

# PRAYER

## NO WORRIES



**Philippians**

**4:6**

**[2020]**

# Cadet/GEMS Theme: **PRAYER NO WORRIES**

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# PRAYER – NO WORRIES!

**Bible Verse:** Philippians 4:6

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

**Verse to Memorize:** Philippians 4:6

**[Life Lesson]** Follow God's do's and don'ts: Don't worry! Do pray!

**Object Lesson:** You will need two tables, antacid tablets, aspirin, a pillow, a sad face, a cell phone, newspaper, letters and envelopes, TV, laptop computer, a radio, whiteboard/chalkboard, and markers/chalk.

**In preparation:** On one table place the antacid tablets, aspirin, pillow, and a sad face. On the other table place the cell phone, newspaper, letter and envelopes, TV, laptop computer, and radio. Write Philippians 4:6 on a whiteboard or chalkboard.

**Stand by the table that holds the antacid tablets, aspirin, pillow, and sad face. Ask a volunteer to come forward, point to each item, and tell the group about each item. Thank volunteer and ask...** Does anyone know what these items have in common? **Listen to responses.**

Each of these items is related to worrying. When we're worried our stomach gets upset, our head hurts, we can't sleep, and we get sad and depressed. Have any of you ever been worried? **Raise your hand so they know how to respond.** Although God tells us not to worry, it's probably something that each of us has experienced firsthand.

**Stand by the table that holds the cell phone, newspaper, letters and envelopes, TV, laptop computer, and radio. Ask a different volunteer to come forward, point to each item, and tell the group about each item. Thank volunteer and ask...** Does anyone know what these items have in common? **Listen to responses.**

Each of these items is related to communication. When we pray we communicate with God. Prayer is speaking and listening to God. Our theme for this GEMS season, *Prayer – No Worries!*, is directly related to the items represented on these two tables. **Thank those who volunteered answers and say...** Let's read the theme verse aloud together.

**Message:** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Philippians 4:6).*

This verse contains God's do's and don'ts for our lives. God says, "Don't worry. Do not be anxious." And that command applies to everything. Do not worry about finances, friendships, food, or the future. God's Word on worry is clear. Don't do it!

Instead of worrying, God tells us to pray – to talk and listen to Him. Communicating with God doesn't happen through email, letters, or conversations on a cell phone. In fact, it's much better and much simpler than all those options!

God invites us to approach Him as a friend and to talk and listen to Him. Whether we speak to God out loud, in a whisper, or quietly in our thoughts, He will hear us. He will also speak to us. Sometimes God the Holy Spirit uses words; sometimes He speaks to us through our feelings, placing a nudge or tender feeling in our heart. And very often, God speaks to us through His Book the Bible. When you read your Bible and listen carefully, you'll hear God speak to you.

God is not oblivious to our troubles. He knows our concerns and our anxieties and has provided a way out through prayer. Let's begin putting God's "don't worry" and "do pray" instructions into practice together.

**Let's pray:** Father God, thank You for a new GEMS season and all the girls gathered in this place. Please teach us how to put Your instructions into practice in our lives. Help us to say "No" to worry, and "Yes" to talking and listening to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# UMBRELLA PRAYERS

**Bible Verses:** James 5:17-18

*Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

**Verses to Memorize:** James 5:17-18

**[Life Lesson]** Pray with earnest expectation, trusting God to answer!

**Object Lesson:** You will need an umbrella and a bowl for every team of 8-12 girls, plus a ping-pong ball, clothespin, or other small, light item for every girl.

**Object Lesson Instructions:**

1. Create a start and finish line for the relay.
2. Place the umbrellas (one for every 8-12 girls) at the start line and the same number of bowls at the finish line. Each bowl must contain enough small, light items for each girl on the team.
3. Group the girls into teams of 8-12 and have teams stand single file in front of the start line.
4. Give an umbrella to the first person on each team. Instruct them to open their umbrellas and hold them upside down.
5. The first girl should run to her team's bowl, take one item, and place it inside her upside down umbrella. She should then run back to her team and hand the umbrella to the second girl in line. If the item falls or bounces out of the umbrella, girl needs to begin again at the start line.
6. Play continues until the last person in each team completes the relay.

