students then repeat the English translation after you.

Since the students don't have books for this session, Worksheet 1 can be copied and passed out to the children if they wish to take the verse home to practice. If you wish, you can wait until next week to distribute the verse and then it can be added as the first page of the Prayer Journal.

2. Introduce the topic of the session, "Prayer." Ask children how many of them have prayed before. Why did they pray? What did they pray for? How did prayer make them feel? Ask the students to tell you what prayer is. Listen to their answers without judging them right or wrong. Ask them if they think prayer is important. Why or why not?

3. Tell the children that prayer is a way that we can communicate with Krishna. We are not in the spiritual world with Him but we *can* talk to Him directly through prayer. We can talk to Him ANYTIME.

The following activity, Hotline to the Spiritual World on Worksheet 2, will demonstrate this point. Tell the children that we are able to "call" the Lord anytime. Before class, gently attach the heavenly cloud from Worksheet 2 to a wall or even the ceiling. Add a 3- or 4-foot piece of curling ribbon (for

the telephone cord), connecting the telephone receiver to the cloud. If you have an old, real or play telephone, this is even better.

Ask the children to think about the things we might say to Krishna in our prayers. Then allow volunteers to take turns “calling” Krishna and praying, using the Hot Line to the Spiritual World. They can dial K-R-S-N-A on the receiver first if they like.

(An alternate way to use Worksheet 2) Copy Worksheet 2 (one copy per student) on various colors of card stock. Give a copy of Worksheet 2 and a 2-foot length of ribbon to each student. Have them cut out the telephone and the cloud. The clouds can be attached to the back of each student’s chair, desk or to a personal spot on the wall. They can attach the ribbon and the receiver and keep their own personal Hot Line to the Spiritual World. This can be used throughout the session by having the children pick up their phones when they first enter class and saying a short, quiet prayer to Krishna and again before leaving class.

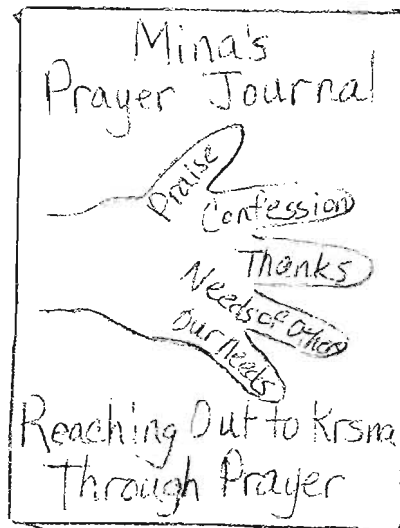
4. Tell the students that we can pray in many different ways to Krishna. Before class cut apart Worksheet 3 on the lines. Pass out the different situations to different students. Give them a minute to think about it and ask what type of prayer might be offered by someone in that situation. If anyone gets stuck, let other students offer suggestions. This activity will show that prayers may be prayed for many reasons, not simply to ask for something material.

5. Tell the students that we are going to learn about five different parts of prayer. A prayer does not have to be only about one subject. We often pray for many different things at a time. List the five parts of prayer on the chalkboard as you name them. They are: PRAISE AND WORSHIP, CONFESSION, THANKS, THE NEEDS OF OTHERS and OUR NEEDS. You may explain each briefly now, but each type of prayer will be discussed thoroughly in the following weeks.

Tell the students that prayer is such an important part of spiritual life that we want everyone in our class to learn to pray regularly. To help us do this, each student will make his own Prayer Journal where his prayers can be recorded. Today we will make the cover and the cover will remind us about the five parts of prayer.

6. For the Prayer Journal cover, let children select a piece of construction paper. Placing the paper vertically, the children should spread their fingers

and trace one hand. This hand is reaching out to Krishna through prayer. The hands should then be cut out and glued, thumb up, on the front of the 3-prong folders. In the thumb, they should write “praise and worship” and then in each finger write one of the other parts of prayer. “_____’s Prayer Journal” can be written on the top. “Reaching out to Krishna through Prayer” can be written on the bottom. (See drawing below.) Give them time to color or decorate the folders if they wish. Collect the folders so the Prayer Journals can be added to next week.



7. There are many examples of devotees praying to the Lord. The one we will concentrate on for this age group is the story of Gajendra. Relate the story of Gajendra below or use the children’s book, “Gajendra, The King of the Elephants,” available from Krishna Culture, 1-800-829-2579. You can show pictures from the Bhagavatam that are found in the Eighth Canto, Part One, if you use the story below.

I would like to tell you of a land very far away from here. It is a land where the heavenly beings go to enjoy themselves. In that land there is a gigantic mountain surrounded by an ocean of milk. Imagine that! So much milk that it creates a whole ocean! It is a beautiful mountain, with gardens filled with fruits and flowers. Lakes with golden lotuses, swans, cranes and other graceful birds add to its beauty. Many jungle animals roam the mountain and birds chirp with sweet voices. The beaches of the lakes and rivers are covered with small gems that seem like grains of sand. The water is as clear as crystal and has a wonderful fragrance due to the devas bathing in it.

