

SOURCE

Why Do I Need To Pray?

SMALL GROUP EDGE NIGHT AT A GLANCE



Scripture

Mark 14:36; John 14:23; Romans 8:15; 1 Corinthians 12:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



Catechism

2560-2567



Resources

Spotify: "ES - Surge" (spotify:user:lifeteen)

GOAL

The goal of this Small Group Edge Night is to inspire the youth to pray and for the youth to see prayer as a relationship with God.

ENGAGE

Choruses to popular and appropriate songs are read with no melody and the youth are challenged to guess the song title and the artist. The purpose of this game is for the youth to have fun and to connect to the theme.

REFLECT

The core members discuss the following main ideas:

- When we understand what prayer is, we can make sense of why we need to pray to God who is all-powerful and all-knowing.
- Jesus invites us to pray, and He reveals to us the heart of prayer, which is a relationship with God.
- Prayer connects us to God and should be the source and foundation of our everyday life.

RESPOND

Youth are given a variety of ingredients listed on individual slips of paper and challenged to put them in the order they would if they were making that food. The purpose of this activity is to help the youth see an example of building something on a foundation. The youth then use journaling prompts to spend time talking to Jesus in prayer. The purpose of this prayer time is to guide and introduce the youth to prayer as a relationship with God.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Keep a sheet of paper by your bed this week and make an effort to write down one way you saw God's presence each day before you go to sleep. Bring this list to Edge next week.

SUPPLIES

Each small group needs the following supplies:

- 5-10 popular and appropriate song choruses
- Slips of paper with ingredients written on them
- Paper
- Writing utensils

SOURCE

Why Do I Need To Pray?

SMALL GROUP EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

ENGAGE

Introduction (10 Min)

Welcome the youth, introduce any youth who are there for the first time, and begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the topic using the following as an example:

Saint Therese of Lisieux once said, "for me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." Prayer is a relationship with God, it is a surge of our heart towards the one who has created us. Prayer is what connects us to God who desires to be our source of strength in times of trial and also our source of true joy, love, and happiness. He is the one who has created us and knows the plans that He has for our lives, and when we put Him at the center of our lives through prayer we are able to recognize His presence and follow His promptings. This week, we are going to be looking at how important prayer really is and why we should pray.

Prayer Assignment (5 Min)

After beginning the small group in prayer, ask for one youth to volunteer to close the small group time in prayer. This prayer can be a formal prayer, such as an Our Father or Hail Mary, or a spontaneous prayer. By assigning this role at the beginning of the small group, you give the youth time to prepare and prevent them from being put on the spot.



Hispanic Inculturation

Keep in mind that some Hispanic/Latino youth have learned prayers like the Our Father and Hail Mary in Spanish. Allow the teens to lead the prayer in Spanish if they are more comfortable. Alternatively, have printed copies of these common prayers in English for the youth to read from or allow the youth to pull them up on their phone if needed.

Say Me A Song (15 Min)

Before the Small Group Edge Night, choose 5-10 popular and appropriate popular songs and print off the lyrics to the song's chorus.

1. Give the lyrics to the first song to a core member and instruct them to speak them line-for-line.
2. The youth who raises their hand first and gives the correct title of the song wins that round. If the youth can also name who the artist is, they receive a bonus point.
3. Repeat this until all of the song choruses have been read. The youth with the most points at the end wins.



Suggestions

Allow the youth who wins to be the one who says the words of the next song.



Suggestions

For a digital meeting platform, make sure that everyone except for the core member is muted. The first youth to type the correct song name and artist in the chat wins.

REFLECT

6th:

- Daily prayer nourishes a relationship with God. How do you pray? What is your prayer life like?
- When praying we are trusting in God and asking for His will to be done. Have you ever had the experience of God answering a prayer?
- There are lots of ways to pray: adoration – sitting in the presence of God’s greatness, petition – asking God for something, intercession – praying for someone else/their needs, thanksgiving – saying thank you to God for the things He has done, praise – giving God honor, and many more. Which style is the easiest for you? Which is the hardest?

7th:

- Christians are called to pray throughout the day. What would your life look like if you were constantly praying? (Note not necessarily formal prayer in a Church but an ongoing dialogue knowing God is present with you in any situation.)
- Praying with Scripture is a great way to learn how to live by growing in an understanding of the teachings of Jesus. What is your favorite Bible story and what does it teach you about how to live?
- Sometimes it doesn’t feel like our prayers are being heard, but we still have to trust in God’s plan. Does anyone relate to this or have a story about a prayer they have made?

8th:

- Prayer is a relationship of love between God and his people. Can a relationship exist without communication? What makes prayer difficult? How can we work on these challenges to create a

life of prayer?

