

Breathe

Module: Basic Training

Lesson 2: Prayer

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- express that prayer is simply communicating with God
- identify some common misconceptions about prayer
- analyze how Jesus prayed and how he taught us to pray
- incorporate this new understanding into their walk with God

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper and/or whiteboard
- Masking tape, laid out in 10 inch strips, one per group
- Markers
- Computer and/or Projector
- YouTube Videos
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmL_GTKU2IE
- Bibles
- One set of “Prayer Signs” (appendix A)
- Copies of “Prayer Topics” (appendix B) cut into single-line strips (1 copy for every 3 students)
- Copies of “Prayer Activity” (appendix C). This handout has two nearly identical pages with different scripture passages on each page.
- Pens/Pencils

- Optional: Cue Cards

Pre-lesson Preparation:

- Cut Prayer Topics printout into strips.
- On a whiteboard or using chart paper, create three large headings: 1. Acquaintance; 2. Classmate/Casual Friend; 3. Best Friend. Post these on the wall before the lesson.
- Post the 6 pages from the Prayer Signs, equally spaced, on the walls of the room.
- Make copies of Prayer Activity.pdf (at least one for each group).

Note on Teaching Practice: Transitions

This lesson moves students among groups a number of times, and is a great chance to practice your transitions. Research into educational practice shows that most misbehaviour occurs during transitions between activities, so if students know what to do before they move; they are more likely to be on task when they arrive. This is an important time to make sure materials are well-placed. Where possible, avoid forcing all students into one small location. Position yourself close to the action. It is also important to use the right sequence to transition from one activity to another. The following sequence is the most effective to get the right students doing what they should be doing, when they should be doing it.

Sequence:

1. When students are to move
2. What the students are to do
3. Who is to do it

Minds On (15 minutes):

Identifying Levels of Relationships:

Start by asking the students if they have ever had a friend share too much information. Tell the students “Do not tell me what they shared or who they were, but think for a moment how that made you feel”. Take a few answers from the students, and carefully monitor what students say to protect identities. Before each student responds, say “How did it make you feel?” just to remind them to limit what they share. Tell the students that tonight you are going to be thinking about who you should share your deepest hopes and fears with, and how you might go about that. Instruct the students that in a moment, they will be moving into “home” groups.

Home Groups: Categorizing Sharing:

Tell them you will be giving them slips of paper listing topics that people might share with someone else. Their job is to decide with their group to which of the three categories (Acquaintance, Classmate/Casual Friend or Best Friend) the topic belongs. For each topic, when they have decided with their group, have one student (the “runner”) from their group use a small piece of the masking tape to attach that topic to the chart paper of that category. Ask if anyone needs clarification. When the students are clear, ask them to get into groups of three (self-selected), and ask them to decide who will be the “materials manager”, the “recorder” and a “runner”. To the materials manager of each group give a set of topics from Prayer Activity 1, and a section of masking tape. Monitor activity close to the chart paper, since a lot of misbehaviour occurs at such places, but also try to move among the groups.

Comparing Categories:

When all students have posted all responses, tell the students: “Good. Now I want you all to come up here to see if any groups chose different categories for their topics.” Having the students do this will be “messy”. There will be a lot of talk, and many students close together. If this is not the best choice for you or your group, then ask for one volunteer from each group to have a look and report back to their group. Give the students a little

time to notice the differences, and ask if there were any differences that surprised them. This might invite discussion between two groups that disagree, so try to find the common thread, and where necessary, make a gentle comment to guide the students as to why that category might or might not be best for that topic.

Ask the groups to return to their seats, and have each group answer: “What are some of the factors or reasons why you would share certain details with one group i.e. best friend and not another i.e. acquaintance?” After 2 minutes, gather into a large group and have 2-3 groups report their answers. Without soliciting any answers, ask students to think about under which heading they would place God.

Prompt:

We each see God in different ways. Some of you may see him as an acquaintance while others see him as a friend or maybe even as a best friend. Whether you realize it or not, God is interested in hearing from us about the things we would share with an acquaintance, the things we would share with a casual friend, and the things we would share with a best friend. Prayer is the way that God has provided for us to talk to him about these things.

