



*Unlocking*

**CHILDREN'S HEARTS**  
FOR INTIMACY WITH GOD

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A Guide for Organizing  
Children's Prayer Conferences

**Linda Mei Lin Koh**

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# Introduction

Today's children live in a tough world. They are bombarded on the television with frightening news of shootings, terrorism, and disasters such as hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and fires. They may be fearful, depressed, and need comforting. What can be more comforting and encouraging than prayer?

Children are also very receptive to the teaching and influence of their parents, teachers, and other significant people in the early years of their lives. They respond spontaneously and eagerly when listening to stories, singing action songs, or praying. This is, therefore, the prime time to nurture their relationship with God through prayer.

Some children learn very early on to pray at mealtimes and bedtimes. When children learn to talk to God and share their joys and sorrows with Him like they do with a friend, they will discover a window of beautiful communication with a loving and wonderful God. It is our hope that such a relationship will continue to be a part of their lives as they develop into praying adults.

It is therefore our objective to provide as many opportunities as possible for children to participate in prayer—through prayer meetings, prayer conferences, and other prayer events. It is our hope that children's leaders will be enthusiastic about organizing prayer conferences for children to inspire them and engage them in meaningful prayer experiences together with other children.

This guide contains practical tips and sample programs for children's leaders to use when they want to plan a prayer conference. Remember, this is just a starter! It is our prayer that leaders will be creative in developing other new ideas to inspire children to develop a lifelong prayer relationship with God.



# Chapter 1

## CHILDREN AND PRAYER



Teaching children to pray is a vital part of introducing them to Jesus and strengthening their relationship with God. Prayer is an avenue for them to communicate with God. When children learn to pray, we are connecting them to God. We want them to know God Himself, and not just know *about* Him. We want them to realize they can talk to God like they would talk to their very best friend. They can share with Him their joys, sorrows, and concerns, and when they see their prayers answered, they can exclaim like David: “I love the Lord for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live” (Psalm 116:1-2, NIV).

### TIPS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY

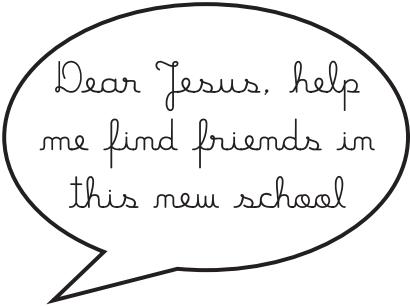
#### 1. Modeling Prayer

One of the first and best ways children learn the importance of prayer is by watching and hearing their parents pray, hearing them thank God for their food, health, and family. Pretty soon, the children follow what their parents do.

Children also observe their Sabbath School teacher praying, as well as the pastor in the church. On occasions when their parents visit those who are sick and pray for their healing, they will appreciate how important prayer is.

## 2. Talking to God

Children can start learning about prayer even before they can speak. Although the young ones may not be able to speak, they do listen to what their parents say. Teaching them to fold their hands and close their eyes as their parents pray is a good start towards forming a valuable habit.



Dear Jesus, help  
me find friends in  
this new school



**God, why did  
daddy lose his  
job?**

Prayer is simply talking to God and having a conversation. Children should know very early in life that God wants us to talk to Him just like they talk to their best friend. They can talk to Him about anything and everything. He is always there to listen even when they are on the playground, at school, or at home.

Do not develop a memorized prayer that the child must repeat. Let it be spontaneous, encouraging them to speak from their heart. Even a child age two can simply say, "Thank you, Jesus, for the rice and beans."

## 3. How and Where Can They Talk to God?

- They can talk to God loudly or softly, or even silently.
- They can kneel down and close their eyes, or they stand, sit, walk or lie down.
- They can talk to God anywhere—on the playground, in the school bus, in the car, in a quiet corner, or just anywhere.
- They can talk to Him at any time—in the morning, afternoon, evening, or even in the middle of the night.

## 4. What Can They Talk to God About?

- They can thank God for the blessings they receive—for example, making a new friend at school; a relative was healed; getting a new puppy as a birthday present.
- They can share their sadness and disappointments with God—for example, their best friend got hurt in an accident, or their Daddy has just lost his job.
- They can ask God for personal needs, such as helping them to be kind to others, performing well in their examinations, or being strong to fight off temptations.
- They can pray for others, like their friends, family members, disaster victims, or refugees.

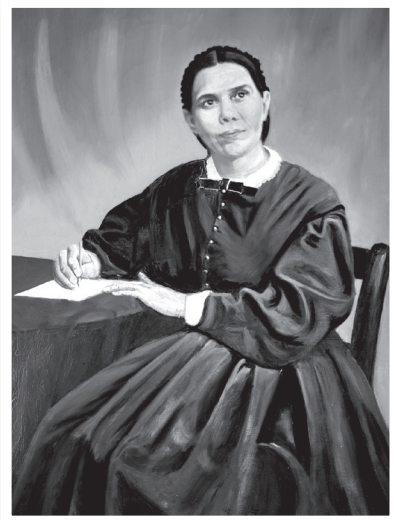


- They can journal their prayers in a self-decorated prayer journal, listing down their requests and then putting a sticker on the prayers that God has answered.

### **5. Ellen White's Counsels On Prayer**

*“Teach your children to pray with clear, distinct voice. Teach them to lift their heads from their chair and never to cover their faces with their hands. Thus, they can offer their simple prayers, repeating the Lord’s prayer in concert.”* (Child Guidance, p. 522)

*“In the church at home the children are to learn to pray and to trust in God...Train the children to offer their simple words of prayer. Tell them that God delights to have them call upon Him.”* (Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students, p. 110)



*“Children should pray for grace to resist the temptations which will come to them—temptations to have their own way and to do their own selfish pleasure. As they ask Christ to help them in their life service to be truthful, kind, obedient, and to bear their responsibilities in the family circle, He will hear their simple prayer.”* (The Adventist Home, p. 299)

*“Then, children, ask God to do for you those things that you cannot do for yourselves. Tell Jesus everything. Lay open before Him the secrets of your heart; for His eye searches the inmost recesses of the soul, and He reads your thoughts as an open book. When you have asked for the things that are necessary for your soul’s good, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.”* (The Adventist Home, p. 299)

*“Children and youth may come to Jesus with their burdens and perplexities and know that He will respect their appeals to Him, and give them the very things they need. Be earnest; be resolute. Present the promise of God, and then believe without a doubt.”* (Messages to Young People, p. 123)



# Chapter 2

## OFF TO A GOOD START: 4 ESSENTIALS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PRAYER CONFERENCE



**B**efore we start organizing a prayer conference for children, let's make sure we know what we are doing and how we should proceed. It is important that we take note of four key essentials when planning such an event:

### **1. CLEAR FOCUS**

It is important that leaders know what their objectives are and to focus on them. We don't just bring children together for an event to have fellowship and fun. Ask yourself why you want them there. What do you want them to gain from this experience? What is your focus for this event?

Gathering children together to enhance their prayer life and to learn different ways of prayer helps everyone to focus on this one objective. Spending a day in prayer for the victims of an earthquake disaster or for Syrian refugee children and how to reach them makes it very meaningful for the children as they focus on this one issue.

## **2. PREPARE**

It is essential to prepare ahead of time what your objectives are, and what topics you will be covering. Discuss with your team members what the theme or objectives will be. Plan the details and how to accomplish your objectives. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you regarding the matters that children should pray about and ensure that you help the children understand the relevance of these issues to them.

**“By failing to  
prepare, you  
are preparing  
to fail.”**

—Benjamin Franklin

## **3. LEAD**

A leader must be passionate about prayer before he or she can lead a prayer conference. Your excitement, enthusiasm, and passion for God will come right through to the children. They will notice it and will model your prayerful attitude. Attitudes are more often “caught” than “taught.”

## **4. PRAY**

It is important that the leader and his or her team pray earnestly that God will impress on their hearts what should be emphasized in this conference. Organize a prayer group to pray earnestly, seeking wisdom and understanding on what the Lord’s plans are for your conference.

# Chapter 3

## ORGANIZING THE PRAYER CONFERENCE



It is essential that leaders plan the overall program carefully and well in advance. If you want successful and effective programs, you must plan, plan, plan! Form a small working committee to start planning on the details.

### A. THE BASICS

#### 1. Select an Interesting and Appealing Theme

- Choose themes that are appealing and relevant to children's lives and spiritual journeys, such as "Anchored Deep," "God's Construction Zone," "Turbo-charge Your Prayers," or others.
- Plan the prayer activities, music, and other group work around the chosen theme.

