

# Breathe

## **Module: INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

### **Lesson 2: PRAYER**

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will discuss the role of prayer in their life.
- Students will consider how prayer impacts our faith.
- Students will discover new ways to think about prayer.

#### **Materials Needed**

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pens, Markers, Pencil Crayons, Crayons
- ☐ White board and dry erase marker (optional)
- ☐ Cards for charades (pieces of paper with a word or phrase on them)

## **Minds On**

Start with a game of Charades. Have a number of words or phrases on small pieces of paper. Divide the group into two. Give a word or phrase to a student and have them act it out without words. If their team can figure it out within a time limit (3 minutes is probably good, but you can set the time to whatever works for you), they get 3 points. If they don't, the other team can steal for one point.

**Leader's Note:** Thinking so much about prayer may be something that seems irrelevant to your youth, so it's important that we begin to bridge that gap before getting into the lesson.

**Ask:** What is your experience with prayer? Why Pray? What do you like about it? What do you find difficult?

**Prompt:** In the game we just played, you had to communicate a word or phrase without words. In life most of our communication is non-verbal. This means that it is not a big stretch to know that God communicates to us through non-verbal means as well. Prayer is our way of communicating with God; it is our direct line to him. God communicates with us verbally through his Word (the Bible), as well as non-verbally, through our circumstances and events in our lives.

## **Action**

**Prompt:** Jesus' life was focused around prayer, and it is through his example that we will begin to take a close look at prayer in our lives. We want to start looking at the question of how we make prayer central in our lives.

**Ask:** Why do you think prayer was so central to Jesus' life?

Are there other people you know whose life is centred on prayer?

Have a student read Mark 1:29 – 39. (You can also choose to break the passage into 2-3 segments and have multiple volunteers.)

**Prompt:** Jesus' life was centred on prayer. After Jesus worked, performed miracles and preached, we learn that he withdrew to spend time in prayer. This prayer not only gave him rest, but prepared him for future ministry as well.

Have another student read from Matthew 6:7-13. This is the passage where Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray (commonly known as the Lord's Prayer). Divide your students into the number of phrase segments. (Leader's note: Many translations write the passage with 10 lines. You can group them per line i.e. 10 groups, by pairing each one i.e. 5 groups or dividing in half i.e. 2 groups.) Assign each group a segment of the Lord's Prayer and have them discuss:

How does this phrase fit into the whole prayer?

What is Jesus trying to teach us through including it in the prayer?

Come back as a group and have each group report their ideas through one representative.

**Prompt:** Jesus taught his disciples this prayer to teach them that prayer can be simple and to the point. It doesn't need flashy language. The point is it should come from the heart, and we should take time to think about what we are actually saying, rather than how it might sound to others or how long we can pray for.

Divide your youth into pairs. In pairs, each person is going to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. Before they go to pray, ask students to brainstorm some of the things that would be incorporated in this type of prayer (write responses on a white board).

As the students go to pray, tell them that at no time in the prayer are you allowed to use the word “Praise,” or “Thanks.” This is harder than it sounds, and some of your students may not get it at first. You must think of different words and phrases to praise God, like “God you are awesome and powerful” or “the stars in the heavens give you glory” or “the mountains you created are beautiful.” You also need to think of some other words to express gratitude, like “We are so happy for the ways in which you provide for us” or “The love and mercy you show us is incredible.”

Have the students come back and ask them how it felt. For some it may not have been a challenge at all, and for others it may have been very awkward. It’s important to stress that saying “praise” and “thanks” in a prayer **is not** a bad thing. This exercise is just meant to emphasize the importance of thinking about the words you put into your prayers.

**Leader’s Note:** It is very possible that you have youth who regularly attend your group, but don’t know God. Maybe they’re there for the first time, or maybe they are new Christians. It may be helpful to have a leader join those pairs. If everything falls apart, the leader can facilitate a discussion about God, such as things we can praise and thank him for, and then he/she can lead the pair in prayer.

## **Consolidate/Debrief**

Close your evening in prayer, being sure to ask your group if anyone has anything that needs prayer. If you can, try to do the same exercise for this prayer, trying not to use the words “praise” or “thanks.” If you really want to have fun, don’t tell the youth you are going to do it, and see who notices.

**Breathe in:** Have students read Psalm 136 and reflect for two minutes on the passage.

**Breathe out:** Students can write their own Psalm of thanksgiving, and use it as a daily prayer each night throughout the week.