*When the relay is finished, applaud the winning team, and ask the girls to sit down. Hold one of the umbrellas and say...*

**Message:** There is a story about a farming community that was experiencing a severe drought. They were in desperate need of rain. The ground was cracked and hard, the plants were dying, and farmers were losing hope. "When is it going to rain?" the people asked one another.

Someone suggested that they have a prayer meeting, joining together to pray for rain. Everyone thought it was a good idea. Everyone came. They came with worries about the future. They came with concerned wrinkles in their brow and dust on their feet. And one little girl came with an expectant heart, trusting that God was going to answer. She came with an umbrella!

The Bible tells Elijah's story. He was one of the people that God set apart as an

Old Testament prophet. God used him to do extraordinary things like restoring a dead child to his mother, representing God in a fiery showdown with the priests of the false god Baal, and predicting the beginning and end of a three-year drought. When we look at Elijah's extraordinary accomplishments, we may think that we could never pray like this great man!

But God says, "Yes, you can!" In the book of James, chapter five, verses 17 and 18, it reads, *Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.* Elijah prayed with earnest expectation, he prayed fully believing that God would answer, and so should we!

Umbrellas remind me of two truths about prayer. Number one: We need to pray with earnest expectation, trusting God to answer. If we pray for rain, we should grab our umbrellas and expect raindrops.

Number two: We can be certain that when God answers our prayers He is working out His good plan for us (Romans 8:28). Sometimes storms will come into our lives and it feels like our prayers are getting tossed to the wind instead of to God. Umbrellas can serve as a reminder that, no matter what troubles and worries come our way, God will cover and protect us.

**Let's pray:** Father God, thank You for what You've taught us about praying with expectation. Thank You that we can trust and know that You will hear our prayers and answer them in a way that works for our good and Your best plan. Thank You that You cover us and protect us on the days that are filled with sunshine and the nights that contain dark storm clouds. We trust You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# BEING THE FRIEND IN THE MIDDLE

## **Bible Verses:** Luke 11:5-10

*Then he [Jesus] said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'*

*"Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness[a] he will get up and give him as much as he needs.*

*"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

## **Verses to Memorize:** Luke 11:9-10

**[Life Lesson]** Prayer nurtures a relationship with God, our Heavenly Father, and an urgency to pray for the needs of others.

**Object Lesson:** You will need three actresses (Amanda and Pam should be dressed in pajamas), two doors, a suitcase, a loaf of bread, and copies of this script for the actresses.

## **Luke 11:5-13 Drama**

*Amanda and Pam are wearing their pajamas and are in their "houses," behind the doors.*

**Cassie:** *Carrying her suitcase, Cassie walks to Amanda's door and knocks.*

**Amanda:** *Opens door and says... Cassie! It's two o'clock in the morning, what brings you here?*

**Cassie:** *This morning I found out that my grandma is very sick, so I jumped in the car and started traveling. I only have about three more hours before I'd be at the hospital, but I'm too tired and hungry to go a minute more. May I stay with you?*

**Amanda:** *Of course you can. Come in, come in! You get freshened up and I'll get something for you to eat.*

**Cassie:** *Gives Amanda a hug. Thank you, Amanda. This means so much to me!*

**Amanda:** *Cassie enters the house, Amanda walks to Pam's house, and knocks on the door.*

**Pam:** *Shouts from within the house, but doesn't open the door. Who is it?*

**Amanda:** *It's me, Amanda, your next door neighbor.*

**Pam:** *It's two o'clock in the morning. Don't bother me!*

**Amanda:** *I know it's the middle of the night and I apologize, but I'm in desperate need of a loaf of bread.*

**Pam:** *Seems like you're also in need of hearing aids. I said, "It's two o'clock in the morning. Don't bother me!"*

**Amanda:** *Friend, please lend me a loaf of bread. An old friend traveling through just showed up at my door and I don't have a thing on hand to feed her.*

**Pam:** *I said, "Don't bother me!" The door's locked; my children are all down for the night; I can't get up to give you anything.*

**Amanda:** *My friend is hungry, and I need your help. Please give me a loaf of bread!*

**Pam:** *Pam opens the door, sticks a loaf of bread in Amanda's face, and says... Here! Take it. Just go, so I can get some sleep!*

**Amanda:** *Thanks Pam, turns to the audience and says... Ask and you'll get; seek and you'll find; knock and the door will open (Luke 11:9, MSG).*

*Thanks actresses and says...*

**Message:** In the Bible, in the book of Luke, chapter 11, verses five through ten, Jesus tells about a middleman. A friend comes to him in the middle of the night, needing food and a place to eat. Not having any food on hand, the friend in the middle goes to a wealthy friend and asks him for bread. He took

action on behalf of his needy friend by going to a friend who had what he needed. The wealthy friend was disgruntled that someone had interrupted his sleep, but because the friend in the middle was bold and persistent in knocking on his door, he got up and gave him as much as he needed.