One time, long ago, the leader of the elephants, Gajendra, wandered to the lake along with the rest of his herd. They were attracted by the

sweet aroma of the lotuses and all the elephants were very tired and thirsty. Gajendra entered the lake, and the cold, clear water refreshed him completely. He filled his trunk with water and sprayed it over his wives and children who were also bathing in the lake.

Suddenly a strong crocodile attacked the elephant's leg in the water. Gajendra tried his best to escape the dangerous crocodile but the crocodile held fast to his leg. His wives, worried and crying, joined the other elephants and tried to pull him from behind. But they were no match for the strong crocodile.

The elephant and the crocodile fought and fought, pulling each other in and out of the water. They continued fighting for one thousand years! Gajendra became tired after so many long years of fighting and began to weaken. But because the crocodile is an animal of the water, he gained strength and power during the fight.

When the king of elephants realized how helpless he was, he knew that he could not save himself. He thought for a long time and decided, "My other elephant friends and relatives couldn't save me from this awful danger. They were no help at all. It is my fate that I have been attacked by the crocodile. I must pray to the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is the shelter of everyone! I surrender unto the Lord."

Then the King of the elephants fixed his mind on the Lord and chanted a mantra that he learned in his past life. He chanted, "om namo bhagavate vasudevaya... I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Person, Vasudeva." Gajendra went on offering many prayers of praise and surrender to Krishna. The Lord, hearing Gajendra's prayers, appeared before Gajendra. He was on the back of His carrier, Garuda, and was carrying His disc and other weapons.

When Gajendra saw the Lord, he was in a lot of pain, but he immediately plucked a lotus flower with his trunk and offered it to Krishna. With great difficulty he murmured, "O my Lord, master of the universe, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You."

Seeing Gajendra in so much pain, the Lord got down from Garuda and pulled the elephant, along with the crocodile, out of the water. With all the demigods watching in amazement, He then cut the crocodile's mouth from his body with His disc. Gajendra, the King of the elephants, was saved. The demigods and heavenly beings danced and sang and showered flowers from the sky, all the time praising the Lord.

Even though Gajendra was in the body of an elephant he was able to remember a prayer learned a whole lifetime ago! How valuable it is to learn how to pray.

Discuss the story briefly, asking questions to be sure the children followed the story.

8. Praying aloud with others is very potent but may be difficult for many. In this session we'd like to introduce the children to the habit of praying aloud with others so they will be less inhibited about it as they grow older. Since children are likely to be shy at first, introduce praying out loud with Echo Prayers. Pray a short phrase or sentence which the children can repeat, such as, "My dear Lord Krishna, thank You for all You have given us." You can say several sentences, having students echo each. When you finish, ask if anyone has anything special they would like to pray for. Allow them to state their prayer.

If you like, each week you may ask the children to assume a different posture for prayer to demonstrate various ways we pray. They can kneel, fold hands and bow heads, raise outstretched arms or offer obeisances. Bowing heads, with eyes closed is an effective way of learning to pay attention and not becoming distracted while praying. Tell the children that this is why many people pray like this.

9. (Optional) Your class may enjoy making their own storybooks about Gajendra. This is an additional activity which will take a bit of time but the children will enjoy it. It will also give them a nice handmade book to take home at the end of the session.

Instructions for making "Gajendra, King of the Elephants" can be found in your teacher's folder. You can begin this week, or since this lesson is quite long, wait until next week. Each week at the end of class, one or two pages of the Gajendra book can be completed. The teacher should collect all pages until the book is finished. The children can assemble the books in class. Students should NOT take home any single pages, or they will inevitably be lost.

Lesson Two

Praise and Worship

1. If children made personal Hot Line to the Spiritual World telephones, allow a minute or two for them to “call” Krishna and say a short prayer. Continue this practice each week.
2. Chant the verse for the session.
3. Ask children who took the time this week to pray to Krishna. Allow a few minutes for them to share how they felt, how they prayed, etc.
4. Review the five parts of prayer learned last week: praise and worship, confession, thanksgiving, praying for the needs of others and our needs. Tell them that today we will talk more about praise and worship.

First define “praise” as showing your admiration or telling of someone’s glories. Praise and worship is given to someone great. Krishna deserves our praise because He is the greatest of all. Ask the students what Krishna could be praised for. (*His strength, beauty, cleverness, mercy, power, etc.*)

5. There are many prayers that simply glorify Krishna. The Brahma Samhita is one of them. Read one or two verses to them (2 are found below), or better yet, play a short segment of a tape of the Brahma Samhita with the translations narrated. The children’s tape, “Little Vaisnava,” Tape 1, also has a few translations of the Brahma Samhita sung by children. (Ordered from Maralee Ash, PO Box 15690, Detroit, MI, 48215.)

Text 31: I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, round whose neck is swinging a garland of flowers beautified with the moon-locket, whose two hands are adorned with the flute and jeweled ornaments, who always revels in pastimes of love, whose graceful, threefold-bending form as Syamasundara is eternally manifest.

Text 33: I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is inaccessible to the Vedas, but obtainable by pure unalloyed devotion of the soul, who is without a second, who is not subject to decay, is without a beginning, whose form is endless, who is the beginning, and the eternal purusa; yet He is a person possessing the beauty of blooming youth.

Tell the children that the reason people come to temples and churches is offer praise and worship to God. Many of the prayers sung in the temple are in praise of Krishna or the spiritual master. In every religion this is true; praise and worship are important parts of all spiritual practices.

