

The Persistent Widow

Dear Teacher,

I've been a widow. I can tell you about the furious helplessness and frustration that comes over you when your beloved dies. You don't feel like there's much justice in the world.

Jesus' story to encourage His friends to pray and never give up is about a widow. In her culture, unless a family member took her in, begging was now her option. To add insult to injury, someone had taken advantage of her widow status (it happens!) to deprive her of justice. Under this triple burden, she decided she'd go to the judge whose decision could bring her justice—until either he acted or she died. She was NOT going to give up.

Jesus wanted His friends—including us—to know that God is eager to hear our prayers. He won't put us off. He'll set things right for us if we'll pray. Don't give up!



Mary Davis
Editor



Big Idea
Never stop praying!



Action Plan
Tell stories of answered prayers, and pray together.



Bible Verse
"Be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."
Ephesians 6:18

Connecting You to Jesus



At the end of today's parable, Jesus refers to His second coming: "When the son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth? Jesus wants us to continue to have faith in Him, no matter what happens—and hard times are going to happen! But when we feel most desperate, most helpless, most besieged, remember that He is not ignoring us or putting us off. On the contrary, He is at work! And He is coming soon. Don't give up!

LESSON MATERIALS



- The basics (see contents)
- Gavel
- Get Thinking—pennies
- Story props (see p. 119)
- Materials for Art or Game activity (see pp. 124-125)

Lesson Extras!



Students discover the order of books in the Bible by playing Book Collections (on CD-ROM). Use the first 17 books of the New Testament for this lesson.



2. Students talk about what Jesus taught as they complete "Prayer in the Surf!" puzzle (on CD-ROM).



Get Thinking

(10-15 minutes)

Welcome students and help them begin to think about today's Big Idea.

Flip Out!

Students practice penny flipping: each student lays a penny on the back of his or her hand, tosses it up, turns hand and catches penny. Challenge students who can flip one penny to add more pennies to the backs of their hands. **Who can flip the most pennies?**



Connect:

- Some of you did this easily. It was harder for some of you. How did you get better at doing it?
- What do you think would have happened if you had tried it once and then gave up? Gave up after three times?
- What are some other things we do often or practice in order to get better at doing?
- Today we'll be talking about one thing we all need to do. We need to do it every day—and not give up!

YOU NEED

Pennies.



Get God's Word



(15-25 minutes)

The Persistent Widow

Help students find Luke 18 in their Bibles. Tell the following story summary in your own words, guiding students to find answers in their Bibles.

Story Starter

Let's have an arm circling contest. Volunteers stand, hold their arms at shoulder height and make small circles with their hands. **Let's see who can keep on doing this and not give up!** This is harder than it looks. When volunteers act tired say, **Don't give up!** When one stops, call time and thank volunteers. **This was hard to keep on doing. Today in our Bible study, we'll find out about someone who would not give up.**

YOU NEED

Bible for yourself and each student, Lesson 12 Poster, Conversation Cards (on CD-ROM), scissors, gavel.

STORYTELLING IDEA



Ahead of time, cut apart Conversation Cards. Choose a volunteer to be the judge and one to be the widow. Students read Conversation Cards as directed in the story.

A Widow's Life

Jesus was with His disciples and once again, He had a parable—a story with another, deeper meaning—to tell to them. **Read Luke 18:1 to find out why Jesus told this story.**

This story is about a widow. A widow is a woman whose husband had died. Today, when a woman's husband dies, she might live on his retirement money. She might get money from the government. She might find a job, if she was not already



working. But in Jesus' day, there were no retirement accounts. The government didn't help people who needed housing or money. Besides that, women couldn't get a good job to earn money.

So, imagine you're a widow with no sons. Without a husband or a son earning a wage, you have no money. You could grow food in your garden—if you can work in your garden. But if you had a house and garden, there were taxes and payments to pay. No payments, no house—and no garden, either! In short, a widow was just about the most helpless person around. No money, no power, no one on her side, alone and without anyone who would defend her or help her. [Widow reads Conversation Card #1.](#)

The Unjust Judge

Now the other character in Jesus' story is a judge. We might think judges are people who are wise and honest. But what if a judge is NOT wise and honest? What if he doesn't care about justice? What if a judge cares only about himself and makes decisions only to help him and his friends? What if a judge doesn't follow the laws or protect people who need help? THAT's the kind of judge in Jesus' story. [Judge reads Conversation Card #2.](#)

So that's a little bit about who these two people are. Now, here's the story:

In a certain town, there lived a judge. Like we said, this judge didn't care about God. He didn't care about people. He didn't care about justice. In this same town, there lived a widow—alone and powerless.

Now, someone had cheated this widow. Maybe she was supposed to get money



from her family. Maybe someone took her house and her land. We don't know. But we do know that someone had been unjust to her. But this widow had one thing going for her. Over and over, she would come to the judge. Over and over and OVER again, she would

TIP

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the definition of "justice" on page 310 in *What the Bible Is All About for Kids*.



stand in front of him. And over and OVER, she would say . . . **Widow reads Conversation Card #3.**

Whatever her enemy was doing, this is what the widow knew: with one bang of his gavel, the judge could give her relief from her enemy and could solve her problem!

But the judge just did NOT care about this widow's problem. So for awhile, he just ignored her and wouldn't do anything. **Judge reads Conversation Card #4.**

Read Luke 18:4-5 to find out what he decided. Widow and Judge read Conversation Cards #5 and 6. Jesus said, "If even a judge who doesn't care AT ALL about justice will do what's right because someone **KEEPS ON** asking, how much more **EASILY** and **QUICKLY** will God give justice to the ones He loves, His chosen! When they cry out for justice, He will see that they get justice—and soon!"