#### 2. Choose a Suitable Date

- Timing is very important if you want the maximum number of children to attend. Choose dates that are centered around public holidays, school vacation, or special events.

- Remember that children, as well as their parents, are often just as busy on weekends as during the week.
- Try choosing a long weekend when there is a public holiday on a Monday, or just at the beginning of school break before the families go off on their summer vacation.
- Usually a two-to-three-day conference will work well for the children.

### **3. Choose a Venue**

- Find a location that is large enough for prayer stations and prayer activities and has space for individual quiet prayer and meditation.
- Try to find a venue that is surrounded by nature so that prayer walks can be conducted outdoors among the trees, flowers, bushes, and singing birds.
- A school or a retreat center is often ideal for such an event.
- Secure a venue that is reasonably priced and affordable.

### **4. Involve the Church Leadership**

- It is wise to get the pastor involved if you are organizing a prayer conference for the children of your local church so that he can give you the needed support.
- If you are organizing a prayer conference on the union or conference level, remember to involve your administrative leaders so that they can catch your vision and support you financially.
- Enroll the help of teachers, elders, retired children's leaders, musicians and parents to assist in the conference.

### **5. Plan Your Budget**

- Consider the number of children you envision will attend this event.
- Identify the expenditures, such as:
  - Rental of facilities for meetings and lodging
  - Food
  - Supplies such as notepads, pens, conference bags, craft materials, etc.
  - Gifts for the children
  - Honorarium for speakers and helpers
  - Transportation
  - Miscellaneous – firstaid kit, etc.
- Identify the incomes, such as:
  - Conference fees from attendees
  - Funding from the church, conference, or union organizations
  - Donations
  - Fundraising projects
- Balance your budget between incomes and expenditures

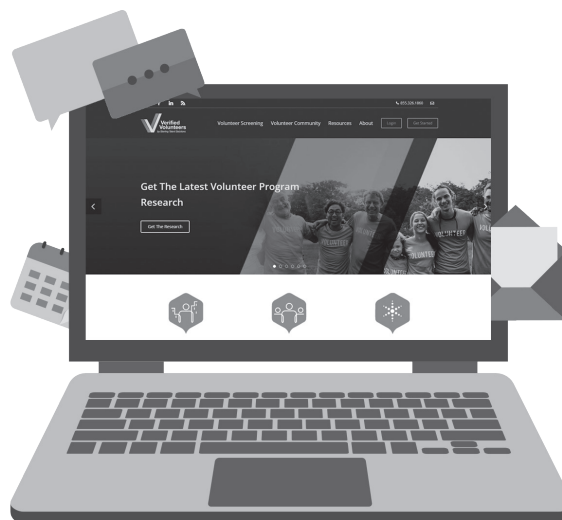


## 6. Set Up Various Working Committees

- It is important to form your main committee and various other working committees to help with the organization of the conference.
- Do not try to do everything yourself. A good leader delegates responsibility to his or her team.
- Involve parents as volunteers in your team. Many have creative gifts and abilities.
- Form the main Prayer Conference Committee with the following individuals: the pastor, the Children's Ministries Coordinator of the church or the Children's Ministries Director of the conference or union, Pathfinder and Adventurer Club directors, and one other person who is involved in prayer activities at your church.
- Set up working committees that will be responsible for planning various activities, such as: prayer, programming, food, transportation, music, small groups, purchasing, arts and crafts, prayer activities, games, etc.

## 7. Ensure Volunteer Screening

- Everyone who works with children must be properly screened and have background checks.
- Instruct volunteers to take a screening test online, such as *verifiedvolunteers.com*, but if their conference or union has its own screening test, it would be best for them to take that test.
- Be sure you have the volunteers' certificates on file before the prayer conference begins.



## B. PROGRAMMING

It is important to remember that a prayer conference program should not provide only knowledge and new ideas about prayer, but also provide opportunities for children to experience time alone with Jesus individually as well as praying together with others. It should be your goal to inspire and motivate children to enjoy communicating with their Special Friend every day. Here is a sample program you may want to follow—but be creative in adapting it or developing your own that is suitable for your location.

## SAMPLE PROGRAM

### DAY 1

08:00 - 17:00	Arrival & registration of participants
17:00 - 18:30	SUPPER
19:00 - 20:30	Opening of Conference

### DAY 2

#### Morning

06:00 - 07:00	Wake up and preparation
07:00 - 07:45	Prayer walk
07:45 - 08:30	BREAKFAST
08:45 - 09:15	Plenary Session 1 "Action Key #1: BELIEVE"
09:15 - 09:45	TAG Time (Time Alone with God)
09:45 - 10:00	BREAK
10:00 - 10:45	Prayer Station 1: "Creation"
10:45 - 11:15	Plenary Session 2 "Action Key #2: ASK"
11:15 - 11:30	Learning prayer songs
11:30 - 12:15	Bible search for prayer texts
12:15 - 13:15	LUNCH

#### Afternoon

13:15 - 14:15	REST TIME
14:15 - 15:00	Prayer crafts
15:00 - 15:45	Prayer Station 2: "Our World"
15:45 - 16:30	Games
16:30 - 17:30	Shower and clean up
17:30 - 18:30	SUPPER
18:30 - 19:15	Plenary Session 3 "Action Key #3: FORGIVE"
19:15 - 20:15	Film on the Power of Prayer
20:15 - 21:00	Debriefing & Group Prayers
21:00	Bedtime

### DAY 3

#### Morning

06:00 - 07:00	Wake up and preparation
07:00 - 07:45	Prayer walk
07:45 - 08:30	BREAKFAST
08:45 - 09:15	Plenary Session 4 "Action Key #4: OBEY"
09:15 - 09:45	TAG Time
09:45 - 10:00	BREAK
10:00 - 10:45	Prayer Station 3: "The Christmas Prayer Journey"
10:45 - 11:15	Plenary Session 5 "Action Key #5: INTERCEDE"
11:15 - 11:30	Learning prayer songs
11:30 - 12:15	Bible game on The Lord's Prayer
12:15 - 13:15	LUNCH
13:15	GOODBYE



# Chapter 4

## PRAYER STATIONS



Prayer stations is an interesting and interactive idea that engages the whole person in thinking, writing, reading a text, and talking to God in an intimate way. Children are given an opportunity to respond to God, meditate on His Word, and connect with the message of the topic on a deeper level. In this chapter we provide several sample prayer stations which you can use for this activity. However, you can be creative and come up with your own prayer stations that are relevant for your situation.

The overall theme or topic is generally displayed at the center of the room or venue where the specific prayer station will take place. Each group moves from one station to another, spending about 10-15 minutes at each station.

### 1. MAIN COMPONENTS

You can print out each of the prayer station package and then enlarge and laminate them so that you can display them on the tables. Laminated cards can last longer and are water-proof. Each station usually has three components:

- A focus verse or topic, and instructions.
- A physical response, such as writing out the answer or prayer request as indicated in the instructions, or each person engages in silent prayer.
- A prayer.

## **2. PREPARATION**

Provide a conducive environment that is inviting and peaceful for children to participate in quiet prayer. Lighting, candles, music, fabric, cushions, photographs, etc. can enhance the experience. Here are some suggestions:

- Decorate each prayer station according to the theme of the prayer focus.
- Use pictures and objects to make it attractive and appealing, such as stones, photos, sand, seashells, etc.
- Use candles and soft light to create a peaceful and solemn environment.
- Provide cushions, throw pillows, and mats for children who choose to sit on the floor.
- Provide clear instructions at each prayer station table.
- Provide all the necessary supplies, such as pencils, ballpoint pens, paper, markers, and other supplies.

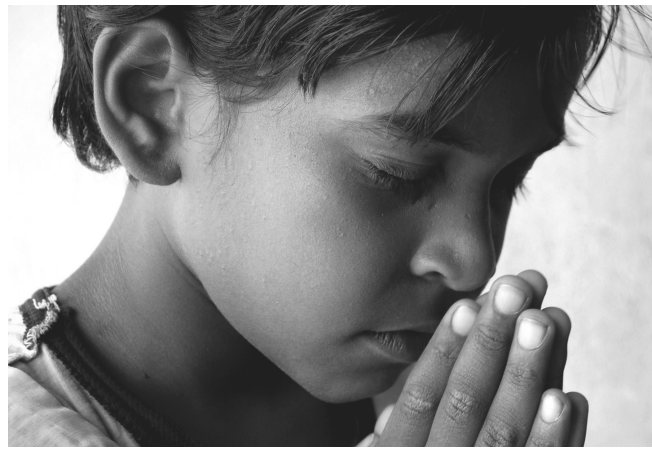
## **3. PROCEDURE**

- Divide children into groups of 5 or 6.
- Have each group begin at a different station.
- After one group has completed their station, they will move on to the next station.
- Always have the groups move in only one direction, whether it be clockwise or counter-clockwise.
- Provide a specific length of time for each group to participate at each station.
- Have an adult leader at each station to assist those children who do not understand the instructions. The leader also indicates the time for the group to move on when the time limit is up.
- Even though there is a time limit, do not hurry a child if he or she wants to stay a little longer at that specific station. That station's specific topic may speak to the child personally.
- When the first group has completed their rounds, gather them together for a final prayer.