6. Tell the students that praising Krishna is like a celebration of the greatness of God. The following activity lets the students have fun while praising Krishna. Purchase enough balloons to have one per child plus a few extra in case some pop. Have students work in pairs. Give a balloon to each child. Instruct them that they will take turns blowing into their balloons. Before each partner puffs into his balloon, he will say something in praise of Krishna, like, "Krishna is so clever; He made all the animals and birds look different." In this way students will fill their balloons up. When the balloons are full enough, tie them off. Then students can use markers and write a short phrase on the balloon that praises Krishna. Attach strings and each person can take home his balloon.

7. Ask the children: If they really had a Hot Line to the Spiritual World, when would they use it? You should get various answers. The conclusion you want to draw is that prayer is for ANYTIME! Anytime we feel that we need to speak with Krishna we can pray. It does not have to be in the temple or before meals or at a designated hour. We can and should pray all the time.

Sometimes this is difficult because we get caught up in our activities and may forget. Therefore, it *is* good to set aside regular times to pray. This will help us remember Krishna and take time out from our material activities and focus on Him. Mealtime is a good time to remember Krishna and thank Him for providing food for us. Bedtime is another good time; it's a good way to end the day by talking to Krishna. In this lesson, we want the children to begin the habit of saying a bedtime prayer.

8. Now the students can add this week's page to their prayer journals. You will find the Prayer Journal worksheets in the teacher's folder. Make copies of the first page, "Praise and Worship," and punch holes so the pages will fit into the 3-prong folders. Each child can insert the first page into his folder.

The poem on top is an example of a prayer of praise to Krishna. Emphasize that prayers do not need to be formal or rhyming. They should feel free to pray what is in their minds and hearts.

The assignment for the week is for students to say a prayer at bedtime each night. When they have completed their prayer each night, they should

put a sticker on the happy face for that day. Suggest that they put the Prayer Journals on their pillows or near their beds so they will remember to pray each evening. Staple a sheet of stickers or stars to the back of each journal or instruct them to color in the happy face.

Another assignment for them to complete this week is to write two prayers in their journals. One is a bedtime prayer and one is a prayer of praise and worship. Remind them to bring back the Prayer Journals so another page can be added next week. To reinforce this, next week you may want to give stickers (which can be placed on the back cover of the Prayer Journals) to those students who bring back their journals.

9. End the lesson with a group prayer, using the Echo Prayer technique as you did last week. Be sure to include a sentence or two of praise and worship in your praying aloud.

10. If your class is making Gajendra books, let them begin after finishing the group prayer.

Lesson Three

Prayers of Confession

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Let students relate their experiences with bedtime prayers last week. Ask to see the Prayer Journals with the sticker section completed and their original prayers. Let volunteers read their prayers. Reward or praise students who remembered to bring back their journals and who did the homework.
3. Remind students that we talked about praise and worship last week. That was one of the parts of prayer. Another part that we will discuss today is confession. Ask if anyone knows what that means. Conclude that confession means *to admit* that you are wrong or that you have done something wrong.

Discuss with the students the value of confession. Let's start with something they can relate to -- a confession to their parents that they did something they were not supposed to do. Give them a hypothetical situation to think about, such as:

- Your parents told you not to invite anyone over while they were gone. You did and your friend spilled soda all over the white carpet and then went home.
- You said something mean to your best friend and he refuses to talk to you anymore.
- You went to the store with some friends and you put a candy bar in your pocket and left without paying for it.

Let the students think about the given situations. How might they feel? What sort of punishment might they face if they confess? Should they tell their parents what they did even if they will be punished? If so, how will they feel after they tell them? If not, how will they feel?

In the course of the discussion, guide them to realize that when we do something wrong we may feel very guilty and that makes us worry and makes our minds uneasy. Often the feeling of guilt is worse than confessing and being punished. Confessing our wrongs also helps us become very honest and straightforward. Until we confess a wrong, we "hide" it in our heart and it does some damage. In the above situations, if the children confessed to their parents, the parents would appreciate their children's attempts to be honest. Emphasize that we all make mistakes and do the wrong thing

sometimes, but it is best that we be honest about it. That will help us prevent it the next time.

4. Prayers of confession are good for us for the same reasons. We place ourselves before Krishna as we are -- imperfect beings who sin and make mistakes. We are not trying to fool Him and say we are all good. But Krishna knows that we are trying to improve. He will forgive us, and if we ask, He will help us become more pleasing to Him.

When we have the *courage* to admit that we were wrong, we can “fix” ourselves with Krishna’s help. If we can’t confess our wrongs, we don’t have a chance to make improvements. Point out to the children that we tend to blame others for our mistakes. Confessing to Krishna helps us take responsibility for our own actions and stop blaming others.

5. In the story of Govardhan Puja, Lord Indra made a mistake and he humbled himself and confessed to the Lord. Tell the story, emphasizing Indra’s prayers of confession and admitting his wrong.

The cowherd men of Vrindavan once prepared a nice sacrifice for Lord Indra. At that time the child Krishna approached His father and asked, “My dear Father, who is this sacrifice meant for? Why are you holding it? Please tell Me everything about the sacrifice.”

