

# How to Pray

**But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. *Matthew 6:6***

Teaching teens how to pray is about guiding them in developing a personal and authentic conversation with God. Encourage them to see prayer not just as a ritual but as how to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs to God. Remind teens that there's no right or wrong way to pray; it's about speaking from the heart. Whether they are asking for guidance, giving thanks, seeking forgiveness, or simply sharing their day with God, what matters is the sincerity of their communication. Assure them that God is always listening, and He cares about every aspect of their lives.

## ➤ conversation starter

How do you feel about prayer? Is there anything about praying that you find difficult or are unsure about?

What would you like to talk to God about in your prayers? Is there anything I can pray for on your behalf?

## ➤ navigating the conversation:

- **Explain the Basics:** Start by explaining the basics of prayer—it's essentially a conversation with God. They can speak to God just as they would to a close friend or family member.
- **Encourage Honesty:** Stress the importance of being honest and open in prayer. God wants to hear what's truly in our hearts and minds.
- **Use the Lord's Prayer as a Guide:** Use the Lord's Prayer as a model (see Matt. 6:9-13). It encompasses praise, confession, thanksgiving, and making requests.
- **Discuss Different Types of Prayer:** Talk about different forms of prayer—praise, thanksgiving, confession, making requests, praying on behalf of others, and listening. This can help teens understand the various ways they can communicate with God.
- **Practice Together:** Offer to pray together. This can be a powerful way to model prayer and make them feel more comfortable.
- **Create a Prayer Routine:** Encourage setting aside a regular time and a quiet place for prayer to develop a consistent habit.
- **Journaling:** Suggest keeping a prayer journal. Writing down prayers, thoughts, and answers to prayer can be a helpful way to engage with and reflect on our prayer life.
- **Use Scripture:** Encourage them to include Scripture in their prayers. Praying God's words back to Him can be powerful and affirming.
- **Reassure over Doubts:** Let them know it's normal to sometimes feel like they're not being heard or to struggle with what to say. Encourage them to continue praying, reassuring them that God values their efforts to connect with Him.
- **Encourage Patience:** Remind them that answers to prayers may not always come in the way or timing we expect. Encourage them to be patient and to trust in God's plan.
- **Prayer as a Lifestyle:** Discuss how prayer can be a continuous, ongoing conversation with God throughout the day, not just during formal prayer times.
- **Be Humble before God:** Remind them that we must approach God with humility and respect. That doesn't mean we have to be formal or formulaic with our prayers. We can still be open and honest with Him, just in a way that acknowledges He is God and we are not.

