YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM · AGES 11–18

A 4-WEEK PRAYER LAB

# PRAYER 101

*Don't just learn about prayer. Try it.*

WEEK 1 OF 4 · THE LORD'S PRAYER

## Teach Us to Pray

Theme: A pattern for prayer · Main text: Luke 11:1–4

**Inside:** 45 / 60 / 75-minute plans · word-for-word scripts · 4 game options · Prayer Lab · Joys & Concerns · 3 student pages

**DAHAM**
NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY TOGETHER

WEEK 1 · LEADER GUIDE

# Teach Us to Pray

Theme: A pattern for prayer · Main text: Luke 11:1–4 (+ Matthew 6:7–8) · Memory verse: Philippians 4:6

THE BIG IDEA

**Prayer isn't a performance or a special vocabulary. Jesus gave us a simple pattern, and we can pray every line in our own words.**

### The question to carry all night

*"How do I actually talk with God?"*

### By the end, students will…

- See that even Jesus' closest friends had to *learn* to pray
- Know the five simple moves in the Lord's Prayer
- Actually pray it, line by line, in their own words

## NIGHT AT A GLANCE · PICK YOUR LENGTH

| SEGMENT | WHAT HAPPENS | 45 MIN | 60 MIN | 75 MIN |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Welcome** | Greet new students by name and grade; your announcements | — | — | 5 |
| **Game 1** | Pick from the Activity Menu (next page) | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| **Game 2** | A second game from the menu (optional) | — | — | 10 |
| **Hook + Message** | "The Prayer Voice" · Luke 11:1–4 | 10 | 12 | 12 |
| **Response Activity** | Prayer Lab: The Lord's Prayer, line by line + My One Step | 10 | 12 | 12 |
| **Small Group Talk** | Pick 3–4 questions | — | 8 | 10 |
| **Joys & Concerns** | "I lift up ___ to God." / "Lord, hear our prayer." | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| **Pastoral Prayer** | Leader prays over what was shared + send-off | 5 | 5 | 5 |

### Supplies

- Pens for everyone · a phone timer
- Soft instrumental music for the Prayer Lab (optional)
- Game extras: printed line cards, one set per team (see Game A)
- Student pages (last 3 pages), one set each
- Bibles or a Bible app

### Before students arrive

- Choose your games using the Activity Menu
- Read Luke 11:1–13 and Matthew 6:5–15
- Write your own words for each line of the prayer
- Think of one time prayer felt awkward for *you*
- Pray for each student by name


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CHOOSE WHAT FITS YOUR GROUP

# Activity Menu

Every group is different. Some nights you have fifteen students bouncing off the walls; some nights you have four quiet ones and a visitor. Pick one or two games, then finish with the Prayer Lab. Every game ends with a debrief that points back to tonight's question.

| ACTIVITY | ENERGY | PREP | BEST WHEN… | MIN |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A. Prayer Puzzle Race**<br>Put the prayer in order; each line unlocks a question | High | Line cards, 10 min | Students need to move; you want teams talking | 10–12 |
| **B. Translate That!**<br>Turn stiff, fancy sentences into normal words, then answer | Medium | Print the list | You want laughs and the strongest link to the Prayer Lab | 10 |
| **C. Teach Me in 60**<br>Partners teach each other a skill in one minute | Medium | None | Lots of new students; zero prep time | 8–10 |
| **D. Name Stories**<br>Trios share the story behind their names | Low | None | Small or quiet group; students who don't know each other yet | 8–10 |
| **E. Prayer Lab: The Lord's Prayer**<br>Response activity (after message) | Reflective | Student page 1, pens | Every night: this is the heart of the week | 12 |

