



# Needing God, Part 2: How to Do Petitionary & Intercessory Prayer

KNOWN: EXPERIENCING GOD IN DAILY PRAYER  
SESSION 06



## Overview:

This session does not have videos. After each session that is guided by videos, you will have another session that is video-free and will give you an opportunity to practice prayer together. This series is not simply a lesson on prayer, rather it is an apprenticeship. Before we launch them into the wild to pray on their own, teenagers must first try it with a guide. You, dear leader, are that guide. You will notice that these non-video sessions have a new section in addition to our usual “CONNECT, DISCUSS, COMMIT” and that is “DO”. After you go through the discussion, it is critical that you DO the prayer you are discussing.

In this session, you will practice sharing with God our needs and the needs of others in petitionary and intercessory prayer.

There is intentionally less content in this session. If your group did not get a chance to finish scripture meditation exercises, this would be the time to revisit it. If you didn't finish placing the tabs in your Bibles, take time to do that today!

## Theme Scripture:

LUKE 11:9-13

And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?



## 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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Writers: Annie Grandell; Ali Hoffman; Dan Driver | Theological/Catechetical Advisors: Fr. Brian Park; Mark Berchem, MTS, MSW; David Rinaldi, MTS | Youth Ministry Advisors: Manuel Huerta; Jenny Boran; Bobby Moren; Vianney Nguyen; Jared Cunio; Sarah Rae LaValla; Elie Laville; Kiersten Salazar; Allie DeBolt

Adapted for Middle School by Jennifer Boran.

# 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.

*In the previous session, they committed to praying for someone every day. Ask them how this went for them.*

## 3. Optional Activity

### "THAT REMINDS ME OF A TIME..."

*Start by saying : As we dive deeper into prayer we are diving deeper into being known by God and knowing Him. This is a short activity to help us also know one another.*

*The first person tells any story about himself from real life. 30 seconds or less. When the story is done, anyone can jump in by saying "That reminds me of a time..." and tells a story from their own life, 30 seconds or less, that relates in some way to the story right before.*

*The game continues until everyone has had a turn.*

### Leader Tip

Activities in these guides are always optional. Know your group and tailor your activities to suit their needs and interests.

# Discuss

- **WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU REMEMBER PRAYING FOR AS A KID? WHAT HAPPENED?**
- **RECALLING THE VIDEO FROM THE LAST SESSION, WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRAYERS OF PETITION AND PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION?** *Petitionary prayer is praying for your own needs. Intercessory prayer is praying for the needs of others.*

Dan shared in the last session the following quote from the Catechism: “[Petitionary prayer] expresses our awareness of our relationship with God.” (CCC 2629) And Dan reminds us that this awareness is very simply that we need God.

- **DO YOU THINK PEOPLE TODAY FIND IT EASY OR DIFFICULT TO REMEMBER THAT WE NEED GOD? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

Let’s take a look at a scripture passage about asking God for things.

## Leader Tip

Some of these stories may be fun, others may be serious. It is important for you to keep in mind that many people will site not having prayers answered at a young age as their first experience of doubting God. Your job will be to make sure they are heard. Your small group needs to be a safe place for them to share their doubts.

## Read Luke 11:9-13

- **WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TELL US ABOUT GOD’S ATTITUDE TOWARD THOSE WHO ASK?** *When we pray, we are approaching a loving Father. God loves us and wants good things for us.*
- **DOES ANYONE HAVE A STORY OF A PRAYER BEING ANSWERED IN AN OBVIOUS WAY?** *It is important to note that God more often works through natural means than supernatural. For example, sometimes healing comes suddenly and miraculously. But more often, he is working quietly, behind the scenes. His “miracle” comes in a surgery going well.*

- **HAVE YOU EVER HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF ASKING AND NOT RECEIVING?** *Sometimes students can be disappointed if he/she's prayer is not answered in the way they asked. "Did I pray wrong? Does God not listen to me? Does He not love me enough?"*

Feeling unheard anywhere, especially in prayer can be painful. At the same time, it is important to remember that we can't always see the full picture. There's a false notion of the prosperity Gospel where we think Jesus came to give me whatever I want. Jesus came to give me the power to imitate and conform my will to God's will. We have to remember that God's ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts...meaning, God doesn't always think like us. We need to seek God's will, to pray for God's will.

Christian petition focuses on the desire for God's Kingdom to come (CCC 2632) and it implies a search for God's will. "Lord, what do you want me to do?" As we discover God's will, pray that His will be accomplished.

An example: In my meditation, I "discover" God wants me to stop yelling in anger at one of my brothers/sisters. In my prayer of petition, I ask God for the grace I need to stop yelling and becoming more loving.

- **HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER A FRIEND IF THEY ASKED YOU, "IF GOD ALREADY KNOWS WHAT I NEED, WHY ASK?"** *We ask not to make known our needs but to remind ourselves of our dependence on God, our need for him. We ask so that in obtaining what God desires to give us, our confidence in Him will grow. God respects our freedom to accept or reject His gifts so He awaits our petition (CCC 2736). God is not a magical genie who gives us everything we think we want to be comfortable, successful, happy, etc. The Father's good pleasure is to give us the Kingdom (Luke 12:32). We experience ongoing conversion as we seek to align our will with God's will. Jesus provides us with the model for how we should pray with the "Our Father."*

Before we jump into practicing intercessory and petitionary prayer, I want to talk about one more type of intercession - the intercession of the Saints.

