

# GOD TALK



1. If you could pray for only **three things**, they would be—
2. Is God listening? Which one do you believe to be true about your prayers?
  - a. God hears my prayers and answers them.
  - b. God hears my prayers, but doesn't always answer them.
  - c. God doesn't hear my prayers.
3. **Circle** those that are true for you.
  - a. I pray before every meal.
  - b. I pray while I'm at school.
  - c. I pray for other people.
  - d. I praise and thank God in my prayers.
  - e. I'm embarrassed to pray in public.
  - f. I only pray for myself.
4. Eric's parents were fighting all the time—and he prayed that God would help out. He didn't want them to divorce. But three weeks later, his mom and dad told him they were separating. Eric is mad at God and isn't sure anymore if prayer makes a difference.

**Why** do you think God didn't answer his prayer?  
Are Eric's feelings toward God okay?  
**What** can Eric do to deal with his parents' situation?  
**How** should Eric approach God now?
5. Match the Bible verse with the correct sentence.

1. Matthew 6:9-13	a. Prayer can lead to peace.
2. Luke 5:16	b. Jesus prayed often.
3. Philippians 4:6-7	c. I should pray for others.
4. 1 Timothy 2:1-4	d. The Bible tells me how to pray.
5. 1 John 5:14-16	e. God hears my prayers.

# GOD TALK [ p r a y e r ]

## THIS WEEK

Prayer is a conversation with God. Some kids don't think they need to pray or don't feel like it. But both talking and listening to God are crucial for understanding God and growing closer to him. This TalkSheet offers your group the opportunity to take a closer look at the importance of prayer.

## OPENER

Many young people are intimidated and self-conscious about praying in front of others. Some kids who don't pray a lot may feel guilty when talking about prayer. So to start this one off, have the group write a personal letter to Jesus. Remind them that he is a real person who is waiting to hear from them. Jump start them with ideas for their letter—thanking him for something they have or telling him something that's going on in their life.

They most likely won't want to share these letters. If you think they'd be open to it, ask for volunteers to share bits of their letters. Otherwise explain to them that each of their letters is a prayer. Every time they communicate or talk to God, they're praying! Prayer doesn't have to mean getting down on their knees with their hands folded—prayer can happen anytime, anywhere.

## THE DISCUSSION, BY THE NUMBERS

1. Make a list of the things the kids chose and ask why they chose these. Be careful to keep your kids focused on the purpose of prayer. You may want to circle requests that are unrealistic (such as "give me all A's in all my classes"). Remind them that God isn't a genie, granting them their every wish. He does, however, listen to their needs and concerns and will answer their prayers.
2. Ask the kids to give examples or reasons for choosing their statements. Be prepared to talk about how God answers prayers. Some won't understand or believe that God hears their prayers and answers them. Point out that God does answer all prayers—with a yes, a no, or a wait (this can be discussed even more in question 4.)
3. Discuss these statements in a general sense. Should a junior high and middle school student should pray before every meal, pray at school, pray in public, and so on? They can pray without closing their eyes, bowing their heads, or using formal language. Prayer is like a conversation with a friend—in this case, their friend in heaven.
4. This tension-getter gives the group a chance to talk about prayers in a real life situation. Give the kids time to talk about why they think God doesn't

answer some prayers like Eric's.

5. What statements did they match with the verses? Ask them to summarize what they've learned about prayer from the Bible verses. You may want to add what you've learned about prayer from the Bible or real life experiences. How has prayer changed you?

## THE CLOSE

As you close, keep the following points in mind—

- It's hard to have a relationship with God without talking to him—just as it's hard to keep a friendship without talking.
- Prayer isn't magic—it's a conversation with God. He wants us to talk with him, using our own language and letting him know what's on our minds.
- Instead of challenging the kids to do something unrealistic—such as praying for an hour each day—encourage them to begin with two minutes of prayer a day. If they are already praying two, have them strive for four. Challenge them with manageable goals.
- Also, remind them that prayer involves listening, too. Let them know that sometimes it's good to just sit back, relax in a quiet place, and reflect on what's going on in their lives and what God would want them to do. God doesn't shout out answers, but he does speak to us through our feelings and thoughts.

Challenge your kids to pray with a pen and paper—to write down things that they are praying for. Have them journal their prayers for a week, then take a look back to see if and how the prayers have been answered. They might have to wait longer than a week. But encourage them to do this. It's a great way to look back and thank God for what he's done!

## MORE

- With your group, make a prayer request list and encourage them to pray from the list each day. Use this to illustrate the importance of praying for and supporting each other. Encourage your kids to e-mail you with concerns and prayer requests. Then distribute the list weekly to encourage prayer among the group. Use snail-mail for kids without e-mail. Include praises in this list, too!
- God's model for prayer is the Lord's Prayer. Break your kids up into small groups and give them each a phrase of the prayer to write in their own words. Then together as a group, put all the pieces together and write a group interpretation of the Lord's Prayer.