



Direct Message / Week 1

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Prayer connects you to God.

SCRIPTURE

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth (Psalm 145:18 NIV).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To point students toward connecting with God in prayer and to encourage them to be honest in their prayers.

THINK ABOUT THIS

This week, be quick to affirm the comfort level your students say they're at when it comes to prayer. Keep in mind that they may be even less comfortable inwardly than

they express outwardly. No matter where they are when it comes to prayer, you want your group to be a safe space to be honest about that. Because being honest about this in small group is going to help them take a step toward potentially being honest with God in prayer. If your students express doubts or questions about prayer, that's okay! Your job isn't to provide all the answers, but instead, to encourage them to keep going and giving honest, real prayer a try! Keep in mind students in your group who may have tried these real, honest prayers but haven't seen them answered the way they hoped. Allow them to be honest about that as well and encourage them to take that feeling to God in prayer, too!

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

DURING GROUP

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE)

XP - 1 As you go through the discussion questions, toss a ball of yarn to each student as they answer. Instruct them to hold on to the string as they toss the ball to the next person, creating a web between students by the end of your conversation. Explain how the web illustrates that the more we interact with God, the more connected we are to God.

DISCUSS THIS

1. In three words or less, tell us what you think about prayer.
2. In your opinion, what could be confusing about prayer?
3. What's one reason someone might pray?
4. Do you think there's a "right" time in your day that you're supposed to pray? *(Note: Leaders, leave room for them to debate and talk about why they answered the way they did.)*
5. What are the similarities between connecting with people and connecting with God?
6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable are you praying?
7. On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable are you being really honest when you pray? *(Note: Affirm every student who answers, regardless of where they are when it comes to prayer.)*

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE)

XP - 2 Pass out a notecard and pen to each student and ask them to write down one way someone might pray. When they are done, lay all the cards in the middle of the group on the floor, facing up. Have everyone read each other's answers and then brainstorm any additional ideas together.

8. Of those ways, which way do you best connect with God through prayer?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE)

XP - 3 Ask your few to select a way to pray from the previous XP and discussion question. End your time by having students pray in the way they choose.