



Needing God: Petition and Intercession

KNOWN: EXPERIENCING GOD IN DAILY PRAYER
SESSION 05



Overview:

Prayers of petition and intercession are an essential building block of a personal prayer life. The Catechism states that in asking “we express awareness of our relationship with God.” (CCC 2629), that we need him. In this session, your students will learn and discuss the difference between petitionary prayer and intercessory prayer.

This session has approximately 18 minutes of video segments.

Theme Scripture:

MARK 9:23-24

Jesus said to him, “If you can! Everything is possible to one who has faith.” Then the boy’s father cried out, “I do believe, help my unbelief!”



A Key to Using this Guide:

ANYTHING IN ITALICS: Important information for leaders. Not necessary to share with the group.

REGULAR FONT: To be shared aloud with the group.

LEADER TIPS: Check out the “Leader Tip” boxes in the margins for helpful hints.

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Connect

1. Check-In

It is always good to check-in and ask, "How was your week?" demonstrating that you care about what is going on beyond your small group. You can ask generally or have them share "Highs and Lows." (High - best part of your week; Low - worst part)

2. Accountability

In the last session of The Invitation, your group was introduced to the concept of "The 5 S's of Accountability." These are 5 things that a disciple should be striving toward. Check-in each time you meet to see how everyone is progressing.

The 5 S's of Accountability: Service, Praying with Scripture, Sacraments, Overcoming Sin, Sharing Jesus with Others.

After every session, teens are encouraged to make a commitment. Last week they committed to **do Lectio Divina or Ignatian Imaginative Prayer at least once between meetings.** Ask them how that commitment went.

3. Optional Activity

SCAVENGER HUNT

Make a list with random items but make a point to throw in some religious articles or sacramentals. There is an example list below that you can use if they are in a home, but feel free to adapt. You will list one at a time an article then your group has to go find that item (if virtually, they can look anywhere in their house, if this is in person they can look for the item on their person, or you could also have them use their phones and find pictures of what you are asking them to find). The first person to get the item you request gets a point. Take time to let them tell you about what they brought. It is a great chance to get to know them. Then you continue naming the next item on the list.



EXAMPLE LIST (or create your own list)

- Toilet paper roll
- Something round
- Image of the Virgin Mary
- Something that starts with the letter M
- Something orange
- An actual photograph (photos on your phone don't count)
- A clean sock
- A Bible

After you play, share with them: We just played a game in which we were seeking items in your space. This week we are talking about the types of prayer in which we ask something of God, in which we seek God's action or wisdom.

Discuss

Watch Video Segment #1

- DAN ASKS, "IF YOU COULD ASK GOD FOR ANYTHING, KNOWING HE WOULD SAY YES, WHAT WOULD YOU ASK FOR?"
- WHAT STOOD OUT TO YOU IN DAN'S STORY?
- HAVE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW EVER HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF A PRAYER BEING ANSWERED?

Leader Tip

We always provide more questions than you could ever use. Pick and choose which ones will be best for your group.

Watch Video Segment #2

- WHAT ARE THE TWO TYPES OF ASKING PRAYER THAT DAN LAYS OUT? WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO? *Petition - praying for our own needs; Intercession - praying for the needs of others.*

- **WHAT DO YOU USUALLY ASK FOR FROM YOUR PARENTS? DO THEY ALWAYS SAY YES?**
- **WHAT IS YOUR REACTION WHEN THEY SAY NO? WHY DO YOU THINK THEY TELL YOU “NO,” OR “NOT YET”?**
- **HOW DO YOU THINK THIS IS SIMILAR TO HOW GOD ANSWERS PRAYER?** *God always answers our prayers, but the answer isn't always yes. God sometimes answers “No,” or “Not yet.”*
- **WHEN IS IT EASY TO REMEMBER THAT WE NEED GOD? WHEN ARE WE LIKELY TO FORGET?**
- **WHY DO YOU THINK GOD USUALLY WORKS THROUGH NATURAL MEANS FIRST INSTEAD OF ALWAYS PROVIDING MIRACLES?** *God wants us to be virtuous and not presumptuous, meaning arrogantly assuming that God “owes me”. In many ways, he has already answered our prayers by providing us natural means like doctors to heal sickness. This is still an answer to prayer.*

We are going to read a story from the Gospel about a father and his son. Talk of the son being possessed by a demon might be confusing. And while this is a very real thing and important to the story, for right now we want to focus on the father's reaction. Regardless of what is going on, he is desperate. And that desperation is something we can relate to.

Leader Tip


Talk of demons can quickly derail your group. While talking about spiritual warfare is really important, this session is not the place for it. If your group would like to dive deeper into the topic, talk to your parish leader about some good resources.

Read Mark 9:17-25 aloud, then watch Video Segment #3

- **CAN YOU RELATE TO THE FATHER IN THE GOSPEL'S PLEA: “LORD, I BELIEVE, HELP MY UNBELIEF!”?**
- **IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A PERSON TO BELIEVE AND DOUBT AT THE SAME TIME?**

Leader Tip

Talking about doubt is essential to discipleship. Your small group should be a safe place to share their doubts. Your role is to hear them first and respond with truth second.

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- **DAN QUOTED THE CATECHISM STATING “OUR DIGNITY LIES IN OUR FREEDOM”. HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO PRAYER?** *God knows what we need before we ask, but he waits for us to ask because he respects our freedom. God won't force even good things on us.*
 - **WHY DO YOU THINK DAN DESCRIBES PETITIONARY PRAYER AS ‘DANGEROUS’?** *At the heart of prayer is seeking God's will for us. This means being open not just to what I want but to what God wants. This can be scary, but we have faith that God is good and wants what is best for us.*
 - **ONE OF THE BIGGEST STEPS WE MUST TAKE IN OUR FAITH IS REALIZING THAT “OUR LIFE IS NOT OUR OWN”. ONLY THEN WILL WE BEGIN TO WANT NOT WHAT WE WANT, BUT WHAT GOD WANTS. WHAT IS STOPPING YOU FROM DESIRING GOD’S WILL AND NOT YOUR OWN?**

Watch Video Segment #4


- **HOW IS BECOMING HOLIER GOING TO AFFECT THE PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD?**

After he told the story of St. Moses the Ethiopian, Dan shared this quote from him: *“God will not hear our prayers unless we acknowledge ourselves to be sinners. We do this when we ponder on our own sins alone, and not on those of our neighbor.”*

- **WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS EASIER TO FIND FAULTS IN OTHERS THAN IN OURSELVES?**

Consider again this quote from St. Mother Teresa: *“I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things.”*

- **HAVE YOU EVER HAD SOMEONE BE THE ANSWER TO YOUR PRAYER?**

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- **TELL A STORY OF A PRAYER THAT WENT UNANSWERED. WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?**
 - **WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT NEEDS PRAYER RIGHT NOW?**
(Allow them to share in as much detail as they would like. Then, stop, and actually pray out loud for them!)

Commit

Every day this week, choose someone that you will pray for. You could choose a different person each day or one person for the whole week.

Follow-up Checklist

- Send the Parent Sheet.
- Remind them to bring their Bible back next week.
- Consider sending them a reminder between sessions of the COMMIT.
- Pray! As you are helping them build a habit of prayer, take time to deepen your own prayer life.