## **4. CLOSING PRAYER**

Try a circle prayer, holding hands in a large circle, facing inwards. The leader then prays for the entire group.

# Sample Prayer Stations





# Creation

## Station 1: Day One—LIGHT

- Prepare a darkened room.
- Have some throw pillows and cushions scattered on the floor.
- Place five different items around the room.
- Put blindfolds on each child before they enter the space. Then ask them, “What can you see?” The children will likely respond that they can see only darkness.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- Now take off the blindfolds. Say, “The first thing God created was light. What are the five things that you see around this space? These things were there when you were blindfolded, but you couldn’t see them without the light!”
- Jesus said He is the Light of the world, a Light that would help people to see God.
- By reflecting Jesus, we may be able to shed light and help others to see God. As Jesus said: “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 15:14).
- Do you want to help others to see God? Ask an adult to help you light a candle. In pairs, pray that you will be the light of the world to help others see Jesus.
- Then leave the candle on the table and move to the next station.



# Creation

## Station 2: Day 2—SKY

- Prepare the room with balloons, clouds, and an electrical fan blowing “wind.”
- Ahead of time, prepare some pieces of paper with fold lines that will help the children fold the paper into a boat shape. They will write their dreams for the future on this paper before folding it.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- After He made the light, God made the sky. He did it so that we could have air to breathe.
- Take a deep breath. Breathe the air in through your nose and out through your mouth. Do it twice more. Can you feel your lungs filling and emptying? The air is one of those things that God created that is essential for life.
- Let’s talk about dreams. What dreams do you have for the future? What do you think you will do with your life, when you get big like an adult? Write your dreams down on a piece of paper (ask an adult to help you if you need to). Then fold the paper into a boat shape.
- God loves you and has wonderful things in store for you. He will “steer” your boat of dreams along the waters of life. You can entrust your dreams to God.
- Pray to God about your dreams.



# Creation

## Station 3: Day 3—DRY LAND AND PLANTS

- Decorate the station with a variety of plants, fruit and vegetables.
- Put up pictures showing how the earth has areas of land and areas of water (aerial photos of the earth are good for this).
- Prepare some grapes (or other fruit) and cubes of bread for the children to eat.

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- On the third day, God separated the water and the dry land and created the wonderful variety of plants we enjoy.
- Do you know the name of a tree, or a flower? And what about the names of some fruit and vegetables? Can you think of the names of some healthy seeds?
- Plants make the world beautiful and provide for our nutritional needs. Trees are not only beautiful to look at and shady to sit under, but they also provide food, clothes, and shelter.
- Plants even help to keep clean the air that we breathe!
- Eat a piece of bread and a few grapes, and while you are eating them, thank God for all these things.
- In front of you there is a plant that needs to be watered in order to grow. Pour a little water on the soil around the plant. Think about how God takes care of you just like you have taken care of the plant.



# Creation

## Station 4: Day 4—SUN, MOON, AND STARS

- Decorate the space by hanging up a sun, moon, and stars.
- Have a pile of sand on a table or in a shallow tray.
- Place a page-a-month calendar (a birthday calendar) somewhere in the space in which the children can write their birthdays.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- Pick up a grain of sand. Hold it in the palm of your hand. See how small it is?
- Have you ever gazed at the stars in the night sky? They seem so far away! And on some nights, we see so many of them that we feel so small in our very small world—as small as this grain of sand.
- The universe in which we find ourselves is huge. There are millions and millions of stars, planets, and moons.
- Despite this, God knows everything about you. You are very special to Him and He loves you so much. Isn't that amazing?
- When is your birthday? Write your birthday in the calendar.
- Remember, you're part of this world and so you are very special in God's eyes. He has a special plan for you!
- Pray silently by yourself and thank God for making you special to Him.



# Creation

## Station 5: Day 5—BIRDS AND FISH

- Decorate the room with pictures of birds and fish, as well as real fish in a fish tank or bowl, if possible.
- Put up a few pictures of polluted oceans or streams, showing how this impacts the birds and fish.
- Prepare an ocean-themed poster entitled “I Pledge to Protect the Oceans”. Have pens available which the children will use to sign their names on the poster.
- Have a bowl of stones available.

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- On the fifth day, God began to populate the earth, filling the seas with fish, dolphins, whales and other sea creatures. He also created birds that fly in the sky.
- Fish and birds are wonderful but, unfortunately, instead of taking care of them, we humans have endangered them by polluting the environment in which they live. Many species today are endangered!
- We must work harder to protect and keep the world that God has created. Do you want to help? If you want to pledge to protect our oceans, sign your name on the “I Pledge to Protect the Oceans” poster.
- Add a stone to the pile that you see in front of you. It is a way of saying that you want to be a good friend at home, at school, and in your neighborhood.
- Pray in twos or threes asking God to help you care for His earth and all the creatures.





# Creation

## Station 6: Day 6—ANIMALS AND MAN

- Decorate the space with pictures of a variety of animals, as well as a variety of people—young, old, male, female, different races and nationalities.
- Provide a lump of clay for each child.

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- On day 6 God created the animals.
- What is your favorite animal? Do you have a dog, or a cat, or maybe a stuffed toy animal?
- After God created the animals, He made the most beautiful thing: people. He made humans in His image, so that they resembled Him.
- Look at the pictures of these people. They are so different from one another.
- On the outside, we may look different from each other, but we were all created and loved by God. We are all special in His eyes.
- Do you see this clay? Model the clay to make a human shape that looks like you. Place it on the table and see the shapes that others, like you, have made.
- Thank God He made you the way you are.
- Ask Him to help you love others and to understand how special they are in God's eyes.
- Leave your clay shape on the table so that other visitors to this station can see it.



# Creation

## Station 7: Day 7—REST

- Decorate the room with comfortable pillows and soft lighting.
- Have peaceful gospel music playing in the background.
- Provide a stack of paper and pencils for the children to use to draw a picture.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- When God finished creating everything, He looked at what He had made and saw that it was very good! Then God rested on the seventh day.
- Get a pillow and get comfortable. As you rest, think about the things you have seen and done today. What impressed you the most? What have you learned about God during your journey today?
- Stay here for a while and speak with God about what you have done today. If you would like to, draw a picture or write a message on one of the sheets of paper that is provided. Then leave it there. We will put it in the big book that you will see as you leave the prayer stations area.



# Our World

## Station 1: OUR FAMILIES

- Display some pictures of families involved in different types of activities. Ensure that you portray a variety of cultures.
- Decorate with hearts, flowers, etc.
- Prepare Scripture cards to put up around the station, with the following verses on them: 2 Timothy 1:5; Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- Our families love us and support us. They are the most important people to each of us.
- Read the Bible texts about families and their role of passing on the faith to their children.
- Share a photo of your family if you have one in your wallet.
- Say a silent prayer to thank God for your family.
- Pray for a specific member in your family as well as a specific family/families you know.



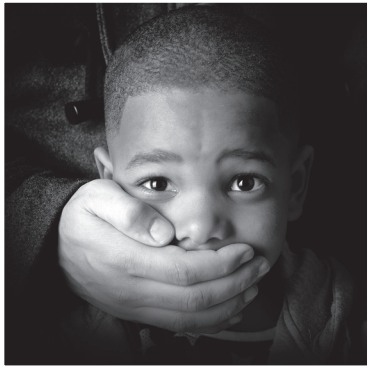
# Our World

## **Station 2: OUR LEADERS**

- Display photographs of church leaders like president, treasurer, youth director, Pathfinder director of divisions, unions, or conferences; and principals and presidents of Adventist colleges and universities.
- Put up pictures of major political leaders of some countries, such as presidents, prime ministers, mayors, or governors.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- God puts leaders in place to lead and govern the church or the country. They need to make wise and good decisions to help the church to grow, or to help the country develop.
- Pick one specific leader from the church and one other political leader and pray that God will give them wisdom as they lead the church or the country.