Action (30 minutes):

Watching and Discussing a Video

Video (4.5 min)

Tell the students they will be watching a video showing different styles of praying. Draw their attention to the six categories posted on the wall. Tell students that as they watch this video, they will choose which role/character they identify with the most. After viewing, remind the students that the video was exaggerating to make a point, but ask them to think about which style their prayers are most like. Tell them, maybe their style isn't like any they saw in the video and that is why there is the “other” group. Ask them to wait for your signal to “go”. Tell them in a moment, they will be moving to the sign

that is most like their prayer style, and to share with their group member why they chose that category. (If your group is very large, ask them to share with one partner, rather than the whole group. If only one student ends up at a group, either you or a leader should go hear what the student has to say.) Say “Go”.

Leader’s Note: Limited Prayer Experience

Some students will have little or no personal experience with prayer. These students can be encouraged to join the group that most closely resembles what they think prayer might be like.

Once students have had a few minutes to share, ask them if there were any things members of their group shared in common. Give a moment for “think time” and take a few answers with the large group.

Prompt:

These characters represent some common ways of praying but may not be exactly what the Bible teaches about prayer.

Home Groups: The Prayers of Jesus

Tell the students that in a moment they will be looking at a Bible passage, and answering questions about the “when”, “why”, “what”, and “how” of Jesus’ prayers. Ask all the Materials Managers to put up their hands. Tell them they will need to collect an activity sheet and writing utensil for their group at the “go” signal, and that all students are also to return to their home groups. Provide a single page from the Prayer Activity (appendix C) to each group. Several groups should have the same passage, depending on the size of your overall group. The Recorder will write their answers on the handout provided to share with the large group. After about 10 minutes ask the students to finish up. Give another minute or two if groups appear to need more time. Starting with question 1, take answers first from the “Matthew 6” groups and then from the “Matthew 26 groups”. Ask the Recorders to write down any additional information they learned from the other answers. Continue with the remainder of the questions.

Leader's Note:

You should make sure students know that these passages do not provide a comprehensive look at prayer. Rather, they provide a good beginning point to explore the idea of prayer.

Consolidate/Debrief (15 minutes):

Still in their home groups, ask the students to reflect silently on one important thing they learned about prayer/praying based on the scriptures and discussions they've had with their groups. Ask the students to share their insight with their group members.

Prompt:

Last week we talked about training ourselves to become more and more like Jesus. We said that becoming a great athlete takes hours and hours of training. In a similar way, becoming like Jesus requires training as well. Prayer can be an important part of your spiritual training program to become more like Jesus. Take turns sharing with your partner what you think we can learn from these two examples of Jesus' prayers that we could incorporate into our spiritual training program?

Breathe In

Encourage students to write down one specific practice they learned today about prayer that they want to incorporate this week (e.g. making sure while praying they are away from distractions).

Breathe Out

As a group, have students agree on one specific time they will pray together (not necessarily in the same place). e.g. on Wednesday night at 10:00 pm. Ask them to pray for members of the group for 5 min. Afterwards, have them write down (or post via social media) what they experienced.

Close in Prayer

Ask the students to think of one thing they want to try praying to God about. Give the students a moment to pray silently, then as a leader offer a prayer of gratitude to God for his interest in all aspects of our lives and his desire to communicate with us. Pray for students that the Holy Spirit will help them as they attempt to implement a spiritual training program that will help them to become more like Jesus.

1. The Nocturnal

2. The New Age

3. The Victorian

4. The Lister

5. The “Our Father”

6. Other

Appendix B

What I had for breakfast

What book I'm reading

Problems at home/with my family

Failing a test

Problems with a boyfriend/girlfriend

My interests/favourite things

Feeling sad/depressed

Concerns about a friend

My dreams/hopes for the future

Where I like to shop

About drinking or using drugs

What music I have on my iPod

Feelings about problems in the world

What sport/activities I participate in

My feelings about a loved one who is sick or dying

What I want for Christmas or my birthday

My cell phone/PIN number

My favourite movie

About fights/arguments with my siblings

About moving to a new house/city

Who you have a crush on

About needing help in a subject at school

About being bullied

About cutting/self-injury

Appendix C

Jesus Teaches Us About Prayer

As you read your assigned Bible passage (**Matthew 6:5-13**), discuss and write down your answers to the following questions:

1. When does Jesus pray?

2. Why does Jesus pray?

3. How does Jesus pray?

4. What does Jesus pray?

Jesus Teaches Us About Prayer

As you read your assigned Bible passage (**Matthew 26:36-46**), discuss and write down your answers to the following questions:

1. When does Jesus pray?

2. Why does Jesus pray?

3. How does Jesus pray?

4. What does Jesus pray?