## SUGGESTED COMBINATIONS

### Big, high-energy group (10–15)

A. Prayer Puzzle Race → B. Translate That! → Message → E. Prayer Lab

### Small group (4–6)

D. Name Stories (whole group) → Message → E. Prayer Lab in a circle

### Lots of first-time visitors

C. Teach Me in 60 → B. Translate That! → Message → E. Prayer Lab (low-pressure option)

### Short on time (45 min)

B. Translate That! → Message → E. Prayer Lab → Joys & Concerns

**GROUND RULES FOR EVERY GAME** *Nobody is forced to share. Nobody is the punchline. New students get paired with a regular. If a game ever starts to single someone out, change the round and keep moving. And say it every week: "Nobody here will ever be asked to pray out loud. Silent is fine. Reading a prayer is fine."*


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## A. Prayer Puzzle Race

10–12 min · High energy

**Purpose:** Teams race to put the lines of the Lord's Prayer (Luke's version) in the right order. The catch: every time a team gets a line right, they have to stop and answer that line's talk question together. Students move, laugh, learn about each other, and by the end they've handled every line of tonight's text.

### HOW TO PLAY

1. Before group, print the 8 lines below on cards, one set per team. Shuffle each set and put it face down across the room.
2. Split into teams of 3–5. Mix friend groups. Each team sits together at their "base."
3. On "Go!", one runner per team grabs **one card**, brings it back, and the team decides where it goes in the order. Runners take turns.
4. When a team thinks they have the next line in place, they call the leader over. If it's right, the leader reads that line's **talk question**, and **everyone on the team answers** before the next runner can go.
5. If it's wrong, the card goes back and the next runner tries again.
6. The first team with all 8 lines in order (and all questions answered) wins. Give hints to any team that's stuck.

### LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Over there are cards with the lines of a very famous prayer, all scrambled up. Your team is going to put it back together. Only one runner at a time, and only one card per trip. But here's the twist: every time you get a line in the right spot, I'm going to give your team a question, and *everybody* has to answer before you can run again. So being fast isn't enough. You have to talk. Ready? Go!"

### LINE CARDS + TALK QUESTIONS

| LINE CARD (LUKE 11:2–4, WEB) | TALK QUESTION (EVERYONE ANSWERS) |
|---|---|
| 1. Our Father in heaven, | "Who's someone in your family you can always talk to?" |
| 2. may your name be kept holy. | "What's a nickname you've had? Who gave it to you?" |
| 3. May your Kingdom come. | "If you ran the world for one day, what's your first rule?" |
| 4. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. | "What's one thing you'd fix about your school?" |
| 5. Give us day by day our daily bread. | "What's your perfect breakfast?" |
| 6. Forgive us our sins, | "What's a funny thing you got in trouble for as a little kid?" |
| 7. for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. | "Who's the easiest person in your life to make up with?" |
| 8. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. | "What's the snack you can never say no to?" |


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### VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** One team, one set of cards spread face up on the floor. Race the clock instead of each other. Everyone still answers each question.
- **Matthew mashup:** Older or churched groups can add Matthew 6:9–13 cards and sort them into "Luke" and "Matthew" piles.
- **No running:** Keep cards on the team's table face down and flip one at a time.

**LEADER NOTE** *Many students will know the longer version from Matthew ("Our Father, who art in heaven..."). Tell them Luke's version is shorter on purpose. It's the same prayer, and that's part of tonight's point: it's a pattern, not a password.*

### DEBRIEF

**SAY**

"You just put together the most famous prayer in the world. Some of you have said it a hundred times. Some of you have never heard it before tonight. Either way is fine. Here's what's cool: every line of that prayer is about real life. Food. Family. Getting along. Tonight we're going to find out what Jesus meant when he taught it. Keep this question in your head: **how do I actually talk with God?**"

## B. Translate That!

10 min · Medium energy

**Purpose:** Partners read super stiff, fancy sentences out loud, translate them into normal words, and then actually answer the question. It's funny, it gets students learning real things about each other, and it's a direct warm-up for the Prayer Lab, where students will do the same thing with each line of the Lord's Prayer.

### HOW TO PLAY

1. Pair students up. Give each pair the list below (or read one line at a time).
2. Partner A reads the fancy version out loud in their most formal voice. British accent optional.
3. Partner B "translates" it into normal words, the way they'd say it to a friend.
4. Then **both** answer the real question. Switch roles every round.
5. After 6–8 rounds, ask a few pairs to share the funniest answer they heard (with permission).