# Oyn World

## **Station 3: AT-RISK CHILDREN**

- Display pictures of at-risk children such as special needs children, poor children, street children, abused children, orphans, child laborers, etc.
- Scatter the table with red paper hearts. Provide pens or pencils for writing.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- Do you know any orphans, or a disabled child, or any other child who is at risk? Write down his/her name on a red heart. It may be one or two children from school or a child you saw on the news.
- Pray for those children that God will take care of them by sending kind and loving people into their lives. Pray for their protection.



# Our World

## **Station 4: OUR NEIGHBORS**

- Display pictures of children from multicultural backgrounds.
- Also display some of the different toys or games from various countries.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- Write down the names of a few of your neighbors that you know and play with often.
- List the reasons why you like to play with them.
- Pray for each of them, especially if they do not yet know Jesus.



# Our World

## **Station 5: OUR TEACHERS**

- Decorate the station with items related to school, such as crayons, colored pencils, easels, a chalkboard, globe, etc.
- Display pictures of teachers from different disciplines, such as science, Bible, mathematics, art, music, etc.
- Provide a stack of paper plates for the children on which to draw their favorite teacher's face.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- Write the name of your favorite teacher on a paper plate. Then draw a picture of your teacher on it.
- Holding your plate, pray for your teacher, asking God to give him/her wisdom and love as he or she teaches you.

# The Christmas Prayer Journey

The Christmas Prayer Journey consists of five stations. At each station there is a picture and some words for you to think about and a prayerful activity to do. Enjoy this quiet space. Each journey will be different, but all stations will end up at the center. May this experience draw you closer to Jesus, the Center of Christmas.





# The Christmas Prayer Journey

## Station 1: WE BEGIN OUR JOURNEY

- Decorate the station with some “gifts” wrapped in Christmas gift wrap.
- Provide a bowl of seeds, such as sweet pea seeds or pumpkin seeds, and a shallow dish containing some damp soil in which to plant the seed.

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- What is your hope or wish as we get nearer to Christmas? Do you hope to get your favorite toy? Do you hope to share the good news of Jesus with your friend? Are you planning to share some of your favorite things with poor children?
- Take a seed from the bowl and look at it—such a tiny thing, yet it has so much potential to grow. Let it remind you of your seeds of hope, your expectation for this Christmas.
- Put your seed in the soil provided. Think about how big things almost always have small beginnings:
  - Every downpour starts with just a raindrop
  - Every fire starts with just a spark
  - Every harvest starts with just a seed
  - Every forest starts with just a single tree
  - Every adult starts as a child
  - Every doctor starts as a student
  - Every journey starts with just a step
- Say a silent prayer that God will help you grow in your love for the poor and lonely people this Christmas.

# The Christmas Prayer Journey

## Station 2: WHAT ARE YOU CARRYING?

- Decorate the station with pictures of people carrying burdens; for example, farmers carrying large bundles of firewood, porters carrying luggage, etc.
- Provide a pile of medium-sized rocks and a bucket of water.
- Prepare a poster containing the words of the hymn “Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary.”

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- We are now on our journey. What are you carrying with you today?
- You might not be carrying anything that we can see, but are you carrying a lot of burdens and heavy weights in your life? Are you weighed down by worry, hurt, pressure of school, lack of time, and busyness all around you?
- Take a stone—hold it, feel its shape and texture. What burdens does the stone represent in your life right now?
- Read the words from the hymn “Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary.”
- When you are ready, give your worries and burdens to Jesus as you slowly drop your stone into the bucket of water and leave it there.
- Say a prayer of thanks to Jesus for taking care of your burdens.

# The Christmas Prayer Journey

## Station 3: PEOPLE WHO JOURNEY WITH US

- Decorate the station with a large tree, labelled the “Prayer Tree.” It can be a real tree (or cut-off branch arranged to look like a tree), or a paper tree stuck on the wall.
- Provide crosses cut out of card for the children to write on.
- Provide pens or pencils.

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- Jesus came to earth to save us. He died on the cross to give us a chance to go with Him to heaven.
- Select two paper crosses and write on each one the name of somebody you want to invite to heaven with you.
- Hang the crosses on the prayer tree and have the group gather around the tree.



- Ask two volunteers to offer a short prayer for all those names on the prayer tree. Have the leader end off with prayer.

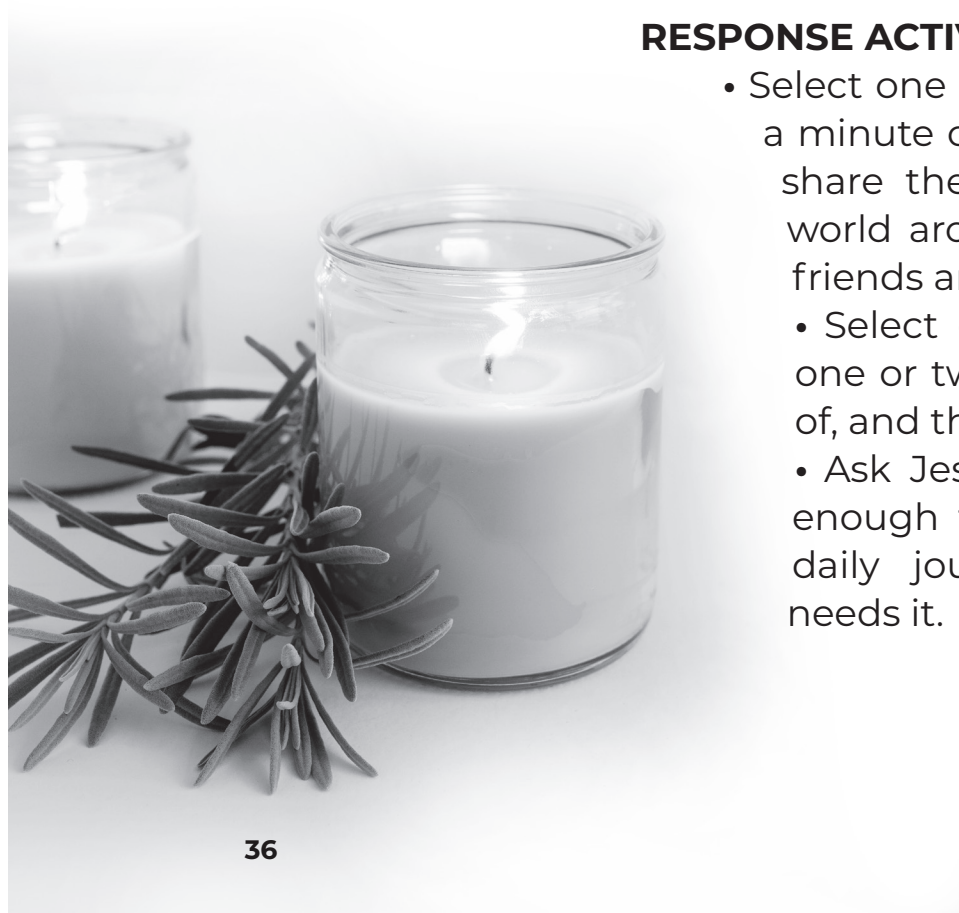
# The Christmas Prayer Journey

## Station 4: BE THE LIGHT!

- Display on a table big and small candles, night lights, or tea lights.
- Light the candles and tealights anew for each group that enters the station.
- Provide bookmarks on which the children will write.
- Provide pens or pencils.

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- Select one kind of light and think for a minute or two about how you can share the light of Jesus with the world around you—especially your friends and classmates.
  - Select one bookmark and write one or two ways that you thought of, and then pray over this.
  - Ask Jesus to help you be brave enough to take His light on your daily journey to someone who needs it.



# The Christmas Prayer Journey

## Station 5: THE GREATEST GIFT

- Decorate the station with pictures of Jesus, depicting scenes from His birth to His death.

### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- Christmas is not just about giving and receiving gifts. Although you may receive many Christmas gifts, remember that the greatest gift of all is Jesus Christ.
- Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to be born as a little baby on earth, and to die on the cross to save you and me.
- Pray in groups of 2-3, thanking Jesus for giving you the greatest Christmas gift—the gift of Himself. Ask Him to show you how you can share this gift with your friends and neighbors.



# The Names of Jesus

## Station 1: THE GOOD SHEPHERD



- Decorate the station with a sheepskin, shepherd's rod, grass, stuffed sheep, pictures of Jesus, etc.
- Prepare two decorative baskets with 40-50 cards in each basket, each card having one of the following two Bible texts printed on them:

- John 10:11, 14, & 16 – “I am the

good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...I know my sheep and my sheep know me... They too will listen to my voice.”