Prayer is a lot like being the friend in the middle. Prayer nurtures our relationship with God, our Heavenly Father, as we talk and listen to Him, and it also moves us to take action. The middleman friend couldn't sit back and listen to his friend's stomach growl from hunger pains. He immediately took action, even if it meant waking up his wealthy friend. When we pray that same urgency is sparked within our spirits. We can't sit back and listen to the news of those who are hungry, sad, and sick. We take action, and go to God who has the power and resources to help the hurting.

If you asked your parent for a serving of fish, do you think they would scare you with a live snake on your plate? No way! If you asked for an egg, do you think they would trick you with a spider? Not a chance!

We're human. We make mistakes. As bad as we can sometimes be, we wouldn't even think of giving snakes and spiders to someone who is asking for a meal. Jesus said, *"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him"* (Luke 11:13).

Go be the friend in the middle. When you see the need, ask your Heavenly Father to meet it, knowing He gives good gifts to those who ask!

**Let's pray:** Father God, thank You that when we ask, You give, when we seek, we find, and when we knock, You open the door. When we see needs in the world around us, help us to be a friend in the middle, immediately taking action by knocking on Your door on behalf of others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# REMEMBER

**Bible Verses:** Joshua 4:1-7

*When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight." So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, "What do these stones mean?" tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."*

**Verse to Memorize:** Psalm 77:11, *I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.*

**[Life Lesson]** Remember the ways God has answered your prayers and give Him thanks!

**Object Lesson:** You will need a small rock for each girl, a glass jar large enough to hold all the rocks, and a sizeable stone similar to what Joshua may have used when building the memorial to the people of Israel (Joshua 4:1-7).

*Give each girl a rock, ask her to hold it tightly in her hands during the devotional and ask... What do scrapbooks, home movies, and history books have in common? Listen to responses.* That's right. All of them are tools that help us remember. Scrapbooks help us remember special events in our lives, home videos remind us of treasured family moments, and history books serve as reminders of past events in our country and our world.

*Point to the sizeable stone you brought in and say...*

**Message:** In the Bible, in the Old Testament, during the period of time before Jesus lived on earth as God's Son, people used stones as a tool to help them remember. In the book of Joshua, chapters 3 and 4, it details one of the amazing things that God did for His people, the Israelites. The people were excited to enter the land God had promised them, but first they had to cross the flood-level waters of the Jordan River. God told the people that

He designated as His priests to step into the water first. As soon as their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away (Joshua 3:15b - 16a). The people crossed over the Jordan river walking on a riverbed that God dried out for them!

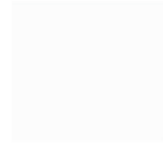
After they crossed, God wanted them to remember this great thing He had done for them. They didn't have cameras and journals like we do today. Instead, they used stones. God had Joshua instruct twelve men to each pick up one stone from the dry riverbed where the priests were standing. He then told them to create a memorial with those stones.

Joshua said, "In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever" (Joshua 4:6, 7b).

As we talk and listen to God, turning our worries into prayers, it's important to stop and remember the way God answers those prayers. Our remembering should contain a two-fold response - thanking God again for His work in our lives and telling other people about what God has done for us!

Think about one thing that God has done in your life that you're thankful for. Once you think about that, come forward, place your stone in the jar, and form a circle around the large stone that I have on the ground. Once everyone has finished remembering a specific goodness that God has done in her life, we'll join hands and pray together.