### LEADER SCRIPT

**SAY**

"Find a partner. I'm going to give you some sentences written by the most formal person on earth. One of you reads it in your fanciest voice. The other one translates it into normal human words. Then you both actually answer it. For example: 'Greetings. Kindly describe the contents of your ideal midday meal.' Translation? 'What's your perfect lunch?' Now answer it. Go!"


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### FANCY VERSION → TRANSLATION

| THE FANCY VERSION | SAY IT YOUR WAY |
|---|---|
| "Kindly describe the contents of your ideal midday meal." | "What's your perfect lunch?" |
| "When did you last experience uncontrollable laughter?" | "What made you laugh really hard?" |
| "Name the program you have viewed the greatest number of times." | "What show have you rewatched most?" |
| "Describe your customary activities on a Saturday morning." | "What do you do on Saturday mornings?" |
| "Which household responsibility do you find least agreeable?" | "What chore do you hate?" |
| "Which musical composition currently occupies your mind?" | "What song is stuck in your head?" |
| "If granted a complimentary vacation, where would you travel?" | "Free trip: where are you going?" |
| "Identify a person who instructed you in a useful skill." | "Who taught you something cool?" |
| "What cuisine shall be prepared for your birthday feast?" | "What's your birthday dinner?" |
| **Bridge:** "O most exalted and holy One, I humbly beseech thee to grant thine assistance unto me." | "God, I need help." Lead into the debrief. |

### VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. One person reads the fancy line, the person on their left translates, and everyone answers.
- **Reverse round:** Give a normal question ("What's your favorite pizza?") and pairs make it as fancy as possible.
- **Team race:** Two teams. First team to shout a correct translation gets a point, then everyone answers.

### DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "That last one. Did you notice it sounded like… church? A lot of people think that's how you have to talk to God. Fancy words, special voice, 'thee' and 'thou.' But when you translated it, what did it say? 'God, I need help.' That's a real prayer. Tonight's question: **how do I actually talk with God?** Spoiler: you already know how to talk."

## C. Teach Me in 60

8–10 min · Medium energy

**Purpose:** Tonight's story starts with someone saying, "Teach us." In this game, partners take turns teaching each other a small skill in 60 seconds. Everybody knows how to do *something*, so new students get a chance to shine, and everyone learns something real about someone else.


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## HOW TO PLAY

1. Pair students up with someone they don't know well. Give everyone 30 seconds to think of a tiny skill they could teach in one minute (see ideas below).
2. Partner A teaches for 60 seconds. Partner B has to actually try it.
3. Switch. Partner B teaches for 60 seconds.
4. After both have taught, each person asks their partner one follow-up: **"Who taught you that?"**
5. Rotate to a new partner and play 2–3 rounds. End with a few volunteers showing off what they learned.

## LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Everybody in this room knows how to do something the rest of us don't. Maybe it's a card trick. Maybe it's how to draw a perfect star. Find a partner. You've each got 60 seconds to teach them your thing, and they have to actually try it. Then ask each other, 'Who taught you that?' I'll go first with my own partner so you see how it works."

## SKILL IDEAS (READ THESE IF STUDENTS ARE STUCK)

- A simple card trick
- How to whistle with your fingers
- A dance move
- How to draw a cat in 5 lines
- A phrase in another language
- A video game tip or shortcut
- The best way to make a sandwich
- A handshake
- How to shuffle cards
- A quick stretch or warm-up
- A way to remember names
- A tongue twister

## VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Go around the circle. Each person teaches the *whole group* for 60 seconds.
- **Pass it on:** After learning a skill, you have to teach it to someone else in the next round.
- **Leader round:** Students teach the adults something. Adults must try their best.