- Psalm 23:1 – “The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.”

### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- Take a card from each of the baskets. Read quietly as you answer the following question: How has Jesus been your shepherd in your life? Think of a few things He has done for you that shows He has taken care of you like a shepherd.
- Pray individually to thank Jesus for being your Good Shepherd.

# The Names of Jesus

## Station 2:

### THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD



- Decorate the station with candles, soft lights or tea lights.
- *Display pictures of children and adults sharing the gospel or witnessing.*
- Provide Bibles for the children to use.

#### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- Form groups of twos or threes and read John 8:12. Share with one another how Jesus is the light of the world. Then list ways in which you can be a light in your family, school, and community.
- Pray for each other that you will let Jesus' light shine in your life so that you can shine out to others for Him.



# The Names of Jesus

## Station 3:

### THE BREAD OF LIFE

- Decorate the station with pictures or real loaves of bread. You may include items related to breadmaking like flour, yeast, rolling pin and others.
- Have a stack of cards in the shape of a loaf of bread for children to write on.

#### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- Read John 6:35: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
- Hunger for Jesus is the longing to meet Him, to be with Him, and to be filled with His Spirit.
- When we hunger and thirst for Him, we will seek Him, and when we seek Him, we will be filled and empowered. It all starts with hunger.
- But there are many distractions in our life that can prevent us from taking time to hunger after Jesus?
- Pick up one of those bread loaf cards and lists all the distractions that prevent you from hungering after Jesus. Give them to Jesus and pray that He will remove those distractions and fill you with His Holy Spirit so as to hunger after Him and His word.





# The Names of Jesus


## Station 4:

### THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

- Decorate the station with picture of lions and stuffed lions.
- Display pictures of Jesus.
- Put up a large poster with the following verse: “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals” (Revelation 5:5).

#### RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- In Revelation, the Lion of the tribe of Judah is declared to be worthy to open the scroll. Jesus is the One who is worthy to open the scroll. Therefore, Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.
- The lion symbolizes power, fierceness, and majesty. The lion is the king of the beasts, and the Lion of tribe of Judah is the king of all creation.
- Jesus is worthy to open the scroll because He lived a perfect, sinless life and shed His blood on the cross to save us. He rose again and has conquered sin to give us eternal life.
- Pray in pairs, thanking Jesus for being the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Ask Him to help you to be strong and powerful in living a good Christian life, and in sharing the good news with your friends and classmates.



# The Names of Jesus

## Station 5:

### THE LIVING WATER

- Have bottled water, cups and glasses and pitchers of water at this station.
- Display a backdrop showing scenes of rivers.
- Hang up big posters with Bible texts like Psalm 42:1-2, Isaiah 55:1 and John 7:37, 38.

#### **RESPONSE ACTIVITY**

- Can you imagine a day without water? Water is life—nourishing us, cleansing us, and sustaining us. When we are thirsty, water quenches our thirst.
- Jesus invites us to go to Him when we are spiritually thirsty: “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them” (John 7:37-38).
- Jesus is our Living Water—the only One who can fill us up and satisfy our thirst!
- Choose one of the three scriptural texts displayed on the wall and read it together with a friend. Share with each other how Jesus can quench our thirst. Identify the things we should be thirsty for.
- Pray for each other, asking Jesus to send the Spirit to help you have a deep thirst for spiritual things.

# Chapter 5

## PRAYER WALKS



**W**hat is prayer walking? Prayer walking uses sights, sounds and the senses to engage in the ministry of prayer. It is bringing our prayers to the places where we experience God’s presence and see our prayers answered. Such places can be the community, your neighbors around you, your church, the schools, or out in the garden.

The apostle Paul commanded us to “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Because walking is something we do daily, surely part of praying without ceasing would include praying while walking? Encouraging children to participate in prayer walking allows them to experience prayer through all their senses. There are two types of prayer walks: intercessory and devotional prayer walks.

### **INTERCESSORY PRAYER WALKS**

This type of prayer walk involves praying for specific places in the community. Be sure to plan carefully the length of the walk and how many places the children are going to pray for. Here are some tips:

1. Organize the children into groups of six to eight with a leader for each group.
2. Plan beforehand the route that includes a number of significant sites and buildings where the prayers will take place. Include one school, one local government site, a college, the shopping center, and a main place where people congregate.
3. Make sure your walk is not too long—between 25-30 minutes is just right.
4. Print out maps of your route and pass them out to the group leaders. Indicate an “X” in the area where the group should stop to pray.
5. Encourage different children to pray at different sites or locations.
6. Arrange a meeting place at the end of the prayer walk where the group can have some refreshments and share their experiences.

### **DEVOTIONAL PRAYER WALKS**

This type of prayer walk aims to provide an outdoor location where children can talk to God in the tranquility of nature, where they can hear the sounds of birds singing, the rustling of the leaves, or feel the cool breeze blowing. Here are some suggestions:

1. Divide the children into small groups of six to eight with an older teenager, a youth, or a teacher leading.
2. A thirty-minute prayer walk is a good rule. After each group has finished their devotional walk, they can all gather for breakfast.
3. Select a key text as well as others pertaining to the topic.
4. Have a variety of prayers during the walk, such as individual prayer, prayers in groups of twos or threes, and prayers with the entire group.

Try the devotional prayer walk ideas that are provided here by Pastor Don MacLafferty, Director of In Discipleship ministry. The children will be greatly blessed.

# Sample Prayer Walks



# Moses Prayer Walk

## #1: THE BURNING BUSH

- Have a child lead the group to a large bush. Gather around the bush.
- Read Exodus 3:1-5, 10.
- God wanted to get Moses' attention with a burning bush in order to give him his mission.
- Invite the group of children to turn away from the bush for a few minutes for private prayer. Invite each one to think about how God may be trying to get their attention right now.
- Call the group to turn back to the bush. Say, "God has a plan for each one of you. There is something that God has on His heart for you to do right now in your life."
- Team up in twos to pray for each other. Pray that God will show you what He is asking you to do for Him—maybe sharing some books with a classmate, or helping to raise funds for the homeless, etc.



## #2: THE BITTER WATERS OF MARAH

- Have a child lead the group to water, or to a place where you can draw the outline of a pond on a dirt or gravel surface.
- Read Exodus 15:22-26.
- God called Moses to a specific mission: to lead Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Days after God delivered them from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, Israel was grumbling.
- Gather around this place, which represents the waters of Marah. Anger and bitterness can ruin our walk with Jesus. Some-

times we are bitter against or angry at our friends, family, or someone at school, a bully, and even God.

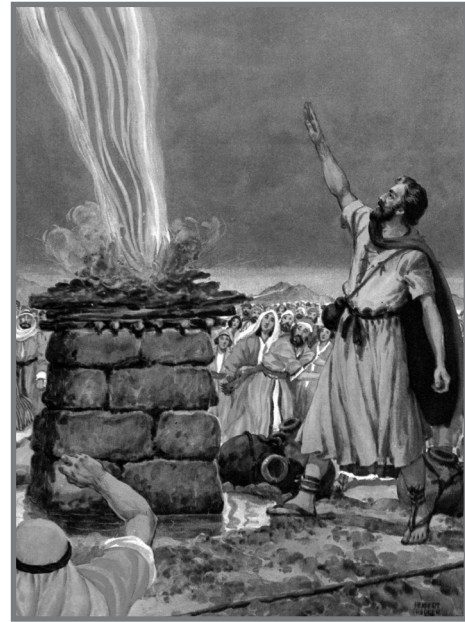
- Invite the children to have a couple of minutes of private prayer to ask God to identify anything in their hearts that they have bitterness or anger over; or someone they are angry with.
- Invite the group to come back together. God told Moses to throw a piece of wood into the water. He did, and God made the water sweet.
- Invite the group to go find a piece of wood. Invite them to throw the piece of wood into the “water” with a prayer that God will remove their bitterness or anger and make it sweet for His glory.
- When each one has thrown their piece of wood, invite everyone to form a circle around the “water.” Invite several to thank God for His healing power in their hearts and lives. . . and to help us leave their bitterness behind!

### **#3: RAISED HANDS**

- Have a child lead the group to a place where there is a rock for every two or three children. (If there are no rocks, find a chair, or a railing, etc.)
- Read Exodus 17:8-13, 15.
- Every time Moses raised his hands to God, Israel began to win the battle. Every time Moses let his hands fall down, Israel would begin to lose. Aaron and Hur found a rock for Moses to sit on and held his hands up. As a result, Israel won the battle.
- Where do you need victories in your life right now? Is it victory over the temptation to try drugs? Is it bravery to say no to pressure from friends? Team up in twos or threes. Invite one of your group to sit down. Ask them in what areas of their life they need to be supported to find victory with God’s help. Raise up their hands while both of you pray for them. Let each person have a turn to sit and be supported in prayer!