**Let's pray:** Father, we've filled this jar with stones of remembrance - remembering and thanking You for the work You're doing in our lives. May we always be quick to remember Your goodness, swift to give You thanks, and eager to tell others about Your love and goodness in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# EARNEST PRAYERS

**Bible Verse:** Psalm 63:1

*O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

**Verse to Memorize:** Psalm 63:1

**[Life Lesson]** We should have an urgency and earnest longing to seek God more through prayer and Bible reading.

**Object Lesson:** You will need a counselor or group leader for every six to eight girls.

*Ask the girls to break into groups of six to eight. A counselor stands in front of each group and says...* We're going to play the game, "Earth," "Air," "Fire," or "Water." If I point to you and say, "earth," you must name an animal before I can count to ten. If I say, "air," you must name a bird, if I say, "water," you must name a fish, and if I say, "fire," you must remain absolutely silent! No two animals, birds, or fish can be repeated, and I'll be counting to ten as quickly as I can! So be quick to answer, OK? If you repeat an answer or don't respond before I count to ten, you'll be out of the game. Let's begin!

*After groups are finished playing, or designated timeframe is exhausted, gather the girls into a single group and say...*

**Message:** Driving in a town that I wasn't familiar with I watched a man sprint across a snow-filled parking lot, slip on an ice patch, and catch himself on the building's front door handle. By the urgency of his run I wondered, "Where's the fire?" As I passed what I originally thought was a storage building, I discovered that the building he ran into was actually the place where they stored the city's ambulance. Within minutes an ambulance, fire truck, and two police cars raced down the small town's main street.

There's an incredible intensity and urgency that surrounds emergencies. What if our prayer lives reflected that same urgency? In God's Book, the Bible, several stories reflect earnest prayers.

When Peter was put in prison because he was telling people about Jesus, the church earnestly prayed for him. Peter was chained up between two sleeping soldiers when God sent an angel to free him. The chains fell off Peter's wrists, the iron gates opened wide, and Peter was free. He ran to the house where the people were praying and they were astonished (Acts 12:1-19)

Night and day Paul, Silas, and Timothy earnestly prayed that they would see the people from the church of Thessalonica so they could encourage them to keep following Jesus (1 Thessalonians 3:10).

Elijah was a regular person, just like you and me. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years (James 5:17)

When Jairus' little daughter was dying, he fell at Jesus' feet and pleaded earnestly with Him asking Jesus to come and put His hands on her so she would be healed and live (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43).

In the book of Psalms, chapter 63, verse 1, we read David's prayer, *O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

God invites us to earnestly seek Him, too. Do you urgently pray for yourself and others? Do you listen to Him intently – hearing His commands and putting them into action?

Don't coast in your prayers or in your walk with God. Instead, seek Him with an earnestness that makes people wonder, "Where's the fire?"

**Let's pray:** Father God, we long for a deeper relationship with You. Please place a sense of urgency in our hearts to seek You more – talking to You in prayer and listening to You through Your Word and Your Spirit. May we be so intense in our walk with You that others long to know You more, too. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# PRAYER DECLARES, “I NEED GOD!”

**Bible Verse:** John 15:5

Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (TNIV).

**Verse to Memorize:** John 15:5

**[Life Lesson]** Prayer declares that we need God. Apart from Him we can do nothing.

**Object Lesson:** You will need a bowl of grapes (at least one grape per girl).

*Pass the bowl so each girl can take one grape. Say...* Does anyone know how grapes grow? (*Listen to responses.*) Grapes are grown on grapevines, and grapevines grow best in sandy or rocky soil that is well-drained. When the grapevine receives plenty of water and sunlight it grows clusters of grapes. When those clusters are ripe, they become tasty treats!

Look at the grape that you are holding. Will it grow anymore? (*Listen to responses.*) That’s exactly right. Your grapes will not grow anymore because they’re not connected to the vine. When grape clusters and branches are pulled away from the vine they are disconnected from their life source; they will no longer grow.

*Please eat your grape while we focus on the truth about vines and prayer.*

**Message:** In the Bible, in the book of John, chapter 15, Jesus tells us that our relationship with Him is like a vine and branches. Jesus is the true vine, and all those who follow Him are branches. If a branch remains connected to the vine, it will grow fruit. Clusters of grapes will grow!

The same is true of you and me. If we are connected to Jesus, we will grow His fruit. The fruit of the Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) – will grow in our lives.

Prayer is one of the ways that we stay connected to Jesus and remain in Him. Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Can you imagine a branch that has been plucked from the grapevine saying, “I don’t need you to grow”? Of course not! Not only do branches not talk, they

Sometimes we live as if we don’t need Jesus. We don’t read our Bibles. We don’t pray. We don’t do what we know He wants us to do. We’re only fooling ourselves if we think that we can live without Jesus. Even branches that are freshly plucked from the vine look healthy at first, but in time, they wither up showing that they are indeed lifeless on their own.