“My dear son,” said Nanda Maharaja, “the rainfall is very important for our lives. We cannot farm without rainfall. So we must repay the person who gives us the rain. That person is Lord Indra.”

Krishna replied, “But Father, there is no need to worship the demigods for material results. Any mercy that is given from the demigods really comes from the Supreme Lord Vishnu. There is no need for you to worship Lord Indra. I beg you to begin a sacrifice for the satisfaction of the local brahmans and Govardhan Hill. Let us have nothing to do with Indra.

“We can hold the sacrifice like this: First prepare nice foodstuffs from ghee and grains. Ask all the brahmans to come and take part. We will chant Vedic hymns and offer grains to the brahmans.

“Then decorate the cows and feed them well. After this you may give prasadam to the dogs and other animals. Give nice grass to the cows. In this way we can begin Govardhan Puja.”

Following the orders of the boy Krishna, everyone fed and decorated his cows. Keeping the cows in front, they began to walk around Govardhan Hill.

Krishna was more than pleased with the Govardhan Puja. In His happiness He began to eat all the foodstuffs offered in the sacrifice. He said, "Govardhan Hill and I are non-different. Anyone who does not worship Govardhan Hill will be bitten by all of the snakes on the hill."

Therefore, all of the cowherd men worshipped Govardhan Hill and the local brahmans every year for the good fortune of the cows.

All of the residents of Vrindavan were happy when they held the Govardhan Puja. The cows and brahmans were satisfied and the cowherd men and women felt very peaceful. Only Lord Indra was unhappy because of the sacrifice. Being very puffed-up, Lord Indra could not understand why the residents of Vrindavan were not worshipping him. He became overly angry and wanted to destroy all of Vrindavan with a mighty flood.

Lord Indra said, "These cowherd men have neglected me on the orders of this talkative boy Krishna, who is nothing but a child. By believing Him, they have made me very angry! They must all be destroyed along with their cows!"

Ordered by Lord Indra, a sky full of dark and frightening clouds appeared over Vrindavan. They began to pour down rain with all their strength and power. There was constant lightning and thunder, a strong wind, and constant rain that fell like sharp arrows. The clouds poured water as thick as pillars and soon the land of Vrindavan was flooded.

Being cold and frightened, the animals and the people in Vrindavan took shelter of their dear friend Govinda. Even the cows took their calves and went to the lotus feet of Lord Krishna.

They all said, "Dear Krishna, You are all-powerful and You are very kind to Your devotees. Please protect us from the wrath of Indra."

Krishna wanted to teach Lord Indra a good lesson. He also wanted to protect the devotees. So, without waiting, He picked up Govardhan Hill with one hand, just as a child picks up a mushroom from the ground.

"My dear brother, My dear father, My dear residents of Vrindavan, you can now safely enter under the umbrella of Govardhan Hill which I have just lifted. Do not be afraid of the hill and think that it will fall from My hand. You have been frightened because of the heavy rain and the strong wind; therefore, I have lifted this hill to protect you just like a huge umbrella. Bring your animals and be happy under this umbrella."

The residents of Vrindavan stayed under Krishna's umbrella for seven days without feeling any hunger or thirst. They were all surprised to see how Krishna could hold up the mountain with the little finger of His left hand.

Lord Indra was also surprised. He called for all the clouds and asked them to stop raining. When the sky was clear and the sun was shining, Krishna said, "My dear cowherd men, now you can leave because everything is ended. Please take your wives, children, cows and wealth. You may all go."

When everything was cleared, Krishna slowly replaced Govardhan Hill just as it had been before. At that time all of the Vrindavan residents approached Krishna and began to offer Him nice prayers. They all embraced Him and blessed Him over and over again. The demigods poured showers of flowers on the earth and sounded many different conchshells. Along with His friends and the cows, Krishna returned peacefully to His home in Vrindavan.

After Krishna saved the inhabitants of Vrindavan, Lord Indra appeared before Him and fell down at the lotus feet of Krishna. He knew that Krishna was much greater than himself and Lord Indra folded his hands and began to offer prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

"Oh dear Lord, due to my ignorance I caused a lot of trouble by sending torrents of rain and heavy hailstorms upon Vrindavan. I was angry because You stopped the sacrifice which was to be held for me. Please excuse me for being fool number one. Kindly give me your blessings so I will not act foolishly again. If You think my offense was too great to forgive, please remember that I am Your servant and You have come to protect Your servants. Kindly excuse me."

Of course, Krishna forgave Lord Indra and He knew that Indra had learned his lesson. He asked him to return to his heavenly home and remember that he is not supreme, but only a servant of the supreme Lord.

Discuss the story briefly, pointing out the value of Lord Indra's confession.

6. Here's an activity that the students can do that relates to the story above. Worksheet 4A and 4B each contain a sentence from the story. Cut Worksheet 4A on the lines. Randomly pass out one section (word) per student until all words are distributed. Tell students that they all hold a word to a sentence, and holding on to the word they received, they should arrange themselves in a line so that the words make a sentence. When students are arranged, have each read his word in order to discover the sentence. Do the same with Worksheet 4B.