# Elijah Prayer Walk

1. Walk to where one of the children could be seated. They will represent Ahab. Have one of the children read from 1 Kings 17:1 to the person seated. Have the child pray that God will give the seated person boldness to say what God wants them to say, no matter the cost.



2. Walk to a place representing the brook Cherith. Have another child read 1 Kings 17:2-7 and then pray that God will help the child trust Him with what He will provide for them.

3. Walk to a place under a tree. Have a child pick up any sticks or leaves there. Choose another child to read 1 Kings 17:8-16. Ask for any volunteer to pray that you will obey even when God sends you to an unusual place.

4. Walk to a place where you can draw a line in the dirt or make a line on the ground with rope or sticks. Have each child line up with one foot on each side of the line. Read 1 Kings 18:17-21. Pray in twos on the line that God will help each child not to compromise or waver between God and Baal (false gods or idols).

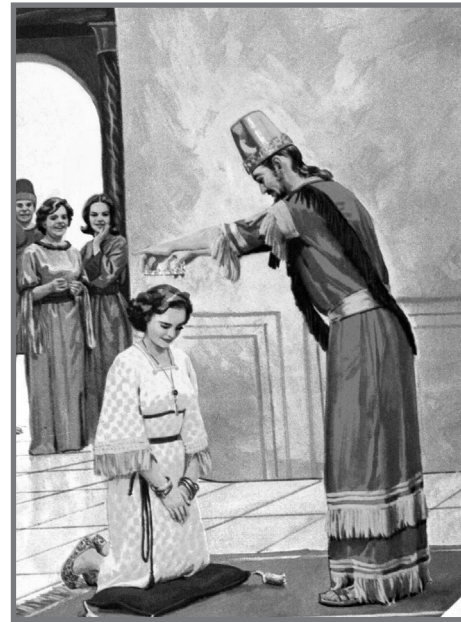
5. Walk to a place where you can form a small altar with rocks. Read 1 Kings 18:30-35. Re-enact what Elijah did in the story. Have each child have private prayer to ask God to rebuild the



altar in his life of true worship to God. . . personal worship each day through Bible study and prayer. Read 1 Kings 18:36-39. Lead the group to shout out twice “The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God!” Pray in the group prayers of praise for the mighty power of God and prayers of thanksgiving for what God is going to do to help each one turn to Him.

# Esther Prayer Walk

1. Walk until you find a very ordinary looking bush that is not particularly beautiful. Read Esther 2:5-7. "Hadassah" means "myrtle bush." What difficulties did Hadassah have? Look at the bush. Maybe there are thorns. There are some things about us that we don't like and wish we could change. In pairs, pray that God will anoint our eyes so that each of us will be ready to see ourselves as God sees us and not as the world sees us.



2. Walk until you come to a flower, plant or tree with great beauty and grace. Say, "Now, the King had banished his queen and was looking for a new queen. Esther, along with many other young women, was brought to the palace for a contest to see who the King would choose as his new queen." Read Esther 2:13-15. Then say, "Every woman could take whatever her heart desired when she went to see the King. Esther chose only what Hegai, the king's eunuch, advised."

Read Psalm 139:13, 14. You need to look in the mirror each morning and say, "I am a daughter of the King! God made me to be wonderful!" or, "I am a son of the King! God made me to be wonderful!"

Read Esther 2:17. Esther was crowned queen and was greatly loved by the King. Pray in twos. Pray that God will change the

way you see yourself so that you know that you are the daughter/son of the King and that you are wonderful in His sight.

3. Go to a place where there are pavers or tiles where each child can stand in a clearly outlined area. If you do not have this, draw a circle in the dirt or use chalk to draw a circle around your feet. Say, "Esther heard that Haman planned to destroy her people, the Jews. Mordecai, her cousin, asked her to intervene and help."

Read Esther 4:10-17. Then say, "We all have comfort zones around us. We make excuses to only do what we feel safe doing, rather than what God has designed us to do. God has dreams for your life...and they should not be boxed in by your fears, but rather should be guided by God's loving plans for you!"

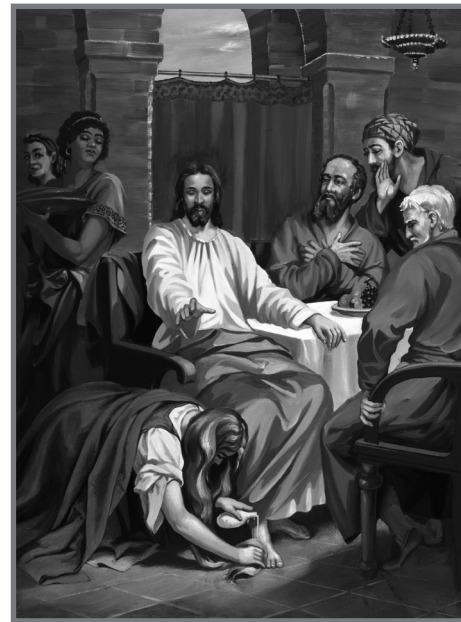
Draw a circle next to where you are standing. This represents what God is calling you to be, and what God is calling you to do for Him. Esther chose God's dreams. She risked her life to step out of her comfort zone into her God-given destiny—to save her people. Jump into your second circle if you are willing to surrender your fears to reach for God's dreams for you. Pray in twos. Pray that God will shape your life into the dreams He has for you.

# Mary Magdalene Prayer Walk

## 1. LITTLE STONES

Walk to a place where there are a number of small stones scattered about. Read John 8:2-12 together as a group.

Mary was labeled and looked down upon by the people of the world, but Jesus saw her differently. He rescued her, forgave her, and invited her to a life of freedom from her sins.



Pick up a few stones in your hand and find a partner. Invite your friend to hold the stones tightly in their hand as you pray that he/she will accept Jesus' gift of love and forgiveness. When you finish praying, throw the stones to the ground to illustrate the freedom Jesus gives your friend from the guilt of sin. Then repeat the process with your partner praying for you this time.

## 2. WATER

Walk to a place where there is a body of water that the children can scoop up into cups or bottles. (If there is none, participants can use water bottles that they have brought along.)

Read John 12:1-3 and Luke 7:44-47. What was important about Mary's act? Discuss your thoughts in pairs.

Mary was so overwhelmed by Jesus' love and forgiveness for her that she poured out her love for Him in a public way.

Find a place to sit by yourself. Thank Jesus for His generous love and grace for you and give Him your worship. As you do so, pour out a little water to signify the act of your heart.

### **3. FLOWERS, GRASS OR LEAVES**

Walk to a beautiful place that reminds you of new life, and read John 20:1, 11-18.

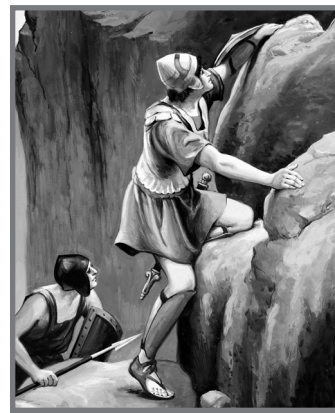
When did Mary realize who Jesus was? Take responses from the group.

Mary knew that Jesus was alive when He called her by name. In a time when women were mostly overlooked, Jesus chose Mary to be the first witness of His resurrection and gave her a precious message to share with the disciples.

Find the same person you prayed with at the first stop. Invite your partner to hold something that reminds them of new life. Pray for your partner, asking that God will give them the courage to share the new life Jesus has given them with someone who needs to know that now! Then let your partner do the same for you.

# Jonathan Prayer Walk

1. Divide children into groups of twos. Let each pair decide who should be Jonathan and who should be the armor-bearer. Read I Sam. 14:1. Who is your armor-bearer? Pray with your armor-bearer for God to prepare your heart for God's Word.



2. Go under a shade tree. Read I Sam. 14:2,3. King Saul was relaxing under a pomegranate tree instead of leading God's people. Saul was afraid of the enemy army. He was fearful. Pray with your armor-bearer. Confess your sins of when you have chosen fear instead of faith.

3. Go to a place that reminds you of a ravine or deep, narrow gorge. Read I Sam. 14:4,5. Ask your armor-bearer what stands between you and doing what God has called you to do. Is it fear, pride, or overconfidence? Is it lack of faith and trust in God to fight your battles? Pray together for faith to cross the barrier to your next step.