**LEADER NOTE** *Some students will say, "I don't have a skill." Help them find one quickly ("What do you do after school? Can you teach us one thing about it?"). Everyone leaves this game having taught something.*

## DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Almost every answer to 'Who taught you that?' was a person. A grandpa. A cousin. A YouTube guy. Nobody is born knowing how to do this stuff. Tonight you'll see that even Jesus' closest friends had to ask him to teach them something. And it wasn't how to do miracles. It was how to pray. So: **how do I actually talk with God?**"


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## D. Name Stories

8–10 min · Low energy

**Purpose:** A calm story-sharing game for small or quiet groups. Everybody has a name, and almost every name has a story. It's an easy, safe way to learn about each other, and it sets up the first line of Jesus' prayer: talking to God as "Father" and treating his name as special.

### HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into trios. "Find two people whose names you *might* not remember next week."
2. The leader reads a prompt. Each person answers in about 30 seconds. Anyone can pass.
3. Play 4–5 prompts. The leader goes first on the first prompt to model it.
4. For the last round, each trio introduces one teammate to the whole group using their best name fact (with permission).

### LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Get into groups of three. Tonight we're telling name stories. I'll give you a prompt, and each of you gets about thirty seconds. If you don't know the story behind your name, that's totally fine. Pick a different prompt or make up the story you *wish* it had. I'll go first."

### PROMPTS

- Who picked your name, and why?
- A nickname you've had
- A name you almost got
- A name you'd pick for yourself
- What you'd name a pet dragon
- Someone who says your name in a way you like
- How people usually mispronounce your name
- A family name that's been passed down
- Your favorite character's name
- What your name means (guess if you don't know)

### VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Stay together and go around the circle. Anyone can pass.
- **Name meanings:** Look up name meanings on a phone. Read them out loud for a few laughs.

**LEADER NOTE** *Not every student has a simple family story. Some are adopted, in foster care, or have a hard relationship with a parent. That's why every prompt has an easy, light option. Model a fun answer, not a heavy one, and never press for details.*

### DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Names matter. The way someone says your name tells you a lot about how they feel about you. Tonight, Jesus teaches his friends a prayer, and the very first thing he says is a name for God. Not 'Your Majesty.' Not 'Sir.' He says 'Father.' So let's find out: **how do I actually talk with God?**"


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## Hook: "The Prayer Voice"

2 min

**SAY**

"Raise your hand if you've ever heard someone switch into a 'prayer voice.'" *(Do a quick, gentle impression: slow, deep, and extra holy.)* "'Father God, we just… we just really just…' You know what I'm talking about."

"Now imagine if I talked to my best friend like that. 'Dear friend, I just really just want to thank you for the pizza.' They'd think something was wrong with me."

"A lot of people don't pray because they think there's a right way to sound, and they don't know it. Or they're afraid of saying it wrong. So for the next four weeks, we're running a Prayer Lab. We're not just going to learn about prayer. We're going to try it. And the question is: **how do I actually talk with God?**"

## Message: A Pattern, Not a Performance

10 min

### 1. Prayer can feel weird

**SAY**

"Let's be honest. Prayer can feel awkward. You close your eyes and your brain goes blank. Or you start praying and three seconds later you're thinking about lunch. Or someone asks, 'Who wants to pray?' and the whole room suddenly finds the floor really interesting."

"If that's you, good news. You are in great company."

**LEADER NOTE** *If you have a short, honest story about a time prayer felt awkward or hard for you as a teenager (being asked to pray out loud, falling asleep praying, not knowing what to say), tell it here. Thirty seconds is plenty. Students trust leaders who go first.*

### 2. Even the disciples asked

**SAY**

"Jesus' disciples followed him everywhere. They watched him heal people and feed thousands of people. And they noticed something: Jesus prayed. A lot. Early in the morning, late at night, alone on mountains. So one day, after watching him pray, one of them asks for help. Listen."

*[1] When he finished praying in a certain place, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples." [2] He said to them, "When you pray, say, 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. [3] Give us day by day our daily bread. [4] Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' "*

LUKE 11:1–4 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE


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"Notice what they didn't ask. They didn't say, 'Teach us to do miracles.' They said, 'Teach us to *pray*.' And Jesus didn't laugh at them for not knowing. He just taught them. Prayer is something you learn. Nobody is born good at it."