The Catholic Church has a rich history in the intercession of the Saints who have gone before us to whom we can ask for prayers before the throne of God (CCC 956). We believe that saints are people who lived lives of “heroic virtue” that we are confident that they are in heaven, in complete union with God. “They contemplate God, praise Him, and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth... their intercession is their most exalted service to God’s plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world” (CCC 2683).

It is commonly misunderstood that Catholics “pray to the saints.” We don’t pray to them. Only God is powerful enough to answer our prayers. But we do ask saints to pray for us. If we believe that we can ask a friend to pray for us and God will hear them, how much more will a friend in heaven be heard!

*“Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life.” (St. Dominic)*

*“I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth.” (St. Thérèse of Lisieux)*

- **WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE SAINTS?**
- **DO YOU HAVE A PARTICULAR DEVOTION TO A SAINT WHO YOU ASK FOR PRAYERS SUCH AS A CONFIRMATION SAINT? WHY OR WHY NOT? WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THAT SAINT?**

## Do

- **NOW LET’S BRAINSTORM IDEAS OF WHAT WE CAN PRAY FOR. LET’S BEGIN WITH INTERCESSORY PRAYER: PRAYING FOR OTHERS’ NEEDS. WHAT PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS NEED PRAYER?** *Some examples: the homeless, the sick and suffering, leaders, the Church, our family and friends, school, people you don’t like/your enemies (Matthew 5:44), the dead, daily events, things happening in the world.*

### Leader Tip

Be ready with your own examples to share. Do you have a story of a prayer being answered after you asked a saint to intercede for you? Share it!

### Leader Tip

Of course there is so much more that could be said on the communion of saints. If you want to dig deeper on the topic, consider using the book “100 Saints Every Teen Should Know” from Lifeteen.

### Leader Tip

If your group is struggling to come up with a list, give them one or two ideas.

## • **WHAT ARE SOME WAYS WE CAN PRAY FOR OTHERS?**

- *Write a list of people who have asked you to pray for them and take that with you to your daily prayer time.*
- *Dedicate each day of the week to a different group of people to pray for*
  - *Example : Monday - parents; Tuesday - siblings; Wednesday - friends; Thursday - school/future; etc.*
- *If praying a Rosary, offer each decade for a particular intention.*
- *When doing chores or different tasks, offer up that task for a particular intention/petition.*
- *During Mass when the gifts are brought up to the altar, think of something or someone you want to “place” on the altar as well.*


## • **WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT A PERSON COULD ASK FOR THEMSELVES IN PRAYER? YOU CAN BE GENERAL.**

- *Healing from suffering or sickness*
- *Help with a broken relationship*
- *Guidance for the future*
- *Grace to turn away from sin*
- *Help to be more loving to others*
- *Grace to stay attentive in prayer*
- *Help to understand God’s will in my life*
- *Help to understand the truths of our faith*

## • **DO YOU FIND IT EASY OR DIFFICULT TO PRAY FOR YOUR OWN NEEDS?** *Teens are often very perceptive in noting the needs of others but hardly think of themselves when asking for prayer. You may need to remind them of the passage from Luke that we read earlier - that God wants them to ask.*

We are going to take some time in silence to reflect on that passage from Luke 9:10-13. You will have a chance to write down your petitions and intercessions in your journal/participant guide. Afterward, we will take time to pray some of them out loud. Don’t worry, you won’t have to say everything on your list. Some things you may want to keep private.

- *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Start with a simple prayer like, “Come Holy Spirit, please meet us here and help us to see our need for you.”*
- *Encourage everyone to take 3 deep breaths in and out.*
- *Read Luke 9:10-13 aloud.*
- *Leader, slowly read the passage out loud one time.*
- *Pause for 10 seconds.*
- *Pray something like, “Lord, we know you are a good Father who loves us, your children. Please hear us now as we consider those people and situations in our lives that need your goodness.”*

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- Say something like: “Take the next 3 minutes and write down as many intercessions, prayers for others, as you can.”
  - Pause for 3 minutes
  - Pray aloud something like, “And God we know you actually desire us to ask. Please inspire our hearts with confidence to ask you for our own needs.”
  - Say something like, “Take the next 3 minutes and write down as many petitions, prayers for yourself, as you can.”
  - Pause for 3 minutes.
  - Say something like, “Now we are going to combine these prayers of petition and intercession. We are going to speak out our own needs, and then we are going to pray for one another. Would each person please share one thing out loud that they want prayers for?”
  - Allow everyone to share.
  - At the end, assign each person someone else’s prayer request to pray for out loud.
  - Go in a circle so the person knows when to pray.
  - Conclude the time of prayer with a common vocal prayer like the Our Father or even a Litany of Saints.

## Commit

Use the lists we created during our time together in prayer every day this week. As you think of more people and circumstances to pray for, write them down, and talk to God about them. Don’t forget to pray for your own needs as well.

## 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.