7. Students can now add this week's page to their prayer journal. It is the "Confession" page included in the Prayer Journal worksheets. Make copies and punch holes so the pages will fit into the 3-prong folders. Each child can insert this in his folder.

The poem on top is an example of a general prayer of confession. Emphasize that the children will have specific things to pray about depending on what happens each day. If they feel that they acted wrong, they can reveal that to Krishna and ask for His help and forgiveness. They should feel free to pray what is in their minds and hearts.

The assignment for the week is for students to continue with bedtime prayers, but to add a "confessional" part to their prayer. Make sure they understand that a prayer does not have to be *a certain type*, such as **only** a prayer of praise or a prayer of thanks. A prayer may have many parts as we communicate with the Lord.

When they have completed their prayer each night, they should put a sticker on the mailbox for that day. Remind them to put the Prayer Journals on their pillows or near their beds so they will remember to pray each evening.

Another assignment for them to complete this week is to write two prayers of confession in their journals. Remind them to bring back the Prayer Journals so another page can be added next week. Again, use stickers for reinforcers.

8. End the lesson with a group prayer. This week, you can progress from Echo Prayers to having children finish a sentence which you begin. Begin with:

- "Dear Krishna, you are _____." (*Allow as many volunteers as you have to finish the sentence as they wish.*)
- "My dear Lord Krishna, please forgive me for _____."
- "My dear Lord, please help me _____."

9. If your class is making Gajendra booklets, begin after the group prayer.

Lesson Four

Prayers of Thanks

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Let students relate their experiences with bedtime prayers last week. Ask to see the Prayer Journals with the sticker section completed and their original prayers. Let volunteers read their prayers.
3. Have students do a short role-playing exercise to demonstrate the value of giving thanks. Have three students act as the “givers” in the exercise. Three other students can be the “takers.” Coach the givers to say something nice as they give an object (pencils, candy, etc.) to the takers, like, “I brought some of my favorite candy today and I want you to have a piece.”
 - Taker #1 should be instructed to take the object and walk away without saying anything.
 - When Taker #2 is offered something, he can take it and say something ungrateful, like, “Only one? Well, it’s not so nice, anyway.”
 - Taker #3 should take what is offered and say, “Thank you very much. That was nice of you to give it to me.”

After the three groups have role played, have all students sit and discuss the activity.

- How did Giver #1 feel when his partner took the object and walked away? What did the rest of the class think about him?
- How did Giver #2 feel when he received an impolite remark for his generosity? What did the class think about Taker #2?
- How did Giver #3 feel when he was thanked? What sort of qualities did the Taker show? Which response was the best? Why?

Point out that good manners teach us to say thank you when we are given something. Otherwise, we seem selfish and ungrateful. Teach the children that whenever something good happens, no matter how small, thank Krishna for the blessing. You can practice doing this in class throughout the rest of the session.

4. Use the above activity to explain that this is true with Krishna, too. He gives us everything, the air we breathe, water, food, parents and friends, comfortable homes. How often do we forget to thank Him for the things He does in our lives? We will pray for something to happen, and when it

happens, we're happy, but forget to thank Krishna for answering our prayer. And what about air, water, food, etc. Must we always take that for granted? If we don't thank Krishna, aren't we also ungrateful and selfish?

5. The class can now make a giant thank-you card for Krishna. Use two pieces of light-colored posterboard. Two or three students can design the front of the card, which is one of the posterboards. Somewhere on the front they should write, "Dear Krishna, thank You for..." Other students can now add what they are thankful for in the card.

An easy and colorful way to do this would be to provide various colors and shapes of pre-cut construction paper. They can be cut into small clouds, circles, stars, triangles, arches, etc. Have students write one thing they are thankful for on a shape and draw a simple picture of it. The shapes can be glued to the second posterboard and even on the back side of the cover posterboard. Reserve a space at the bottom to write, "From your servants," and have children sign their names.

Attach the cover sheet to the second sheet of posterboard by punching holes and tying ribbon through both or by stapling. Keep this on display somewhere in the room throughout the session.

6. This week we will add another prayer session to our lives. In addition to our bedtime prayers, we will also offer prayers of thanks before mealtimes.

Krishna is very kind to us in giving us delicious food. You may want to go over the act of offering food to Krishna and receiving His mercy in the form of prasadam. Tell the children that before each meal, they can get into the habit of offering a short prayer of thanks to Krishna. It can be very simple. The main idea is that for a few moments they focus on the Lord and show their gratitude.

7. Students can now add this week's page to their prayer journal. It is the "Thanks!" page. Make copies and punch holes so the pages will fit into the 3-prong folders. Each child can insert this into his folder.

The poem on top is an example of a general prayer of mealtime thanksgiving. Encourage them to use their own words as they pray.

The assignment for the week is for students to continue with bedtime prayers and also add the mealtime prayers. Each night they can place a sticker on a hand if they remembered their prayers. Another sticker can be placed *under* the hand if they have prayed at mealtime. Remind them to put

the Prayer Journals on their pillows or near their beds or even on the dining table so they will remember to pray.

Another assignment for them to complete this week is to write one prayer of thanks in their journals. Remind them to bring back the Prayer Journals so another page can be added next week.

8. Lead the class in a group prayer. You can continue with the children finishing a sentence you begin. If the children are not shy in praying aloud, simply let them pray aloud in their own words.

