



What Should I Do if God Doesn't Give Me What I Ask For?

Supplies

- Bibles
- paper
- pens

Ask Permission

- Have kids line up along one wall of the room while you stand on the opposite wall.
- Play a game of Mother, May I? in which kids ask for your permission to take a certain number of steps to get to you. Kids may ask to take baby steps, giant steps, hops, or somersaults.
- Whenever anyone asks for four or more of any kind of step, say no. Whenever anyone asks for three or fewer steps, say yes. Kids may learn the pattern and revise how they ask, but don't tell them your reasoning. (If you're finding that kids aren't asking for bigger numbers, you could adjust the reasoning to be two or fewer steps are a yes.)
- The game ends when someone can touch the wall you're standing against.

Ask: • **Did you figure out why I sometimes said yes and sometimes said no? What was my pattern?**

- **If you did figure out my pattern, how did that change what you asked for?**

Say: **In this game, sometimes I said yes, and sometimes I said no. I had a reason for my answers, even if you didn't know what the reason was. God has good reasons for saying yes or no when we ask for his help, but sometimes we don't know what his reasons are. So what should we do if God doesn't give us what we ask for? Let's dig in to that.**

Dig Deeper

Say: **We're going to learn five things to do if God doesn't give us what we want. When we ask for something, we often put out our hands to receive it. So let's use our hands to remember what to do.**

Have small-group leaders set out paper and pens, and have kids each trace one of their hands.

Say: **The first thing to do when God doesn't give us what we want is to keep asking. Jesus said to do that!**

Read Matthew 7:7-8. Have kids write "Keep asking—Matthew 7:7-8" on the thumbs in their hand outlines.

Have small groups discuss this question, and then ask a few kids to share with everyone.

Ask: • **If this promise is true, why don't we always get what we ask for?**

Say: **Jesus did say to keep asking. But he followed it up by saying this.** Read Matthew 7:11.

Say: **God will give us only good gifts. And sometimes even if what we're asking for seems good, it might not be good for us at that time. But we might find that God's different answer is actually good, if we look for the good. That's what happened with a guy named Paul. He had a problem he described as a "thorn in his flesh." We don't know what it was, but he asked God for help. Here's what happened. As you hear it, listen for what good things God gave Paul.**

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Have small groups discuss these questions.

Ask: • **What good things did God give Paul?**

- **Why were those better than what he was asking for?**

Say: **God didn't take away Paul's thorn, but he gave him grace and power. That's really cool! On another finger of your handprint, write, "Look for the good—2 Corinthians 12:7-10." If God doesn't answer your prayers with what you want, look for the good things he's giving you instead.**

Another place we can look for God's answers to prayer is with other people. Read James 5:16.

Have small groups discuss these questions, and then ask a few kids to share with everyone.

Ask: • **What are some problems kids might have that they could ask adults to help with?**

- **What are some problems that a friend could help with?**

Say: **Asking for help is part of prayer**, so we can always turn to God for help. Sometimes his help comes through a person he sends to help us. So if you're facing a really big problem, talk to a trusted friend or adult who might be able to help and pray with you.

Have kids write "Ask other people for help—James 5:16" on another finger.

Say: **Sometimes God's not answering our prayers because we're asking for the wrong things. Remember, God gives only good gifts. Sometimes you might need to change what you're asking for. You might be praying for your sister to be nicer to you when you really need to ask God to change *your* heart toward your sister. Or you might be asking God to give you a new phone when you really need to ask God to change your heart to be more grateful for what you have. Let's read an example of a prayer you could pray.**

Read Psalm 51:10.

Have small groups discuss this question, and then ask a few kids to share with everyone.

Ask: • **What are some other examples of prayers that might need to be more focused on your heart?**

Have kids write "Change how you're asking—Psalm 51:10" on another finger.

Say: **There's one more thing we can do when God isn't giving us what we want: Trust God! Here's why we can trust him.**

Read Isaiah 55:9. Have kids write "Trust God—Isaiah 55:9" on the last finger.

Ask: • **Tell about a time you disagreed with the way God worked in your life.** Examples could include moving, losing a close friend, or parents getting divorced. Have small-group leaders share first, and then have kids share in their small groups.

Say: **When those types of things happen, it's clearly not the way we think is best. But we can trust that God's ways are higher than our ways, and he's doing what's ultimately best. Even if his answer doesn't make sense to us, we can trust him. And we can keep on turning to him because asking for help is part of prayer.**

Have kids place their hands on their handprints as you pray: **God, thank you that we can always ask for your help and we can trust you to do the very best thing. Help us trust you even when we don't get what we want. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Have kids take their handprints home as a reminder of what to do when God doesn't give them what they want.