As you grow physically and mentally, you become more and more independent of your parents. When you were a baby, you needed your parents to do everything for you. As you mature, you’re able to do things on your own.

Just the opposite is true in our relationship with God. Instead of becoming independent, growth takes place when we become more and more dependent on Him.

Each time you pray, you demonstrate that you need God, you are dependent on Him, and apart from Him you can do nothing. Pray much and pray often – it keeps you connected to Jesus like a branch and vine.

**Let’s pray:** Dear Jesus, we acknowledge that apart from You we can do nothing. We are dependent on You for all things. Thank You that through Your power we have everything that we need to grow and live for You. Be glorified in our lives! In Your name, Amen.

# PRAYER & ACTION

**Bible Verse:** James 2:14-17

*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if people claim to have faith but have no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (TNIV).*

**Verse to Memorize:** James 2:17

**[Life Lesson]** Prayer goes hand in hand with action. God often answers prayer through His people.

**Object Lesson:** You will need two batteries (any size), a baseball glove, cell phone charger, an empty drinking glass, a DVD, and a bookmark.

**Hold up the two batteries and say...** Although these batteries are new, charged up and ready to go, they're useless on their own. How many of you have ever said to your mom, "I'm going to go outside and play with my batteries?" (*Listen to responses.*) I didn't think so. If you did, she would give you a really strange look! What things need battery power? (*Listen to responses.*) Those are good answers. On their own batteries are useless. But when you combine batteries with flashlights, games, and TV remotes, you have a valued combination!

What do these items need? *A baseball glove needs a baseball, a cell phone charger needs a cell phone, an empty drinking glass needs a drink like milk or juice, a DVD needs the means to play it, and a bookmark needs a book.*

Can you give me other examples of things that work best hand in hand with one another? *Listen to responses.* Good answers! Prayer also has something that it needs to work hand in hand with and that's action! Let's learn more together.

**Message:** In the late nineteenth century, William Carey prayed that God's Word would be spread around the world and that more and more people would come to have a living relationship with Him. As Carey prayed for people, he sensed God telling him to travel to India to tell the people there about Jesus. The pastors in his community laughed at him and said, "Young man, if God had wanted to save the [people] in India, He could certainly do it without the likes of you or us."

Those pastors missed the mark! God loves to work in partnership with His people-- with you and me. He uses us to pray and to be the answers to those prayers by taking action and doing what God asks us to do.

In the book of James, chapter two, verses 14 through 17, it says, *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if people claim to have faith but have no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

Girls, in the same way, suppose you see a friend who is struggling in history class and really needs to do well on tomorrow's test. If you say to her, "I'll be praying for you," but don't offer to help her study, what good is it? Or what if you pray every day for children who are hungry and need to know Jesus, but refuse to give part of your allowance to help a ministry that is giving them food and Bibles, what good is it?

God asks us to pray *and* to take action. That's why listening to God during your prayer times is so important. As you pray, tell God your needs and the needs you see around you, and then listen. He may be nudging you to take action to help that need!

**Let's pray:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You that You are God. You hear and answer our prayers. You also ask us to partner with You in Your work in this world. As we tell You our needs and the needs of the people around us, give us ears to hear how You may be calling us to take action. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# A LISTENING HEART

**Bible Verses:** Psalm 16:7-9a

*I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.*

**Verses to Memorize:** Psalm 16:7

**[Life Lesson]** Through prayer God's voice speaks to our hearts. We must respond by obeying His instruction.

**Object Lesson:** You will need to recruit volunteer nurses, doctors, technicians, paramedics, and others who are trained in using stethoscopes (if possible; recruit one volunteer for every six to eight girls).

*Ask the volunteers to bring their stethoscopes. Ask them to meet with a group of six to eight girls, showing them how to listen to one another's heart sounds, and talking about why it's important for medical personnel to listen carefully to their patients' hearts. What are they listening for? What would cause concern? What is deemed normal for different age groups? Encourage the girls to ask lots of questions!*

*After volunteers and girls are finished interacting ask...* Why is it important for medical personnel to listen to your heart sounds? *Listen to responses.* When you met with your volunteer, what is one thing you learned that you didn't know before? *Listen to responses.*

**Message:** Stethoscopes are medical devices that are used to listen to heart sounds. Doctors, nurses, paramedics, and other medical personnel know the critical importance of listening to our hearts.