- “Dear Krishna, you are _____.” (*Allow as many volunteers as you have to finish the sentence as they wish.*)
- “My dear Lord Krishna, please forgive me for _____.”
- “My dear Lord, please help me _____.”
- “My dear Lord Krishna, thank you for _____.”

Lesson Five

Praying for Others

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Let students relate their experiences with mealtime prayers last week. Ask to see the Prayer Journals with the sticker sections completed and their original prayer. Let volunteers read their prayers. Review the parts of prayers that you have learned so far. Ask students how they are feeling now as they pray. Do they find it easier to talk to Krishna? Do they think about Him more during the day than they used to?
3. Children are a lot like the rest of us -- usually quite selfish, where their needs and wants outweigh anything else. Teaching them to focus on others and their needs helps balance this selfishness. Today we'll discuss praying for others, the fourth "finger" in the five parts of prayer.

Collect pictures from newspapers and magazines showing people in distressful situations. Pictures of people who are victims of flood, drought or other natural disasters, war, violence, and disease will be likely to have an emotional impact upon the students. You may also include one or two pictures of people in happy situations. Hold the pictures up one at a time or pass them around the room. Ask students to imagine that they are one of the people in the pictures. What would their prayer be in that situation? Let volunteers share their thoughts.

4. Emphasize that prayer is not only for what *we* want. Praying for others is a way of sharing with others. Tell them that it is a good way to learn to be less selfish and to learn to care more for others. We can pray for others' spiritual, emotional or physical needs.

Teach them to pray about others who don't know about Krishna. Knowing Krishna is the best thing that can happen to a person and praying for someone else is a good way to develop a preaching spirit.

5. Remind them that we have been praying regularly now at bedtime and mealtime, but when is the best time to pray? ANYTIME!!! Reinforce the idea that they have a hot line to the spiritual world and Krishna is always listening. Krishna doesn't go away on vacation or fall asleep; He's always there to hear our prayers. But it is a good idea to set aside time each day to

pray and bedtime and mealtime is good for that. Ask for students' opinions -- can you pray TOO much?

Since we have established that it is good to pray anytime and all the time, we will let this lead into our next activity, a

6. PRAYERWALK!!! Prayerwalking can be done by families, small groups or even an entire temple. The basic idea is to walk the neighborhoods doing nothing but praying for homes, people you see, businesses, churches, etc.

Explain the concept to the children before you set out. For safety's sake, lay down some rules of the road before you go, too. Then, take the children on a walk through the temple neighborhood. As you or the children notice something to pray for, stop briefly and allow time for a silent prayer or let children take turns voicing a prayer. This can be done discretely without those being prayed for even knowing about it and is a good way for children to focus on others in prayer.

When you return to the classroom allow a few minutes for students to relate their feelings and observations of the prayerwalk.

7. Students can now add this week's page to their Prayer Journal, "The Needs of Others." Make copies and punch holes so the pages will fit into the 3-prong folders. Each child can insert this page into his folder.

The assignment for the week is for students to continue with bedtime prayers and mealtime prayers. Within their nighttime prayer they can add a prayer for someone else. They can continue putting a sticker on if they remembered their prayers. Remind them to put the Prayer Journals on their pillows or near their beds or on the dining table so they will remember to pray.

Another assignment for them to complete this week is to write one prayer for the needs of others. It can be for a specific person or a general prayer for others. Remind them to bring back the Prayer Journals so another page can be added next week.

8. Lead the class in a group prayer. Since the class has had more practice now in praying together, simply ask for a volunteer to lead the prayer session. Others can add their particular prayer requests at the end.

Lesson Six

Praying for Our Needs

1. Chant the verse for the session.

2. Review briefly the parts of prayer already studied. Ask how students felt in praying for another person during the week? Encourage them to share. Who did they pray for? Why? How did it make them feel toward that person? Ask to see the prayer journals with the completed sticker section and the original prayers.

3. Tell the students that today we will be discussing praying for ourselves. Of course, this is probably the easiest (and the most common) way to pray!

Discuss the idea of making requests of God. Is it to be expected that whatever we ask, God will do? No, Krishna is not our order supplier, waiting for our next list of instructions. We may request something of Krishna, but it is up to Him how He will fulfill that prayer. Sometimes the answer might be “NO,” or “WAIT.”

4. The following activity will demonstrate the wisdom of Krishna’s answers to our prayers. Cut Worksheet 5 on the lines and distribute the pieces to different children. Tell them that you are the mother or father as the case may be. You will make a decision about each child’s requests. Ask the child who has #1 to read his request. Suggested answers are below. Continue with the requests and replies until all are answered. The idea is for the children to see that sometimes it makes good sense to be denied their requests or to be told to wait.