### 3. It's a pattern, not a password

**SAY**

"In another place, Jesus says something about how *not* to pray:"

> [7] *In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking.* [8] *Therefore don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him.*
>
> MATTHEW 6:7–8 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"So this prayer isn't a magic password you have to say perfectly. It's a pattern. Like a map. And it only has five moves:"

"**One: 'Our Father.'** Start by remembering who you're talking to. Not a boss. A Father who loves you. **Two: 'Your name, your Kingdom, your will.'** Before my list, I say, 'God, you're in charge, and I want what you want.' **Three: 'Daily bread.'** Ask for what you need today. Food, sleep, help on a test. Nothing is too small. **Four: 'Forgive us… as we forgive.'** Be honest about what you did wrong, and let go of what others did to you. **Five: 'Deliver us.'** Ask for help with what's pulling you the wrong way."

### 4. Now say it your way

**SAY**

"Here's the secret. You can pray these exact words, and that's great. But you can also take each line and say it in your own words. 'Give us day by day our daily bread' might become, 'God, I'm stressed about my math test tomorrow. Help me.' That's the same prayer. It's just yours now."

"Paul put it this way in one of his letters:"

> [6] *In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*
>
> PHILIPPIANS 4:6 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"In *everything*. Not just the big, holy stuff. So in a few minutes, we're going to try it, line by line. Nobody has to pray out loud. But everybody gets to try. So here's the question again, and I want you to actually think about it: **how do I actually talk with God?**"


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## E. Prayer Lab: The Lord's Prayer, Line by Line

12 min

**Purpose:** This is the heart of the night. Students actually pray, using Jesus' pattern one line at a time, first by writing each line in their own words and then by praying it silently. Nobody has to pray out loud. They leave with a prayer they wrote themselves and a simple way to try it at home.

### HOW TO RUN IT

1. **Set the room.** Dim the lights a little if you can and play soft music. Say the "nobody has to pray out loud" line (see script).
2. Students turn to **Line by Line** on student page 1. It has five of Jesus' lines, what each one is about, and a blank column: "In my own words."
3. For each line: the leader reads Jesus' words, gives one example in normal words, and gives students **about 60 seconds** to write their own version.
4. After writing each line, students pray it silently to God. "Just read what you wrote to God in your head."
5. **Pray it together:** The leader reads each of Jesus' lines out loud. After each one, pause. Anyone who wants to can read their own line out loud. Silence is completely fine. The leader closes with "Amen."
6. **Try It at Home + My One Step:** Students turn to page 2, look over the "Try It This Week" card, and fill in "My One Step This Week."

### LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY (SET UP)**
>
> "Welcome to the Prayer Lab. In a lab, you don't just read about stuff. You try it. Here's the promise: nobody in this room is going to be asked to pray out loud. Ever. Silent is fine. Reading what you wrote is fine. If you're not sure you even believe in prayer yet, you're still welcome to try. Just be honest."
>
> **SAY (LINE BY LINE)**
>
> "Look at Line by Line on your page. I'll read Jesus' words, then you write what that line means for *you*, right now, in normal words. First line: 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.' My version might be, 'God, you're huge, and you still want to be my Dad.' Now you write yours. Then pray it to God in your head."
>
> *(Repeat for each line. Keep your examples short and real. Give about 60 seconds each.)*
>
> **SAY (PRAY IT TOGETHER)**
>
> "Now we're going to pray the whole thing together. I'll read each of Jesus' lines. After each one, I'll wait a few seconds. If you want to, read your line out loud. If not, just pray it silently. Either way, you're praying. Let's pray."
>
> **SAY (TRY IT + ONE STEP)**
>
> "Turn to page 2. See the Try It This Week box? It's the same thing we just did, but short enough for five minutes before bed. Now write one small step: when and where you'll try it. Something like, 'Every night before I plug in my phone, I'll pray one line in my own words.'"