4. Read I Sam. 14:6-15. Cross the ravine with your armor-bearer. Pray with your armor-bearer for strength to live with such boldness for God's glory that God will make the ground tremble before your feet and cause the enemy to run. Share your next step.

# Chapter 6

## OTHER PRAYER IDEAS



Parents and teachers should try to bring creativity into their prayer time. Not everyone learns the same way and making things different and interesting can go a long way in helping children develop their love for God.

Here are some fun ideas you can try when teaching children to pray:

### **1. CARDS GALORE PRAYER**

Make a special prayer box in which you put Christmas cards and birthday cards received throughout the year. After every meal, let the children take out a card and then have the family pray for the person or people who sent that special card. The children will know many of the people who sent the cards, and this allows them to pray for their friends and family.

### **2. BAND-AID PRAYER**

Have a box of Band-Aid available for prayer for the sick. Have the children write the name of the sick person on the Band-Aid. Stick it to the fridge or any other place so that they are reminded to pray for that person.

### **3. VITAMINS FORGIVENESS PRAYER**

When you pray and ask Jesus to forgive your sins, take a vitamin tablet which can dissolve, and let the children put it in a glass of water. Watch what happens. The vitamin tablet dissolves and colors the water, illustrating how God forgives completely. He has taken away your sins and they are not there anymore, just like the tablet disappeared.

### **4. UNIQUE FINGERPRINT PRAYER**

Have the children put their fingerprint on a page. Get a magnifying glass and let them look at each print. They'll discover that no one print is alike. Say a prayer of thanks to God for making each one of us unique. Quote Psalm 139:14, "I will praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

### **5. PRAYER CHAIN**

Have a main theme for your prayer chain, such as "I am thankful," "Following Jesus," "I surrender all," or any other theme relevant to the children. They can write on one or two links something they are thankful for. Join up all the links to see the prayer chain grow. Or, if the theme is following Jesus, they can write a link that says "Take time to study the Bible," or, "Say a prayer," and see the prayer chain grow.

### **6. AUTUMN LEAVES PRAYER**

Have paper cut-outs of leaves in yellow, orange, red, and brown (colors of autumn leaves). Let children pick up any two or three colored leaves and write down on each leaf the name of a friend, family or groups of people who are suffering from illness, disaster, death, etc. Then have them pray for each of those names listed on the leaves. Just as the leaves of autumn are falling to the ground, many people have fallen in their strength, courage, health, finances, etc. The children can lift them up in prayer.

### **7. RAINBOW PROMISES PRAYER**

Give children black and white rainbow outlines and provide them with colored pencils or felt pens to color in the rainbow colors. Ask children to write on the rainbow one promise in the Bible that speaks to their hearts. Have them pray to thank God for this wonderful promise. They can write as many promises as they like.



### **8. FAMILY OF GOD PUZZLE PRAYER**

Cut up a large picture into puzzle pieces and lay it on the floor or put it up on a large bulletin board. Have the broad theme written across the top of the puzzle, "We Belong to the Family of God No Matter How Big or Small Our Gifts Are!"

Give each child one puzzle piece and ask them to write down one special gift or talent that God has given them. Each one should pray silently to thank God for that special gift. Then each child can take that puzzle piece to fit it into the big Family Puzzle.

### **9. GIFT BOXES PRAYER**

Have each child draw and cut out a beautifully decorated paper gift box. They can write "Jesus Loves You" on the gift box as well as the name of the person they would like to give that gift box to. Punch holes in the paper gift box to thread a colored string through it for a handle. Hang all the gift boxes on a branch or paper tree. Have the children gather around the tree of gift boxes and ask for 2-3 volunteers to pray for all the names on the gift boxes. Then the children can share the gifts with someone special.



# Chapter 7

## PLENARY SESSION ACTION KEYS



### INTRODUCTION

Boys and girls, have you ever wondered whether God answers your prayers? Have you been frustrated when it seemed as though God hasn't answered your prayers? How does God decide which prayers to answer? The Bible says in James 5:16: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." This verse seems to be saying that there are some requirements to effective prayer. What are these requirements, or "action keys" as we shall call them? Requirements are conditions or things that are needed in order for our prayers to be effective. Let's look at all these five action keys of effective prayers.

# Action #1 - Believe

## KEY TEXT

“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”  
Matthew 21:22

The most important step of faith you can make is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for your sins. When we ask Him to forgive us, we must believe that He does. He promises to give us eternal life. This is the gift of salvation. It's free to all who believe.

## Just Believe

*Do you believe that God sent His Son,  
Who died on the cross for you and me?  
Do you believe that He rose again,  
So that you can receive salvation for free?  
If Jesus didn't rise again, what would happen to us?  
For sure our sins aren't forgiven, and we're condemned thus;  
Praise God that He did raise His Son  
To give us eternal life in a home beyond the sun!  
All you need to do is just believe!  
Accept God's Son as your Forever Friend!  
You'll live with Him in a place where there's no more grief  
Only believe!  
—By Linda Koh*

## DO YOU BELIEVE CHECKLIST

For each of the statements below, put an X on the blank space if your answer is Yes.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Do you believe your parents even when they need to punish you for your wrongdoing?
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Do you believe your teacher when he shows you how to do mathematics?
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Do you believe your pastor when he tells a story during his sermon?

\_\_\_\_ 4. Do you believe your grandma if she promises to visit you at Christmas?

\_\_\_\_ 5. Do you believe a stranger on the phone when he tells you that you have won a new computer?

Why do you believe your parents, your grandparents, and your teachers? It's because you know them. You have lived with them and talked with them, and so you trust them.

In the same way, if you spend time with Jesus, study His word, and talk with Him through prayer, you will be able to believe that He answers your prayers. When you claim His promises, you will see His power. But you must first BELIEVE!

### **CLOSING**

Have a closing prayer with the children in groups.

# Action #2 - Ask

## KEY TEXT

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find,  
knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Matthew 7:7-9

Don't be afraid to ask God anything. He never gets tired of your questions. It's okay to ask for “things” that we can see and touch. God delights in supplying our needs. But what about asking for things we can't see? Will He answer then, too?

Let's look at Matthew 8:5-13. When a centurion came to Jesus in Capernaum, he asked Jesus to heal his servant who was very sick. Jesus agreed to go with the Jewish elders to the centurion's home. But the centurion did not want to trouble Jesus to come to his house. He asked Jesus to just say the word and his servant would be healed. Isn't it amazing what faith the centurion had?

God answers our prayers when we ask for strength to do His will; when we ask for increased love and compassion for others; when we ask Him to increase our faith in Him.

Let's read John 10:1-10. Verse 9 of this passage says: “I am the gate: whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.”

## **A DOOR—SHUTTING OUT OR LETTING IN?**

A door is there to shut out strangers, thieves, robbers, and other bad people who may harm us. Therefore, we shut our doors and lock them when we are not at home.

On the other hand, a door is also there to open and let people in—our friends, our family members, our teachers, church friends and anyone we know. We welcome them warmly.

What kind of door are you? Are you so busy throughout the day that you shut Jesus out? When we shut Jesus out of our lives, how can we ask Him for help? Let's take some time to do the following worksheet:

*[Pass out the worksheet “Do You Shut Jesus Out?” and have the children fill them out. Then take some time to discuss it. The answers for this activity are below for your convenience.]*

## WORKSHEET: DO YOU SHUT JESUS OUT?

Match the letters on the left side of this page with the numbers on the right side to discover the ways that you might be shutting Jesus out of your life.

a. Ignore	1. _____ too much time with electronic gadgets.
b. Watch	2. _____ to study the Bible.
c. Spend	3. _____ church often.
d. Treat	4. _____ God's voice.
e. Forget	5. _____ God's commandments.
f. Choose	6. _____ to help and serve others.
g. Skip	7. _____ television for many hours.
h. Disobey	8. _____ once in a while.
i. Fail	9. _____ the wrong friends.
j. Pray	10. _____ others unkindly.

[1-C, 2-E, 3-G, 4-A, 5-H, 6-I, 7-B, 8-J, 9-F, 10-D]

Psalm 37:4: "Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."