- 1) Please may I have a new bicycle for my birthday? **Yes, you are old enough now to have a big bike and you ride well, so you may have one.**
- 2) May I please have a puppy if I promise to take care of it nicely? **No, it wouldn’t be fair to the puppy. Dogs require a lot of time and attention and if you are going to take karate classes and be on the swim team you won’t have enough time to give the puppy the time it needs.**
- 3) My friend invited me to go camping with his family to Montana for two weeks. Can I go with them? **I think you should wait until you are a little older. Perhaps next year or the year after you may go.**

- 4) Is it all right if I skip supper and have candy and ice cream instead? **No, you will get sick if you eat too many sweets. You have to eat healthy food if you want your body to grow properly.**
- 5) Can we go to Disneyworld this month? **Your relatives will be here visiting for 6 weeks but we can go after they go home. You will have to be patient and wait.**
- 6) Can my friend come over to spend the weekend? **Yes, of course.**

After the activity, discuss:

- How did you feel if the answer was “no?” Was there a good reason for it?
- How about when you had to wait before getting what you wanted? Do you think the answers were reasonable?

Point out that many times we may pray for things we need or want but Krishna’s answer may not always be “yes.” Sometimes He may say “no” or ask us to wait. He has very good reasons even though we may not know right now what the reasons are.

5. This is a good time to introduce the phrase, “If You so desire.” Write the phrase on the chalkboard and have the children repeat it a couple of times after you. Tell the children that if they have a special request of Krishna, they can add this phrase. It voices our request but leaves the answer up to God. It tells Krishna that we will accept whatever answer He gives and trust that His answer is for the best.

You may wish to tell about Prabhupada’s last days on earth when he was very ill. His disciples couldn’t stand the thought of him dying and leaving them. They asked Prabhupada if they could pray to Krishna to make Srila Prabhupada better. Prabhupada agreed but suggested they pray, “My dear Lord Krishna, *if You so desire*, please cure Srila Prabhupada.”

6. We have already talked briefly about Krishna not being our order supplier. Ask the children how they think Krishna would feel if the only prayers He heard were, “Please give me a new bike,” or “Please can I have a new Barbie doll?” If those are the only kinds of prayers we pray, it seems we are quite selfish, doesn’t it?

Explain that Krishna knows what is in our hearts. We do not have to ask Him for every little thing that we desire. The children should be taught that they should make wise decisions about what they want to ask God. It is good if the children evaluate their requests based on the following criteria: **is**

my request going to make me a better person or a better devotee, and is what I am asking pleasing to Krishna. This will ensure that their prayers are not selfish demands and will be within Krishna's will for their lives.

As you explain the criteria, write the two points on the chalkboard:

- 1) Will it make me a better person or devotee?**
- 2) Is what I ask pleasing to Krishna?**

Be sure to point out that praying for ourselves doesn't only mean to pray for material things. We may have problems with family or friends that we need to share with Krishna, we may have illnesses, etc. We can pray for physical, emotional and spiritual needs, not simply material goods.

7. Now ask for students to give you examples of prayers that would *not* fit the above criteria. Then ask for examples of prayers that *do* fit the criteria. You may have to give the first example.

8. Students can now add this week's page to their prayer journal, "My Needs." They can also add the "I Can Pray Every Day" and "My Prayer Chart" pages to continue charting their prayer progress at home after this session ends. The page entitled "My Prayers" can be added for students to record special prayers of their own. Make copies and punch holes so the pages will fit into the 3-prong folders. Each child can insert these into his folder.

Have them fill in the "Checkpoint" section in class with the two criteria we listed on the chalkboard:

- 1) Will it make me a better person or devotee?**
- 2) Is what I ask pleasing to Krishna?**

The assignment for the week is for students to continue with bedtime prayers and mealtime prayers. There is no particular way they should pray this week, just continue with whatever prayers they wish. Remind them when praying for their needs to remember the checkpoints and evaluate their prayers.

They can continue putting a sticker on if they remembered their prayers. Remind them to put the Prayer Journals on their pillows, near their beds or on the dining table so they will remember to pray.

Another assignment for them to complete this week is to write one prayer for themselves. Remind them to bring back the Prayer Journals next week.

9. Remind the class that there will be a quiz next week. Tell the children what they will need to know. Their Prayer Journals should be the only material they need for review.
10. Lead the class in a group prayer. Since the class has had more practice now in praying together, simply ask for a volunteer to lead the prayer session. Others can add their particular prayer requests at the end.

Lesson Seven

Quiz

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review briefly the parts of prayer already studied. Ask how students felt praying for themselves during the week? What sort of things did they pray for? Did anyone get any answers to their prayers yet? Ask to see the prayer journals with the completed sticker section and the original prayers.
3. Encourage the children to continue using their prayer charts at home. The two prayer progress charts that they now have in their journals will give them 12 more weeks in which they can keep track of their prayers. Have children open their journals to see these pages and ask how many think they can continue praying as they have been. You may wish to send home extra stickers with them to use for these charts.
4. The quiz for this session is found on the next two pages. Collect the Prayer Journals until after the quiz. Any extra time after students have finished the quiz can be used to add prayers, decorations, etc. to the prayer journal or to complete the Gajendra booklet. Don't forget to return the Prayer Journals to the children at the end of the class period.

NAME _____

DATE _____

Prayer
Final Quiz

Part One: Circle the five parts of prayer.

love	praise and worship	confession
complain	thanks	forgiveness
the needs of others	hello	our needs

Part Two: Circle all the sentences that are TRUE.