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### Sample "own words" lines (read if stuck)

- **Father:** "God, thanks for actually wanting to hear from me."
- **Kingdom:** "Do what's right in my school, my family, and me."
- **Bread:** "I need sleep, and I need help on Friday's test."
- **Forgive:** "I was rude to my mom. Sorry. Help me let go of what ___ said."
- **Deliver:** "Help me when I'm tempted to ___."

### If a student says "I don't know what to write"

- "Just write one word. That counts."
- "What would you say to God if you were texting him?"
- "Copy Jesus' line. Praying his words is a great prayer too."
- "Skip it and come back. There's no wrong order."

## VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. After the leader reads each of Jesus' lines, go around and let anyone read their own line. Everyone can pass.
- **Low-pressure option:** Skip the "pray it together" step. The leader reads Jesus' lines slowly with silence after each one, and students pray their own lines silently.
- **Prayer walk:** Tape the five lines on five walls. Students walk to each one, write their line, pray it, and move on.

**LEADER NOTE** *Never collect or read student pages. Don't correct anyone's prayer. If a student writes something funny, that's okay; God can handle funny. If a student looks upset while writing, check in quietly later (see the Care Note).*

## DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "You just prayed. Maybe it was your first time. Maybe it felt weird. That's okay. Look at your page. That's your prayer, in your words, using the same pattern Jesus gave his friends two thousand years ago. **How do I actually talk with God?** Like that. One honest line at a time."

# Small Group Talk

8–10 min · Optional

Groups of 3–5, with one adult or student leader per group if possible. Pick 3–4 questions that fit your group.

## WARM UP

1. What's something someone taught you that you still use all the time?
   *Follow-up: How did they teach it?*
2. When you were little, what did you think prayer was?
   *Keep it light. Funny answers welcome.*


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## GO DEEPER

3. What makes prayer feel awkward or hard for people our age?
   *What would make it easier?*
4. Jesus starts with "Father." How does it change prayer to think of God as a loving parent instead of a boss or a judge?
   *If "father" is a hard word for someone, what other picture helps?*
5. Which line of the prayer was easiest to write in your own words? Which was hardest?
6. Why do you think Jesus put "forgive us" and "as we forgive" in the same line?

## TAKE IT HOME

7. What's a "daily bread" thing you need from God this week?
8. When and where could you pray for five minutes without being interrupted?

**LEADER NOTE** *Silence is okay. Count to seven in your head before rephrasing. If no one answers, answer it yourself briefly and honestly, then ask again.*


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## Joys & Concerns

10 min

**Purpose:** Students practice praying *for each other*, not just hearing about prayer. It's often the moment new students realize this group actually cares about them. Tonight it fits the theme: Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father" and "give *us*," not "my Father" and "give *me*." Prayer was meant to be done together.

### HOW IT WORKS

1. Sit in a circle if you can. Explain the response: when someone shares, they end with **"I lift up ___ to God."** Everyone responds together: **"Lord, hear our prayer."**
2. Start with **joys** (things to thank God for), then move to **concerns** (things we're worried about or carrying).
3. The leader goes first to model it, with one joy and one concern.
4. Anyone can share, or pass. "Unspoken" requests are welcome, too.
5. Jot down what's shared (first names only) so you can pray for each one in the Pastoral Prayer.

### LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Did you notice Jesus didn't teach us to pray 'My Father' or 'give me'? It's 'Our Father' and 'give us.' Prayer was always meant to be something we do together. And when we pray 'give us our daily bread,' that includes the stuff our friends need today too. So what's something good that happened this week you're thankful for? Or something you or someone you love needs from God right now?"
>
> "When you share, end with 'I lift up ___ to God.' And all of us will say together, 'Lord, hear our prayer.' Let's practice. I lift up this group to God…" (*All: "Lord, hear our prayer."*)
>
> "I'll go first. My joy is ___. I lift up ___ to God. My concern is ___. I lift up ___ to God."

