

PRAY IT - Week 4 – Practicing the Way of Love Through Prayer

Big Idea

Prayer helps us notice God's presence in everyday life. Prayer can be words, silence, movement, gratitude, questions, listening, or simply paying attention.

Core Truth for All Ages

God is always near. Prayer helps us open our hearts, minds, and lives to God's love.

- Ages 0–4: *Notice it*
- Ages 5–10: *Say it*
- Ages 11–13: *Explore it*
- Ages 14–18: *Own it*
- Adults: *Live it deeply*

Ages 0–4: Simple Prayer & Wonder

Activity Option A: Repeat-After-Me Prayers

Pray short, rhythmic phrases together, then add motions:

- “Thank you, God.” - open hands
- “God loves me.” - hands on heart
- “God is with us.” - blowing a gentle breath
- “Help us love.” - arms wide

Activity Option B: Prayer With Stuffed Animals or Dolls

Invite children to:

- tuck in a stuffed animal
- pray for someone they love

Simple prompts:

- “God, help ___ sleep peacefully.”
- “God, thank you for ___.”

Activity Option C: Listening Prayer

Sit quietly for 10–20 seconds. Then, Ask:

- “What do you hear?”
- “What do you feel?”
- “Can we be still together?”

Frame silence as peaceful, not pressured.

Why This Works

- prayer becomes relational and sensory
- children learn prayer through repetition and safety
- stillness is introduced gently

Ages 5–10: Prayer Practices & Creativity

Activity Option A: Prayer Jars

Write or draw:

- people to pray for
- things they're thankful for
- worries
- hopes

Pull one out each day to pray for together.

Activity Option B: Prayer Walk

Walk slowly:

- around the house
- outside
- through the neighborhood

Notice: people, nature, sounds, places needing care

Pray simple prayers:

- “God, bless this home.”
- “Help people feel safe.”
- “Thank you for this day.”

Activity Option C: Color Prayers

Use colors as prompts:

- Green → things growing
- Blue → peace
- Yellow → joy
- Red → courage

Invite kids to draw while praying.

Why This Works

- gives concrete ways to pray
- keeps prayer active and imaginative
- teaches attentiveness

Dinner Table Prayer & Conversation

Conversation Starters

- What made you happy today?
- What was hard today?
- Who should we pray for tonight?
- Where did you notice kindness?

Simple Dinner Prayer

“God, thank you for this food, for our family, and for all the people who helped bring this meal to our table. Help us share your love. Amen.”

Ages 11–13: Honest Prayer & Everyday Life

Activity Option A: Emoji Prayers

Use emojis or emotion cards:

- tired 😴
- excited 🥳
- worried 😟
- peaceful 😌

Ask: “What would you want to say to God from this feeling?” Normalize honesty in prayer.

Activity Option B: Prayer Playlist

Invite tweens to:

- choose songs that help them feel connected, calm, hopeful, or reflective
- create a “Prayer Playlist”

Discuss:

- How can music become prayer?
- What songs help you feel grounded?

Activity Option C: Prayer Experiments

Try different kinds of prayer: silence, gratitude, writing, movement, art, breath prayer

Reflect:

- Which felt natural?
- Which felt uncomfortable?
- Which helped you feel connected?

Why This Works

- validates emotional complexity
- gives permission to explore
- moves prayer beyond memorization

Prayer Journal Prompts: Tweens

- What do I wish God understood about me right now?
- When do I feel closest to God? What kinds of prayer feel natural to me?
- What worries am I carrying today? What helps me feel calm, grounded, or connected?
- If I could ask God one honest question, what would it be?

Dinner Table Prayer & Conversation

- What helps you feel calm or grounded? When do you find it hardest to pray or slow down?
- What do you wish adults understood about stress or pressure?
- What kind of prayer feels most meaningful to you?

Dinner Prayer

“God, thank you for this day and for the people gathered here. Help us notice your presence in moments of joy, stress, questions, and rest. Teach us to love ourselves and others well. Amen.”

Ages 14–18: Real Prayer for Real Life

Activity Option A: Unfiltered Prayer

Invite teens to write:

- honest questions
- frustration
- hopes
- gratitude
- fear

Frame: “God can handle honesty.”

Optional: tear up, burn (safely) or flush the paper afterward as a release practice.

Activity Option B: Breath Prayer for Anxiety & Stress

Practice: Take a few deep breaths, noticing your inhale and your exhale. Then,

1) On the inhale, say to yourself: “God, you are here.”

2) On the exhale: “I am not alone.”

Invite them to create their own mantra.

Activity Option C: Praying for the World

Choose: a news story, a friend, a community issue, something at school

Ask: “What would it mean to pray *and* respond?” Connect prayer with action.

Why This Works

- respects teens’ emotional reality
- avoids shallow spirituality
- connects prayer to justice, courage, and compassion

Prayer Journal Prompts: Tweens & Teens

- What do I wish God understood about me right now?
- When do I feel closest to God?
- What kinds of prayer feel natural to me?
- What worries am I carrying today?
- What helps me feel calm, grounded, or connected?
- If I could ask God one honest question, what would it be?

Dinner Table Prayer & Conversation

- What helps you feel calm or grounded?
- When do you find it hardest to pray or slow down?
- What do you wish adults understood about stress or pressure?
- What kind of prayer feels most meaningful to you?

Dinner Prayer

“God, thank you for this day and for the people gathered here. Help us notice your presence in moments of joy, stress, questions, and rest. Teach us to love ourselves and others well. Amen.”

Adults: Prayer as Attention & Practice

Activity Option A: Breath Prayer

Choose a simple phrase:

- “Be still and know.”
- “God, give me peace.”
- “Help me love well.”
- “Here I am.”

Repeat slowly with breathing.

Activity Option B: Praying the Day

Reflect:

- Where did I notice joy?
- Where did I feel disconnected?
- What needs healing?
- What am I carrying?

Close with gratitude or release.

Activity Option C: Prayer & Listening

Sit quietly for 1–2 minutes.

Prompt: “What might God be inviting me to notice, release, begin, or trust?”

No pressure for certainty.

Prayer Journal Prompts: Adults

- What is shaping my inner life right now?
- Where do I feel invited toward deeper trust?
- What distractions keep me from prayer or reflection?
- What kind of prayer do I most need in this season?
- How can prayer become more honest and less performative?
- What would it mean to listen for God in ordinary moments?

Dinner Table Prayer & Conversation

- What practices help us stay spiritually grounded?
- Where have we noticed beauty or grace this week?
- What burdens are we carrying right now?
- How can prayer shape the way we treat one another?

Dinner Prayer

“Loving God, thank you for nourishment, connection, and the gift of another day. Help us become people of compassion, courage, wisdom, and peace. May our lives reflect your love in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities. Amen.”