1. You must pray at the same time each day.
2. Prayer is a way of talking to Krishna.
3. You can pray anytime.
4. Krishna doesn't hear most of your prayers.
5. We praise Krishna so He will give us more stuff.
6. Praying for other people is a good thing to do.
7. We should thank Krishna for the food we eat.
8. We only need to pray when we want something from Krishna.
9. Gajendra, the elephant, is a good example of someone who prayed to Krishna.
10. Don't pray too much because Krishna gets tired of hearing your prayers.

Part Three: Draw lines to match.

Confession

Talking to Krishna

Prayer

One way people pray

Gajendra

Admitting you are wrong

Bowing your head
and folding your hands

Attacked Gajendra

Crocodile

An elephant who prayed to the Lord

Part Four: Tell us what you think!

1. Will you keep praying at home after today? _____

2. Did you like to write your own prayers? _____

Why or why not? _____

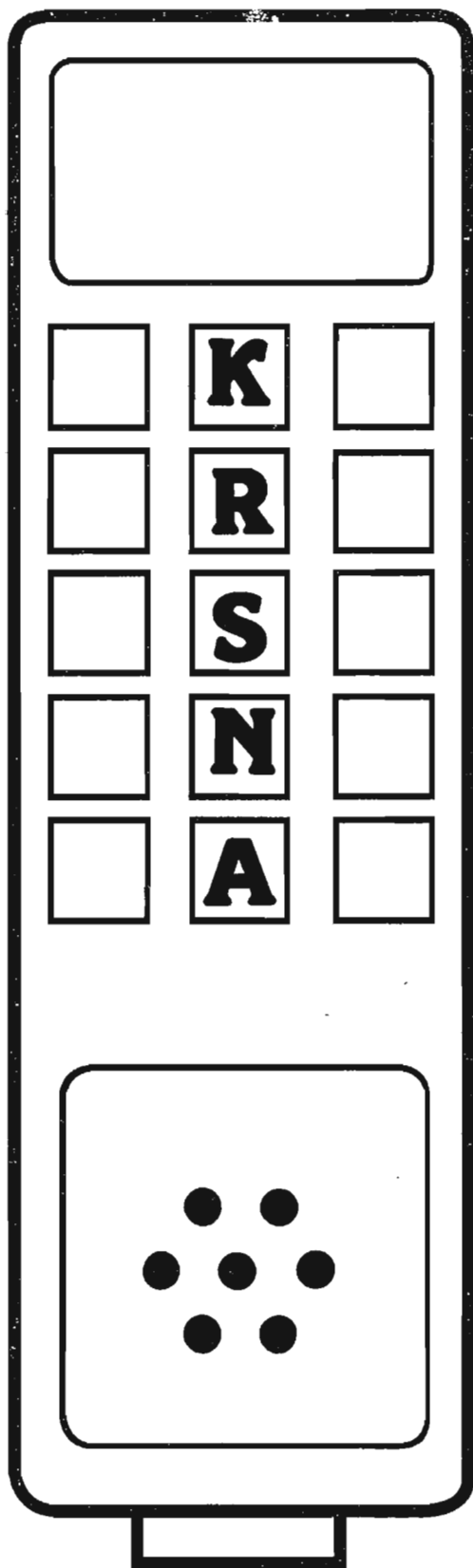
3. Do you like to keep track of your prayers on a chart? _____

Bhagavad Gita 10.10

***tesam satata-yuktanam
bhajatam priti-purvakam
dadami buddhi-yogam tam
yena mam upayanti te***

Translation: To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.

Worksheet 2
Hotline to the Spiritual World



(Be sure to brightly
color your phone!)



Optional:
Glue glitter on edges

Worksheet 3

1. Carlos lives in Mexico. His wife and his only daughter died 10 years ago in a car accident. He lives with his only son who just found out he has cancer. His son is only expected to live for 3 months. What might Carlos' prayer be?

2. Mr. Veldez is the president of a country that has been having a war for many years. The people in his country are fighting against each other. It has been very bad lately with 100 or more people getting killed every day. What might Mr. Veldez's prayer be?

3. Jenny is a 7 year old girl who has just moved to a new city. She doesn't know anyone yet and today is the first day in her new school. She is very shy and is not looking forward to the next few days at all. What might her prayer be?

4. Jacob is a farmer in Iowa. His wife's name is Irene. This has been a very bad year for farming because it has not rained for almost the whole year. Irene looks out her window and sees the corn all brown and withered. The cows and sheep are very thin. All their crops have failed. Irene sees Jacob looking older and very worried. It's hard to be a farmer and a drought can ruin you. What might Irene's prayer be?

5. Don has just finished 8 years of schooling to become a doctor. He has hoped for this for a long time and many year of hard work have finally paid off. He is happy to start his new career and hopes to help many people become better. What might Don's prayer be?

Worksheet 4A

Indra	was
angry	because
Krishna	stopped
the	sacrifice

Worksheet 4B

Indra	felt
foolish	and
asked	Krishna
to	forgive
him	

Worksheet 5

1. Please may I have a new bicycle for my birthday?

2. May I please have a puppy if I promise to take care of it nicely?

3. My friend invited me to go camping with his family to Montana for two weeks. Can I go with them?

4. Is it all right if I skip supper and have candy and ice cream instead?

5. Can we go to Disneyworld this month?

6. Can my friend come over to spend the weekend?