

Prayer Journey

(prayer commandos)

Prayer Lesson for junior high and senior high students with adult leaders

Summary: groups are sent out from the church to pray for the community in a variety of ways, and then, following the experience, come back and discuss their thoughts. The lesson is designed for an hour and a half time slot, preferably in the evening. The author has used this lesson annually at the last advent meeting of the year before Christmas, typically closing the evening with communion led by a pastor before a sending into their Christmas break.

Gathering (10 min.)

Welcome everyone. Allow for conversation, opening question for the evening:

Do you remember a time when you needed prayer? or, do you remember a time when you prayed for someone else? Talk to the person next to you for a few minutes and share your thoughts.

(ask the group to share some answers with the large group after 3 min. Or lull in conversations)

1. Help group identify some commonalities, some differences, and questions raised by the stories.

Large group questions:

1. Is prayer more effective if we pray better?
2. What is praying better? What is praying worse?
3. Why?

Activity Introduction:

Tonight we are splitting into groups. One adult leader (or more depending on your leadership base) per vehicle. Your team of prayer commandos will be taking a pray journey out into the community. Choose 3-5 sites that you feel are important places to the community, that provide important leadership, service, care, or sites of folks whom you feel need prayer. Some examples might be the hospital, nursing home, jail, hospice center, local big box store, school, city hall, homeless shelter, home of someone grieving a loss, home of home bound member, etc. travel to these sites and spend a few minutes in prayer there. Use some ideas from your cards and try some different kinds of pray. While traveling from site to site, discuss the experience, how you feel, and some of the questions on the bottom of your cards. Please meet back here in the church sanctuary at this specific time (insert your time here) when we will discuss the experience and close this year together so far with communion.

Activity:

1. Send groups out. (join them if you have made arrangements)
2. Make sure pastor is prepared for communion. Intinction with a common cup and a loaf of bread (assuming no celiac's or gluten intolerant) is a good fit for a smaller and intimate group like this.
3. Have questions ready for smaller group and large group conversation.

Small group conversation: as groups return (plan some variance on their timing) give them a few of these questions to discuss.

1. What surprised you about this experience.
2. What was challenging?
3. What was encouraging?
4. Were your prayers more effective because you were there? How is this question misleading?
5. How were *you* affected by praying in these places?

Large group:

1. Which is changed in pray, that which is prayed for, or the one who is praying?
2. Give some experience from tonight to support your answer.
3. Why is it important to you to pray?
4. If it isn't important to you to pray, why not?
5. What did your experience tonight teach you?
6. How could you share that with someone else?

Preface to communion:

In prayer, we are doing as our lord bids us, and we know God is listening because God promises that God will hear our prayers. Still, prayer is mysterious and powerful. It changes us, makes us receptive to God just as much as we hope it will make God receptive to us. Tonight after we pray together the Lord's prayer after the words of institution, I encourage you to think of three people you could pray for each day of Christmas break, and also think of someone whom you would like to pray for you. Maybe a leader or friend here at youth group, or maybe a member of the church or of the community. Before Christmas break, ask them about it. Think of all of the ties of faith and prayer that will be created by that simple act in our community!

Communion: Led by a pastor in your congregation. Make sure to give them time before hand to prepare a litany appropriate to your situation. If you or a leader are available to help, all the better as you will know the names of the individual's. If the pastor is able to give communion by name as well, all the better.

Closing: send students on their way following the benediction and blessing after communion, make sure to announce when youth group will begin again after break.