- How do you pray? We should never be afraid to pray during any circumstance, for anything, at any time.
- Let’s pray the Our Father together. Pay special attention to the words. What do you think the main message of the Our Father is?

“Source” Teaching Reflection (20 Min)

Use the following as a guide for a time of reflection:

What is Prayer?

There are many things that we encounter in our lives that do not at first make sense. For example, it might not make sense to us why we should talk to the screen of our phones or a sign at a drive through until we realize that it is a part of a communication system that connects us to a source. In a similar way, when we first look at prayer, it might not make sense why we should speak the words of prayer until we realize that those words are a part of a communication system that connects us to as source — to God.

- If you could go to any fast food restaurant or coffee shop, where would you go and why?
- When you think of prayer, what comes to mind first?

Prayer can sometimes be confusing or overwhelming. After all, God knows everything, so we might wonder why we need to tell Him about our lives. Or we might think that God is so big and powerful that He is too busy for us or does not care about the details or the struggles of our individual lives. Prayer might also be confusing because we don’t know how to hear God’s voice. We may find it really hard to pray and talk to God when we don’t hear His response in the tangible ways that we are so used to in our other relationships. God may not ever speak tangibly to us, so we might wonder how then we are supposed to “hear” Him.

When we understand what prayer is — that is it more than just saying words, but rather a form of communication that connects us to God — we can make sense of why we need to pray to a God who is all-powerful and all-knowing. Then as we continue to grow in our prayer lives, we will also learn the different ways that we can hear God, even if it is

not literally hearing Him. We will begin to be attentive to how God is moving in our lives and in our hearts.

- What is something right now in your life that you find to be confusing or overwhelming?
- What is an experience you have had where you felt confused or overwhelmed by prayer?

Jesus Asks Us to Pray

Prayer is more than just saying words, it is our way to communicate with God. In order to understand what this actually looks like, we can look to what God Himself has revealed about prayer. Through the words and example of Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate, we can see not only the importance of prayer but what the heart of prayer truly is. Throughout His life and His public ministry Jesus talks about prayer, teaches people how to pray, and prays as well. He prayed to God the Father early in the morning in the quiet, He prayed before big moments in His ministry, He thanked God the Father for the good things in His life, and He prayed to during His suffering and crucifixion.

- What is your favorite way to talk to someone (i.e. in person, on the phone, texting, social media, etc.)? Why?
- What are some times in life when you have prayed or found it easier to pray?
- What are some times when you have forgotten to pray or found it hard to pray?

In every part of His life, in every situation, Jesus prayed. Through Jesus' words and His example we come to see that the heart of prayer is more than just saying the words of prayers at a specific time of the day. Prayer is about allowing God to be a part of our lives. Prayer is engaging in a relationship with God. It is not a relationship of a slave to a master, or of a worker to a boss, but of a child to a father. In fact, in Scripture we are told to call God "Abba" which translates to father and shows an intimate or personal relationship with God as our Father (Romans 8:15). God desires to be in a relationship with His children whom He

loves so much that He sent Jesus to die in order to save us from sin. Prayer helps us engage in that relationship with God. Through prayer we respond to this great love of the Father. He is always present to us, and prayer helps us to be more aware of God throughout our day.

- What are the most important relationships in your life right now (i.e. relationship with friends, siblings, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)?
- What makes that relationship strong and meaningful?

My Prayer Life

When we develop as human beings and first learn to communicate we start small — by learning to say individual words. Eventually as we grow older, our language also grows — developing into sentences and conversations, ultimately learning how to express ourselves more clearly and vulnerably. When you think about relationships in your life, there are some standard things that also happen to help them develop and grow stronger. For example, if you kind of know someone on your sports team but you want to be better friends then you have to talk to each other. Usually you begin by talking about things you both like. Maybe you talk about school, and then eventually you might share more about your life or your family. As you find this person to be trustworthy, you will likely both open up more and share more about your hopes, your dreams, your struggles, and your fears, etc. As you continue to talk to each other and do things together sharing life experiences, your friendship becomes stronger. These steps of communication are all a natural part of building relationships with another person.

- What was it like the first time you met someone who is now your friend?
- How often do you talk to your friends or family members?
- How has talking to your friends or family members made your relationship stronger? Would that have happened if you never talked to them?

Just as we gradually learn how to communicate, and that helps us to build relationships in our lives, our prayer life will go through a similar process. We might start with just a few words that grow into sentences, but as we come to know and trust God more, those few words will eventually help us learn how to express ourselves more clearly. And this clarity will lend itself to vulnerability and openness to God's presence in our lives and in our hearts. Prayer allows us to communicate and talk to God — sometimes through words, sometimes through a surge as we lift our hearts to God, and sometimes simply through silence as we sit and spend time in the presence of God. While we may not tangibly hear God speaking to us like our friends or family do, we can hear His words through Scripture, we can hear Him in the good guidance we get from people who are calling us to holiness, and we can even hear Him (in a sense) through moments when we really recognize His presence or the work of His hands.

