

# THE PRAYER BOOK

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## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pencils and pieces of paper
- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

## ICE BREAKER: THE BEST KIND OF BOOK

This is an alphabetical word game. Ask the teens to be seated in a circle and have them clap their hands to form a slow rhythm. (*If keeping a rhythm hinders instead of helping, then skip it!*) The first person begins by saying, "The best kind of book is an A \_\_\_\_\_ book", inserting a descriptive word that begins with the letter A (some examples might be ancient, amusing, Australian). The next person in the circle must repeat the A-word, but add a B-word. For example, "The best kind of book is an ancient, baking book". The exercise continues around the circle till all the letters of the alphabet have been used. The words chosen don't have to fit together, they must only begin with the correct letter.

FOR SMALL GROUPS YOU MAY END UP GOING MULTIPLE TIMES AROUND THE CIRCLE. TO ADD AN ELEMENT OF COMPETITION FOR LARGER GROUPS, ANYONE WHO GETS STUCK OR TAKES TOO LONG IS ELIMINATED UNTIL THERE REMAINS ONE WINNER.

## 622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

## DISCUSSION (ACTIVITY): PRAYER COACHING (AGAIN)

If you kept your stick person from lesson #18, pull him (or her) back out. If not, redraw him as best you can from memory. Ask the teens to consider their original prayer coaching ideas.

- Is there anything they'd like to change?
- Anything that they still believe would be beneficial?
- What would they do differently if they were creating a prayer plan for themselves?

Have the teens draw a stick person representing themselves and spend a few quiet moments thinking out a daily prayer plan for themselves.

*Discussion Activity (Notes):*

- *Remind the teens that in putting together their prayer plan, they should include prayer times in both the morning and the evening, and that they should consider what sorts of prayers will be included.*
- *Encourage them to challenge themselves, but ensure that their plan is achievable, so that they won't be discouraged and give up after one attempt.*

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- *The teens should take their stick person home with them. There is one more week of assigned prayer time that they can make use of before they finalize their personal prayer plan.*

## THE LESSON: 1 THESSALONIANS 5

The first part of the lesson gives a few brief notes on how the Book of Common Prayer came to be the resource that it is for us, tying it in with the text which exhorts us to “pray without ceasing”. You may wish to pause after reading the lesson so that the teens can ask any questions they might have about that before moving on to the scripture text. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

Since the earliest days of the Church, Christians have formed liturgical rites, which have guided our worship together and inspired our private devotions. These rites have generally included the reading of scripture, instruction (or preaching), prayer and receiving Holy Communion, but they have varied widely as to the details depending on the historical period, language and culture.

The Book of Common Prayer that we use originated at the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. This was a complex period in history, when reformers across Europe were breaking away from the Catholic Church, which previously had been *the* Church of the western world. Our prayer book was drawn from the tradition of the ancient liturgy, but was offered in the language of the people (rather than in Latin), and compiled with a view to correcting some of the distortions that had characterized the Catholic Church of that day. In a very real sense, our prayer book connects us with the best of the Christian tradition, neither rejecting a legacy that goes back for millennia, nor forgetting the lessons of the Reformation. Since that time our prayer book has been updated for our use today, here in Canada, and it is a wonderful resource for us in fulfilling the mandate of “praying without ceasing”.

Refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- How are the Thessalonians asked to relate to their spiritual mentors? (v12-13)
- Their spiritual peers? (v13)
- Those who are weaker in the faith? (v14)
- What is to characterize their lives in general? (v15-22)
- Who do the writers (Paul, Silvanus and Timothy) entrust with all of this? (v23-24)

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- *The Thessalonians are told to respect and esteem highly those who are providing leadership. With each of these (leaders, peers, the weak) it’s worth noting that these exhortations suggest that this is not in fact what was already happening, rather they needed to be told to do this! So if we find that we struggle to respect those who are “over us in the Lord”, we may know that even the early Christians sometimes fell short.*
- *With their spiritual siblings, they are asked to “be at peace”.*

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- *With those who are weaker, they are asked to admonish, encourage, help and be patient. It may be worth noting that while admonishing is here, it is followed by encouragement, help and whatever the situation - exercising patience!*
- *Their lives are to be characterized by doing good, rejoicing, ceaseless prayer, thankfulness, the Spirit's leading, respect for prophetic truth, discernment, and abstinence from evil.*
- *With the closing benediction, the readers are commended to the care and sanctification of God, who has called us and who is able to see us through.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

## PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY "AT-HOME CHALLENGE" IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

**PART 1:** Each day this week, pray with the (brief) morning and evening prayer section from the "Forms of Prayer to be used in Families" part of the Prayer Book, which can be found in the BCP beginning on page 728. If you don't have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>

**PART 2:** At the conclusion of the week, complete your own personal daily prayer plan, drawing from the different resources that we've looked at.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

*O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth: We humbly beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which be profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (COLLECT FOR THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, BCP PAGE 229)

## 622 (AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", the final prayer in the booklet.

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## 1 THESSALONIANS 5: **HOW WE SHOULD LIVE**

<sup>12</sup>We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, <sup>13</sup>and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. <sup>14</sup>And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. <sup>15</sup>See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup>Abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.