In the Bible, some of the great heroes asked God for things that were important to them, and God answered their requests. Here are some examples:

- Solomon asked for WISDOM and God granted him wisdom and understanding in abundance, such that he became the wisest king of his time (1 Kings 3:9).
- Hannah asked for a SON and God granted her the desires of her heart and gave her a son Samuel who became a great prophet (1 Samuel 1:10-11).
- Gideon asked God for a SIGN when God asked him to go and deliver his people from the Amalekites, and God granted it. But then Gideon asked God for a *second* sign to be sure—and God again answered his request (Judges 6:33-40).
- Peter asked Jesus to let him WALK ON WATER towards Him out in the sea, and Jesus enabled him to walk on water (Matthew 14:28-29).

## PRAYER TOOLS

- The Lord's Prayer is one example of how we should pray (Matthew 6:9-13).
- Scripture prayer songs are excellent to prepare our hearts for what we need to express.

Here are some good examples of Scripture prayer songs. The first one is the well-known hymn, "Search Me, O God" by J. Edwin Orr, and the second is a song by Keith Green, "Create in Me a Clean Heart."

**SCRIPTURE**

Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God and know my heart; Test me, and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

**SONG**

*Search me, O God, and know my heart today  
Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray  
See if there be some wicked way in me  
Cleanse me from every sin and set me free*

**SCRIPTURE**

Psalm 51:10-12: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

**SONG**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God  
And renew a right spirit within me (x2)  
Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord  
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me  
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation  
And renew a right spirit within me*

**PRAYER CHALLENGE**

Draw a picture of something you want to ask God about. Post the picture where you see it every day and pray about it.

**CLOSING**

Have a closing prayer with the children in groups.



# Action #3 - Forgive

## KEY TEXT

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

Mark 11:25

## FORGIVENESS: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Turn to the person next to you and share what you think forgiveness is.
- Form groups of 3-4 around you and share what you two have discussed.
- Let's hear some of you share.

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FORGIVENESS?

- We all need to be forgiven (Romans 3:23).
- When we ask God to forgive, He has promised to forgive (1 John 1:9).
- Jesus asked us to forgive others seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21, 22).
- If we forgive others who sin against us, God will also forgive us (Matthew 6:15).
- Only through Jesus are all our sins forgiven (Acts 13:38).
- We just need to ask God to forgive us and He will wipe away all our sins (Isaiah 1:18).

## CREATIVE WORD BUILDER

From the word FORGIVENESS, set out as an acrostic, add as many words as possible which describe attitudes of love, care, and concern for others. An example is here for your convenience. The children can add more words:

- F** – friendliness; favor
- O** – outreach; openness
- R** – regard; responsibility
- G** – grace; gratitude
- I** – inclusiveness; insight
- V** – victory over bitterness
- E** – empathy
- N** – noble; not revengeful
- E** – elevated mindset
- S** – service; sensitivity
- S** – selflessness; sympathy

It is never easy to forgive someone who has hurt you, said bad things about you, or bullied you. But the Bible asks us to “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Don't let your anger and hurt feelings stay with you by refusing to forgive your friend or classmate. You will only be miserable and unhappy. An unforgiving attitude is like a heavy chain hung around your neck. It keeps you prisoner to your problems.

Let Jesus take those burdens away and go to Him and ask for strength to get rid of those chains of anger and hatred. Matthew 11:28-30 says: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

#### **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT. . .**

- When was the last time you forgave someone?
- Was it difficult to forgive someone who had wronged you?
- Do you need to forgive someone now?
- Do you need to ask for forgiveness from someone?

#### **PRAYER CHALLENGE**

Choose a colored circle from the table and write down the name of the person you want to forgive. Say a quiet prayer individually and ask Jesus to help you forgive that person listed on your circle.

# Action #4 - Obey

## KEY TEXT 1

“And receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.”

1 John 3:22

## KEY TEXT 2

“If you remain in Me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

John 15:7

Obedience is showing our love to God by following His commands:

- Following Jesus' teachings.
- Living our lives like Jesus by being kind, loving, and helpful.
- Accepting Jesus as our Special Friend.
- Choosing to be baptized into His church.

When we obey God, we do what He asks us to do. God's Word, the Bible, tells us how to obey Him. We trust Him to hear us and to grant us our answers according to His will because He knows what is best for us.

## SONG

Listen to the words of this children's song by Jeremy Brummel:

*Obedience is the very best way to show that you believe  
Doing exactly what the Lord commands, doing it happily  
Action is the key, do it immediately, joy you will receive  
Obedience is the very best way to show that you believe  
O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E*

*Obedience is the very best way to show that you believe  
We want to live pure, we want to live clean, we want to do our best  
Sweetly submitting to authority, leaving to God the rest  
Walking in the light, keeping our attitude right, on the narrow way  
For if we believe the Word we receive, we always will obey  
O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E*

*Obedience is the very best way to show that you believe*  
[You can also look at the words of the hymn, “Trust and Obey.”]

## **PUZZLE**

Fill in the blanks with the key words provided. Some words can be used twice.

Obey, obey, \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord.

You can \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and obey God.

You can \_\_\_\_\_ to follow all His \_\_\_\_\_.

You can \_\_\_\_\_ to do what's \_\_\_\_\_.

Even when it's hard to \_\_\_\_\_.

*Key words: right, rules, choose, obey, listen*

## **OBEDIENCE IN PRAYER MEANS:**

- Accepting God's will and answers. His answers may be: GO, NO, or SLOW!
- It may not be what we want, but it will surely be what we need at this moment.
- Asking God to change us, making us more loving and kind to others.
- Not blaming God when He doesn't answer exactly the way we want Him to.

## **PRAYER CHALLENGE**

Get together in groups of twos or threes and pray for each other, asking God to help you to obey Him even when you don't get the exact answer you want.

# Action #5 - Intercede

## KEY TEXT

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people.”

1 Timothy 2:1

## WHAT IS AN INTERCESSORY PRAYER?

An intercessory prayer is a prayer that asks God to help or bless another person. When we see someone going through a difficult situation, or we recognise their spiritual need, we pray to God on their behalf. This is intercessory prayer.

Did you know that Jesus intercedes for us? He says to God, “Father, I’ve been to earth. I understand what people go through. I put myself in their place on the cross, so you could save them.” Jesus is our example in interceding for others.

## STORY: JOSHUA AND THE AMALEKITES

In Exodus 17: 8-12 we read how Israel won a battle through intercessory prayer. Let us read and discuss this story about Joshua.

## UNLOCKING THE TRUTH

You use a bike lock when you know you will not be nearby to watch your bike. If you were riding your bike, you wouldn’t need a lock. When it is out of your sight, however, someone might steal it. You can’t protect it yourself, so you rely on something else—the lock—to do it for you.

In the same way, we rely on prayer not only for ourselves but for others. When we intercede for people, we try to put ourselves in their place.

## FOR WHAT DO WE INTERCEDE?

Here are some situations that call for intercessory prayer. You may be able to think of many other situations where we need to intercede for others.

- We ask the Lord to strengthen the faith of newly baptized members when they face difficult trials.
- We ask God to heal our loved ones, a friend, or a classmate when they are sick.

- We pray for the pastor that he has wisdom, good health, and love to serve our church.
- We ask God to help a close friend to have the courage to say no to peer pressure.
- We ask God to bless the refugees in our city, and that we can find opportunities to serve them.
- We pray for those who do not know Jesus and who need to hear about Jesus' love.

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

When we pray for someone else, God pours out His Spirit through us to reach them. Romans 8:27 says, "He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

Intercessory prayer opens up new ways for God to work. It provides God with another opportunity.

- Intercessory prayer is powerful.
- Intercessory prayer makes a difference.
- Intercessory prayer changes things.

### **PRAYER CHALLENGE**

I challenge each of you to intercede for the following:

- Pray for our churches and church leaders.
- Pray for our families.
- Pray for our friends.
- Pray for freedom to worship.
- Pray for the safety of our schools.
- Pray for our government.
- Pray for the Syrian refugees that there is opportunity to share Jesus with them.

# Chapter 8

## PRAYER PROMISES



### **PHILIPPIANS 4:6**

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

### **1 JOHN 5:14**

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”

### **JEREMIAH 29:12**

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you.

### **1 THESSALONIANS 5:17**

“Pray without ceasing.”

### **MARK 11:24**

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

# JESUS FIRST

## I Promise



To begin each day  
talking to Jesus  
through prayer



To study the Bible and  
my Sabbath School  
lesson



To pray for my family  
and others



To end my day thanking  
Jesus for His blessings

WITH JESUS' HELP: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



# Song References

## **OBEDIENCE**

by Jeremy Brummel

<https://www.jeremybrummel.com/song-o-b-e-d-i-e-n-c-e/>

## **SEARCH ME O GOD**

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## **CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART**

by Keith Green

<https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/ns/51>