Jesus wanted His friends to know that it is important to pray and not to give up. God loves us. He has the very **BEST** answer to whatever it is we are asking!

He doesn't get tired of us—

He wants to hear from us! And He wants us to **TRUST** Him to the very end, no matter what. He is **WOR-**

THY of our trust. He **ALWAYS** does what He says He will do!



TIP

Show Lesson 12 Poster. Students tell what they think people in the picture are saying.

Wrap-Up

The judge didn't care about the widow. He didn't want to please God. But he still helped the widow. Why? Not because he was kind, but just because he wanted to get the widow to leave him alone! Remember the reason Jesus told this story? To tell us that when we pray, we should be like the widow—she did not give up.

Read Ephesians 6:18 aloud. Show gavel. When a judge bangs his or her gavel, it means a decision is made. When you see a gavel, remember that God is not like the judge in our story. He IS kind. He DOES care. He wants us to pray and not give up. He WILL hear us and help us! When we think nothing is happening, He is at work. He asks us to be faithful. That means to not give up, but to keep on praying!

Action Plan

Tell stories of answered prayers, and pray together.

Connecting Kids to Jesus



At the end of today's parable, Jesus said that He will be coming back to Earth one day. He wants us to remember that we can trust Him, no matter what happens. When hard things happen, He is not ignoring us and He is not putting us off. He is actually hard at work, doing good things for us! So don't give up!

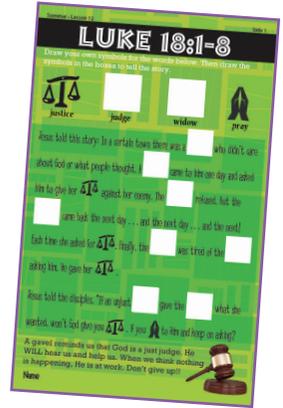


Get Talking

(25-30 minutes)

Distribute Lesson 12 *Kid Talk Cards*. Students add symbols to complete the story on Side 1.

- **Why did the judge help the widow?** (She kept coming every day. She did not give up.)
- **What did Jesus say about praying to God when it seems like nothing is happening?** (Don't give up. Be faithful. Trust God.)
- Point to photo of gavel. **When you see a gavel, remember that God wants us to pray and not give up. He's not like the judge. He IS kind. He DOES care. He WILL hear us and help us! When we think nothing is happening, He is at work.**



Whiteboard Time



Write out letters on whiteboard as shown. Students take turns to write on whiteboard as many words as they can from the letters. If students don't happen to write the words, "never," "stop," and "praying," then give them clues to these words. **There are**

three words in this letter box that begin with N, S and P. If students don't find the words, draw lines from one letter to the next to show the words. **The words we're looking for are "Never stop praying." That's what Jesus told us!**



Students look at Side 2 of *Kid Talk Cards* and read verse together. **What does the word "alert" mean in this?** (To pay attention.) Briefly tell about times God has answered your prayers. **Now think about your own prayers.** Students star answered prayers they have experienced or write their own examples of answered prayer.

- **When are some times people might pray?** (When they are in trouble. When they want something. When they are sad or mad or afraid.)
- **When are times people might give up on praying?** (When they think God is not listening. When they are tired. When they forget.)
- **What did Jesus tell us about praying?** (Keep on praying. God loves us. He will answer us. Don't give up. Trust God to answer.)

Prayer



Invite volunteers to tell prayer requests as you write them on the whiteboard. Tell a way God has answered one of your prayers. Volunteers also tell ways God has answered their prayers. Thank God for these answers, and then pray with students about the needs and concerns they mention.

Art

Ahead of time, cut cardboard into 5-inch (12.5-cm) squares, two for each student. Cut fabric into 6-inch (15-cm) squares, two for each student.

Students cut card stock sheet in half lengthwise and then tape them together to make one long sheet. Students accordion-fold sheet to make 6 sections about 3.5 inches (9 cm) wide each. Students cover one side of each cardboard section with glue and lay glued cardboard facedown on center of a fabric square. Students then fold over and glue fabric to inside edges of cardboard for book covers. Students glue down ends of accordion folded card stock to cover inside ends, making an accordion book.

YOU NEED

Cardboard, rulers, scissors, card stock, fabric, markers, glue sticks.

Connect: Your little book will be a fun place to write down God's answers to your prayers. When you take this book home, use it to write or draw to help you remember how God answered. Remembering God's answers helps us to pray and not give up!



TIPS

If time allows, students can cut out their own cardboard squares. Use scrapbooking paper or wrapping paper for covers if you don't have fabric available. Provide rubber bands for students to secure books until dry.

Game

Each student writes an answer to prayer on a Post-it Note. Any student who can't think of an answer to prayer writes, "Don't give up praying!"

Students place their Post-it Notes on their backs. At your signal, they begin trying to grab notes off others' backs while not letting anyone take theirs. When a student's note is taken, student surrenders other notes collected and moves to the side. Play continues until only one student has a note on back. Winner reads aloud several of the answers to prayer. All say, "Thank You, God!" Then redistribute notes and play other rounds as time permits.

Connect: We've heard amazing answers to prayer! When we remember how God has already answered us, it helps us to keep on praying and not give up!

YOU NEED

Post-it Notes, pencils or pens.

Get Going



Direct students to look again at Side 2 of their *Kid Talk Cards*. As we listen to this song, think about a way God has answered one of your prayers—and thank Him! Play "My God Will Meet All Your Needs" (on *Worship DVD* or track 10 on *Worship CD*), inviting students to listen or sing along. Distribute Lesson 12 *Family Fridge Fun* papers as students leave.