#### Joy starters (if students are stuck)

- A good grade or finishing a big project
- A birthday, new sibling, or new pet
- My team won / a great practice
- Someone I love got good news
- Just having a good week

#### Concern starters

- A test or tryout coming up
- A grandparent or relative who is sick
- A friend who's going through something
- Something I need this week ("daily bread")
- "I have an unspoken request."

### VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Go around the circle so everyone gets a turn, and everyone is allowed to pass.
- **Big group (12+):** "Popcorn" style: anyone shares when ready. Cap it at about 8 minutes.
- **Written version:** Students write joys and concerns on slips of paper. The leader reads them (no names) and the group responds.


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**LEADER NOTE** *Say once at the start: "What's shared here stays here, unless someone's safety is at risk." If a student shares something serious, thank them, pray, and follow up privately afterward (see the Care Note).*

## Pastoral Prayer

3–5 min

Pray this over the group. The **[bracketed]** lines are where you name the joys and concerns students just shared.

Our Father in heaven,

Thank you that we don't need a special voice or fancy words to talk to you. Thank you that you're not a boss we have to impress or a judge we have to convince. You're our Father, and you already know what we need before we ask.

Thank you for the good things you've given us this week. *[Name the joys shared: "Thank you for Maya's grandma coming home from the hospital, for Chris's team winning..."]* Every good gift comes from you.

And we bring you the things we're carrying. *[Name the concerns: "Be with Ethan's family. Give Sophia peace before her test on Friday..."]* And for the things that stayed in our hearts tonight and weren't spoken out loud, you already know them. Hold them too.

Give us what we need today. Forgive us for the ways we've messed up this week, and help us forgive the people who have hurt us. When we're pulled the wrong way, pull us back to you. Let your kingdom show up in our schools, our homes, and in us.

For anyone who has never prayed before tonight, thank you that you heard every word. For anyone who is new here, thank you for bringing them. Help them feel at home. And teach us to pray, just like you taught your friends.

In Jesus' name, amen.

**SEND-OFF**

"Take your student pages home. Page 2 has a Try It This Week card, so you can pray line by line on your own, and page 3 is a prayer journal for five days. Bring it back next week. Next time, we're talking about what to do when life is hard and prayer feels like it isn't working. It's called **'How Long?'** And every week we'll keep asking the same question: **how do I actually talk with God?** See you then."

**Next Week Follow-Up:** Open Week 2 by asking students to look at their Try It card and One Step tracker. "How many days did you try praying line by line? Which line was easiest to say in your own words? What got in the way?" Celebrate any progress, even one day. Then ask: "Did anybody pray a 'daily bread' prayer this week and see something happen?"


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### Care Note for Leaders

Praying to God as "Father" can be hard for a student whose father is absent, harsh, or unsafe. Writing honest prayers can also bring up real needs: hunger at home, family conflict, or a student praying about something frightening. Watch for anyone who goes quiet on "Father" or writes something that worries you.

- **Stay calm and thank them** for telling you. "I'm really glad you told me."
- **Offer other pictures** of God's love if "Father" is painful: God is the one who fully cares for them, the parent they deserve.
- **Don't promise to keep secrets** if someone's safety is at risk.
- **Follow your church's safety policy** and tell your lead pastor the same day.
- **Connect them to trained help:** parents or guardians, a school counselor, or a licensed counselor. In the U.S., anyone can call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) any time.

You're not expected to be a counselor. Your job is to listen well, take it seriously, and make sure they're connected to the right people.


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THE FULL SERIES

# PRAYER 101 · 4 Weeks

Each week stands alone, so new students can jump in any week. Taught in order, the four weeks give students four simple ways to pray, straight from Scripture, and a Prayer Lab every week to actually try them. The question every week: *How do I actually talk with God?*

| # | WEEK | TEXT |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Teach Us to Pray** The Lord's Prayer | Luke 11:1–4 |
| 2 | **How Long?** Honest prayer | Psalm 13 |
| 3 | **Be Still** Silence & breath prayer | Luke 10:38–42 |
| 4 | **Carried by Friends** Praying for others | Mark 2:1–12 |