But did you know that it's also important for our hearts to be good listeners? Can you picture your heart with ears? Imagining an ear attached to each side of my heart may seem like a silly picture, but it's exactly what God wants prayer to look like in our lives.

When we pray, we talk to God, and He talks to us. His voice speaks to our hearts – not through a stethoscope, but through His Word, the Bible, and His Spirit. Every day you can experience God personally speaking to you! Sometimes God the Holy Spirit uses words; sometimes God the Holy Spirit speaks to us through our feelings. Have you ever done something wrong and felt really guilty about it? That sick feeling in your gut could be the Holy Spirit telling you to say you're sorry or reminding you not to do that again. Did you ever have a strong sense that you should go talk to someone who looks sad?

That soft feeling in your heart could be the Holy Spirit urging you to go be a friend. And, very often, God speaks to us in His Book, the Bible. When you read your Bible and listen carefully, you'll hear God speaking to you. Those words are God's words to you! God is always speaking to us; we just need to have big ears on our hearts that are listening to His voice.

Psalm 16:7-9a says, *I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.*

When we pray, read God's Word, and think about the way God wants us to live He counsels, instructs, and guides us. When the ears on our hearts are attentive to God's Spirit, we'll hear His voice speaking to our hearts. Once we hear His voice, we mustn't sit back and get cozy in our chairs thinking, "Wow! I heard God's voice! That was cool!" We must then get up and go do what He's instructed us to do!

God doesn't just speak to Bible teachers, pastors, and men and women who have been Jesus' followers for many, many years. He speaks to you and me, too! We just need to have listening hearts!

**Let's pray:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You that You speak to us through Your Word, the Bible, and Your Spirit. Please help us to have listening hearts that respond in obedience to all that You instruct us to say and do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# PEACE

**Bible Verses:** John 14:27, Philippians 4:7

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid* (John 14:27).

*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 4:7).

**Verse to Memorize:** John 14:27

**[Life Lesson]** Whenever worry starts to tie your stomach in knots, stop and pray.

**Object Lesson:** You will need a string, cord, or rope for every ten girls. The cords should run the length of the room.

**In preparation:** Tie ten knots in each cord (or however many girls will be on each team). Knots should be similar and tied fairly tightly.

## Object Lesson Instructions:

1. Have girls form teams of ten.
2. Have each team line up at one end of the room.
3. Stretch the cords across the room, securing them to tables or chair legs at the opposite end of the room.
4. At your signal, the first player from each team runs to the team's cord, unties the first knot, then runs back and tags the next player in line.
5. The next girl unties the next knot, and so on until one team wins by untying all of its knots first.

*After finished playing, ask the girls to sit down, and say...*

**Message:** Sometimes when we're worried and anxious it feels like someone has tied our stomach into knots. Other times troubles initiate headaches, depression, and short tempers.

Being a follower of Jesus doesn't protect us from trouble. Illness, disagreements, and problems can and do pop up within families, schools, churches, and even GEMS Girls' Clubs. If you're in the middle of a trouble spot, here is God's news for you. He's given you a gift.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). When we pray, turning our worries into prayers, God does this amazing thing. He covers us with His peace. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

Stephanie was sixteen years old when a close friend died in a car accident. Never before had she experienced such pain, grief, and heartache. Her pastor wrote her this email:

*Stephanie, let me share with you a picture I have been thinking about in my mind today. I'm sitting on a huge rock in the middle of the ocean, and a terrible storm comes. And the rock doesn't shelter me from the storm, so I get all wet and blown about and bruised from flying debris. That's how today feels. As though God is a big rock, just sitting there, doing nothing. But that isn't the whole story. It's only BECAUSE I'm on the rock, because I'm firmly grounded on God, that I survive the storm, or this terrible day. God is there for us. He will be there tomorrow, and the next day too. And so we will be OK in the long run. But today, the storm was bad, and it feels like we might not survive it. I will keep praying for you, Stephanie. Just keep hanging on to God, the Rock.*

God is a Rock in our storms and Peace in our troubles. When we spend time in His presence through prayer, He reassures us of His love, understands our heartaches and concerns, and gives us His peace. Do not be troubled. Do not be afraid. Let God give you peace and untie the knots of worry in your life.