- What have your prayers been like in the past?
- Has your perspective on what prayer is changed at all during the course of this discussion? How so?

God is always reaching out to us. He wants us to know Him and how much He loves us. In our relationship with God, He is the one who reaches out to us first and we are called to respond. Prayer is a way for us to respond to God. In prayer, we talk to Him and thank Him for the great things He has done in our lives. Sometimes we ask God for help, and other times we simply sit in His presence. Through prayer, we respond to God's invitation into a relationship, not one where we only come to Him when we need things, but one that allows Him to be a part of our daily life. God wants to show us His love and His plans for our lives, He wants us to trust Him and allow Him to take care of us. It is through prayer that we grow in this relationship with God, and as we come to know God more we will be able to recognize His presence more clearly in our daily life.

- If someone asked you to explain what prayer is, what would you say?

RESPOND

Get to the Source Activity (10 Min)

Write each ingredient that makes up each of the foods below on individual slips of paper so that each youth will have a slip of paper for each ingredient.

Pizza: crust, mozzarella cheese, sauce

Salad: lettuce, tomatoes, croutons

Ice Cream Sundae: ice cream, chocolate sauce, sprinkles

Nachos: tortilla chips, salsa, cheddar cheese

Burritos: tortilla, rice, chicken

1. Give each youth all of the slips of paper with ingredients written on them. Make sure the slips of paper have been mixed together first and are in no particular order.
2. Tell them, or write down for them in a place they can all easily see, the foods they have to create (i.e. pizza, salad, ice cream sundae, nachos, burritos).
3. Challenge the youth to go through their slips of paper and organize them into groups for each of the foods they need to create — they cannot use the same slip of paper for multiple foods.
4. After they have grouped all of their ingredients together, challenge them to put the slips in order of how they would create their food.
5. Once they have ordered all of their slips of paper, ask the youth to share the ingredients and order they choose for each of the foods. Allow one or two youth to defend why they choose the ingredients and order that they did — do not focus on right or wrong answers but encourage youth to be creative in their answers.



Suggestions

For a digital meeting platform, post all of the ingredients mixed together on a whiteboard or chat feature. Then in a separate section of the whiteboard or in a new chat message post the foods the youth need to create. Ask them to use their own sheets of paper to write down each food, the ingredients they would use, and the order they would put them in. After all of the youth have done this, have all the youth post their ingredients and order in the chat feature one food element at a time (pizza first, salad second, etc.) and ask one or two youth to defend why they choose the ingredients and order that they did.

Journaling with Jesus (15 Min)

Use the following to introduce this time of prayer:

Just like our pizza needs a good dough as foundation, or our favorite burrito ingredients need to be built upon a tasty tortilla, prayer should be the foundation of our lives and every part of our life should be built upon this relationship with God. Prayer builds up this relationship with God, but sometimes we can over-complicate prayer. Right now we are going to take some time to simply talk to Jesus, to share with Him about our lives and what we are experiencing. You can talk to Him in prayer as you would talk to a friend — He cares about you and everything that is going on in your life.

Make sure the youth have paper and a writing utensil for a time of journaling. Either ask the youth to write down the following prompts as you say them or write them somewhere that all of the youth can see.

- What is on my mind right now?
- What good things are going on in my life right now?

- What difficult things are going on in my life right now?
- From all of these things that are on my mind right now, what would I most like to focus on and talk with Jesus about at this time?

After the youth have copied down the prompts, give them time to spread out and journal with these prompts entering into a time of personal prayer with Jesus. As they contemplate the last question, encourage them to either write down what they want to say to Jesus or to say it silently in their heads.

End the Small Group Edge Night by allowing the youth who was chosen at the beginning of the small group time to close in prayer and then give the youth their weekly challenge.



Suggestions

For a digital meeting platform, before the Edge Night, create a slide with the prompts for journaling typed out. After you explain the activity, share your screen and leave the prompts visible for all the youth. Give the youth a time limit and instruct them to turn off their screen sharing and mute themselves as they go pray (in whatever location in their house they are most comfortable). When the youth have one minute left, start a countdown on your screen or unmute yourself and play music so the youth know it is time to come back.

Weekly Challenge:

Keep a sheet of paper by your bed and make an effort this week to write down one way you saw God's presence in your day before you go to sleep. Bring this list to Edge next week.