### Every week includes

- 45 / 60 / 75-minute schedules
- Activity Menu with 4+ game options
- Word-for-word leader scripts
- Scripture (World English Bible) and one big idea
- A hands-on Prayer Lab and a Try It at Home card
- "One Step" challenge
- Tiered discussion questions
- Joys & Concerns prayer time
- Pastoral prayer with space for your group
- Student pages and a 5-day prayer journal
- Next-week follow-up

### Built for real youth groups

These weeks were written for a real Wednesday night group: 5 to 15 students, often with a new face or two, led by a pastor or volunteer with limited prep time. Games never single anyone out. Every activity has a small-group version. Nobody is ever asked to pray out loud. And every leader script can be read word for word when you're short on time.

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Purchasers may photocopy and share the student pages and leader guide for use within their own church or ministry.
Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (public domain).

Name: _____ Date: _____

TONIGHT'S BIG IDEA

**Prayer isn't a performance. Jesus gave me a simple pattern, and I can pray every line in my own words.**

## THE STORY · LUKE 11:1

One of his disciples said to him, "Lord, _____ us to _____."

What did the disciples ask Jesus to teach them? _____

## PRAYER LAB: LINE BY LINE

Read Jesus' line. Write it in your own words, like you're talking to someone who loves you. Then pray it to God silently.

| JESUS' WORDS (LUKE 11:2–4) | IT'S ABOUT… | IN MY OWN WORDS |
|---|---|---|
| *Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.* | Who I'm talking to | |
| *May your Kingdom come. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.* | God's way, not just mine | |
| *Give us day by day our daily bread.* | What I need today | |
| *Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.* | Sorry + letting go | |
| *Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.* | Help me stay on track | |

The line that was easiest for me to pray: _____

The line I want to keep praying this week, and why:



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# Try It This Week

### Try It at Home · The Lord's Prayer, Line by Line (5 minutes)

1. **Get quiet.** Find a spot. Phone face down. Say, "Father, I'm here."
2. **Pick one line** of Jesus' prayer (see page 1) and read it slowly.
3. **Say it your way.** Tell God what that line means for you today. Out loud, in your head, or written down.

I tried it: Day 1 ☐ Day 2 ☐ Day 3 ☐ Day 4 ☐ Day 5 ☐

## MY ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Every _____ (morning / lunch / bedtime / car ride)

I will pray _____

Example: "Every night before I plug in my phone, I will pray one line of Jesus' prayer in my own words."

## MY WEEK TRACKER

Check each day you did your step.

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

## MY PRAYER LIST

Write down the joys and concerns people shared tonight (first names only) and keep praying this week.

| JOYS: THANK YOU, GOD, FOR… | CONCERNS: PLEASE BE WITH… |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |

✂ CUT OUT AND KEEP IN YOUR PHONE CASE, WALLET, OR BIBLE

*"In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

My "daily bread" prayer: _____

My step: M ☐ T ☐ W ☐ T ☐ F ☐ S ☐ S ☐


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## My Prayer Journal

5 DAYS · 5 MINUTES A DAY

Each day: read the verse, think about the question, then write a short prayer to God. One honest sentence is plenty.

**DAY 1** Luke 11:1 · Teach us

What's one thing about prayer you wish someone would teach you? Ask God to teach you.

**DAY 2** Luke 11:2 · Our Father

What would change if you really believed God loves you like the best parent ever? Tell him.

**DAY 3** Luke 11:3 · Daily bread

What do you need today, big or small? Ask God for it, in your own words.

**DAY 4** Luke 11:4 · Forgive us

Is there something you need to say sorry for, or someone you need to let go of? Pray about it.

**DAY 5** Philippians 4:6 · In everything

What are you worried about? Turn it into a request, and add one thing you're thankful for.

### A prayer you can pray this week

*Father, I don't always know what to say to you. Thank you that I don't need fancy words. Teach me to pray. Give me what I need today, forgive me, help me forgive, and keep me close to you. Amen.*

Next week · Week 2: **How Long?**


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