**Let's pray:** Dear Jesus, thank You for giving us Your peace. You know the things that concern us and bind us in knots of worry and anxiety. Please loosen those knots and reassure us of Your love, care, and presence. Cover us with Your peace today and in the days to come. In Your name, Amen.

# PRESENTING PEOPLE TO JESUS

**Bible Verses:** Philippians 2:3-4

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

**Verse to Memorize:** Philippians 2:4

**[Life Lesson]** Look to the interests of others by presenting them to Jesus in prayer.

**Object Lesson:** No supplies are needed.

**Object Lesson Instructions:**

1. Each girl must find a partner and discover these three things about her:
  - a. Her first and middle name.
  - b. Her hobby.
  - c. If she could present someone (or a group of people) to Jesus who have a need, whom would she bring?
2. After girls have interviewed one another, have them take turns standing in front of the group. With fanfare they should introduce one another and say (example) . . . Presenting Ms. Melanie Kay. Her hobby is beading and if she could present someone to Jesus she'd bring the teenagers who come into crisis pregnancy centers.

*After all the girls have introduced one another, say... It's kind of cool to think of knocking on Jesus' door, walking into His presence, and presenting people to Him, isn't it? Just picture it! Let's pretend that your friend has a problem. She may be a little shy and not want to talk much about what's bothering her. But you pull her by the arm, and tell her that you're going to present her to Jesus. Jesus can help her!*

**Message:** Philippians 2:3-4 says, *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

One of the best ways that we can look to the interests of others is to pray for them. When we pray for others we forget ourselves and lend them a helping hand by bringing their needs to Jesus.

When we pray for others, it's as if we bring them right into Jesus' presence and tell Him face to face about their needs. In Philip Yancey's book, *Prayer - Does it Make Any Difference?*, he quotes Ron, a director of an international prison ministry. Ron said, "When you pray for someone, envision taking that person by the hand and presenting them to the Lord. Imagine! I try to do that in my prayers of intercession."

When Ron prays for others, asking Jesus to bring hope, healing, and help into their lives, he imagines holding their hand and walking them into Jesus' presence. What a beautiful picture of what praying for others is all about.

When we see people who are hurting, sometimes we feel helpless. Maybe you've even hugged that person and said, "I wish there's something I could do." Oh, friends, there is something you can do! In fact, it's the best thing you can do! You can pray! You can pray with that person on the spot by grabbing her in a hug and talking to Jesus about her need. You can also pray for that person throughout the day and night. Whenever He pops her name into your mind, you can pray! Prayer is the best way to show someone that you care.

Let's stand in a circle, hold hands, and pray.

**Let's pray:** Dear Jesus, thank You for the reminder that the best way to look to the needs of others and offer them a helping hand is to present them to You in prayer. Please meet the needs of the person to our right and to our left. Hear the cries of their heart. In Your name, Amen.

# WHEN ANXIETY STRIKES

**Bible Verses:** 1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 139:23, Isaiah 52:12  
*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you* (1 Peter 5:7).

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts* (Psalm 139:23).

*The LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard* (Isaiah 52:12).

**Verse to Memorize:** 1 Peter 5:7

**[Life Lesson]** Give your worries to Jesus.

**Object Lesson:** You will need a large number "1" and number "10" cut out of paper, or written on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or poster board.

**In preparation:** Place the number "1" on the far left of the room and the number "10" on the far right of the room.

**Say...** We all have different levels of anxiety over different circumstances. Some of you may experience massive amounts of anxiety when you're asked to stand in front of a group of people and speak, and others of you love taking center stage. I've created a makeshift anxiety meter to help us measure our anxiety level when we face different circumstances. I'll say a life circumstance and if it causes you a great amount of anxiety, stand close to the number ten on the far right of the room. If it doesn't cause you any anxiety at all, stand near the number one on the far left of the room, and if it's somewhere in between stand in the place that most closely identifies with how you feel about that situation.

