



Ways to Pray

Corporate and individual prayer is the heart of the Christian life. Students who grow in their prayer life are growing in their faith life. Prayer is a discipline which requires practice. Here are some ways to practice prayer with campers. (Prayers marked with a cross [+] work best with campers older than second grade.)

- 1. Pocket Prayers:** Invite everyone to pull out of their pockets or purses a number of items. Simply ask what the various objects might represent as prayer concerns. After some discussion, ask each person to choose one of the objects and place it in front of them. Share prayer petitions represented by the object. Encourage people to say short prayers the next time they see that object again. Return all objects to their owners. +
- 2. Building Block Prayer:** Use a pile of blocks to begin. Place one block on the table proclaiming Christ as the cornerstone of our faith. Invite participants to each take a block and share a petition. As their petition is shared ask them to add their block creatively building on the cornerstone. The finished structure may look like a building, tower, or path, or whatever direction the prayers and builders take.
- 3. Band-Aid Prayer:** Ouch it hurts! And sometimes life does. Pray for people we know that are hurting, ask God to give them strength in the midst of pain and healing for the wounds. Wear a Band-Aid as a reminder to pray often during the day for this friend or someone else who is hurting.
- 4. Whisper Prayers:** Cup hands together in front of one's mouth. Prayers are whispered into the cupped hands. When the prayer is finished, raise the hands upward and open them, releasing the prayer.
- 5. Laying-on-of-Hands-Prayer:** If someone is leaving the group for a time, send them off by asking each person to lay a hand on their head or shoulder and share prayers for their journey, their witness of Christ and their safe return. +
- 6. Popcorn Prayer:** Many groups use popcorn popping to describe praying short petitions in random. No order is planned. One person begins with the first prayer and others "pop" in. Someone can be designated to close the prayer. +
- 7. Hand Squeeze Prayer:** This is the round the circle prayer, with eyes closed, hands held and heads bowed. Someone begins with the first prayer petition. When they are done, they squeeze the hand of one person next to them. That person prays and passes on the squeeze to the other hand they are holding. This works well if everyone is assigned a topic such as praying for things they are thankful for. You may allow people who are not comfortable praying out-loud to pray silently and then pass the squeeze.
- 8. Newspaper Prayers:** Simply lay out the daily news paper and let each person choose a story. Each person should share what the story is about and then pray for the family and people involved. +
- 9. The Echo Prayer:** Someone says a petition and the group repeats the petition. This is a great choice for praying with little ones.
- 10. Ambulance Prayers:** Every time you see or hear an ambulance, always pray for the family and people involved.



11. All At The Same Time Prayer: Each person says their own prayer softly but aloud, all at the same time. The voices will flow together. It is described as beautiful, soothing and powerful. +

12. Art Prayers: For many people works of art are much more than a drawing or sculpture. For some, what they create is an expression for their soul. Dance is an art form that may express a prayer. Give the group a blank piece of paper. Play soft music and invite the group to draw a picture that expresses their love for God. Share with family.

13. Scripture Prayers: The Bible is full of prayers. Sometimes the most appropriate thing to do is to open to a Psalm or other favorite prayer in scripture and read it as your own.

14. Praying For Each Other's Petitions: Ask the group to share concerns to pray about. When all requests are made, pray for each specific request. Each person could also pray their petitions, finishing "Lord in your mercy" with the group responding, "Hear our prayer." +

15. Prayer Notes: Each person can be given an index card or piece of paper to write personal prayers. The prayers can be collected (in a hat, baskets, etc.), and redistributed so that each person ends up with someone else's prayer petition. If they wind up with their own, it's okay. Take turns reading the written prayers out loud one at a time. +

16. Wink Prayer: A great way to acknowledge the presence of God through prayer in restaurants and other places where praying out loud might be challenging. Someone counts to three and everyone looks up and winks. This prayer can be used other times when we need to be reminded we are not alone.

17. The Lord's Prayer: Soft to Loud Style! Begin with a whisper and build volume until you are shouting "Amen." Petition Style! Go around the circle letting each person speak this prayer by petitions. The first person will start (with either version)— "Our Father who art in heaven," the next person will add, "hallowed be thy name," and so on. + (Remember, not all the campers will know this prayer.)

18. Dear God Prayer: Dear God it's me. Writing a letter may be one of the most intimate forms of communication. (Use a drawing for little ones to pray in this way.)

19. The Boom Box Prayer: Recorded songs hold great meditative thoughts for most people. Choose a song that is meaningful and if possible have the words printed out. Play the song, asking people to silently meditate, listening for God's voice and silently sharing prayers. People may want to share some of their thoughts at the end or express their reflections in writing. +