Let's begin! What's your level of anxiety when you... (*ask all the girls to participate in all the listed circumstances. You may want to interview individuals that are polar opposites – one having much anxiety about a certain circumstance, and another having no fear.*)

- > Go to the dentist
- > Take a test
- > Play in a ballgame
- > Perform in a dance or piano recital
- > Fly in an airplane
- > Receive a shot or have blood drawn
- > Stand in front of a large group of people and speak
- > Experience a thunderstorm in the middle of the night

*Thank the girls for participating, ask them to sit down, and say...*

**Message:** When I was a young girl one of the wonderful things my dad and mom did for me was schedule regular dentist appointments. The thing is, it didn't feel so wonderful. As a child, I was convinced that the worst place in the whole world was a dentist chair. The night before I wouldn't sleep. I'd cry and pick at my teeth on the way to the appointment and would breathe huge sighs of relief when the ordeal was over.

Each one of us probably has something that causes a twinge of fear or spikes our anxiety meter within our hearts. Here is God's great news for you when anxiety strikes!

**1. God knows the things that make you nervous.** Don't try to keep your worries a secret; God knows the fears and anxieties that you try to stuff deep within. Psalm 139:23 says, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.* Talk to God about your worries. He knows anyway!

**2. God invites you to give Him your worries in prayer.** Not only does God know what's bothering you, He extends an open invitation to give Him those worries anytime, anywhere. 1 Peter 5:7 says, *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.* God cares for you and He cares about the things you care about. Give Him your worries!

**3. God has you surrounded.** As you walk into circumstances that make you nervous, you never go alone. God goes before you and walks behind you. Isaiah 52:12a says, *The LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.* No need to worry – He's got you covered!

**Let's pray:** Dear Jesus, we have so much to be thankful for. Thank You that You are familiar with all our ways – including the things that make us anxious. Help us to always cast all our worries on You. Thank You that in every situation You have us surrounded – going before us and walking behind us. We are blessed! In Your name, Amen.

# KEEPING COMPANY WITH GOD

Great object lesson to use during a camp experience!

**Bible Verses:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Hebrews 13:15

*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*

*Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name (Hebrews 13:15).*

**Verse to Memorize:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17

**[Life Lesson]** Prayer is keeping company with God.

**Object Lesson:** You will need a piece of paper and pencil for every two girls.

**Object Lesson Instructions:**

1. Have girls form pairs, and give each pair a pencil and piece of paper.
2. Give the assignment that they are to go on a walk or hike together. Detail the boundaries of the area where they may walk. As they walk, they should write down ten things they see that they're thankful for. *Although this activity is more fun outdoors, it can be done inside, too!*
3. Another goal of their walk is to get to know one another better.
4. Set a time limit for the walk and the signal you'll give to call them back together again.

*After girls have returned ask...*

1. What are some of the things you saw that you're thankful for? **Listen to responses.**
2. What is something you learned about your walking partner that you didn't know before? **Listen to responses.**

Friendships are formed and strengthened when we walk and talk together, discovering things that we have in common, and delighting in the things that make us unique.

**Message:** One of the best ways to form and strengthen our relationship with God is through prayer, walking and talking together with Him throughout the day. In his book, *Prayer – Does It Make Any Difference?*, Philip Yancey writes, "Prayer means keeping company with God who is already present." Although

we can't physically see God, He's present. Wherever we go, He already is. We cannot escape His presence. If we go up to the sky, God's there! If we go underground, He's there. Whether we're sitting in the darkness or the light, His eyes see us (Psalm 139:7-12).

God is present and when we acknowledge His presence by praying, He keeps company with us. This is what God desires our relationship with Him to look like!

In the book of first Thessalonians chapter five, verses 16-18 it says, *Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances.*

In the book of Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 15, it says, *Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name.*

Continually keeping company with God doesn't mean non-stop talking or sitting all day with our heads bowed and our hands folded. Instead, we keep company with God in all that we do. The way you study history and math can be a prayer when you do it to honor God. The way you practice your instrument or make your bed can be a prayer, when you do it in a way that pleases God. Yancey writes, "Ask God to remind you, as you do it, that you're doing it for Him."

Sometimes Jesus followers compartmentalize prayer, putting it on their to-do list as a 5-minute, 10-minute, 30-minute or more must-do task. Although designated prayer times are good and right, they shouldn't be the only times we pray.

Prayer is a lot like breathing. Breathing gives life to our bodies; it is continual. We never quit breathing or compartmentalize it into a designated time slot in our day. We breathe all the time! The same should be true of prayer. Prayer gives life to our walk with Jesus. God wants us to keep company with Him all the time!

**Let's pray:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You that You are present right here, right now. We find joy and comfort in knowing that we can never flee from You. Help us to acknowledge Your presence by praying continually, always keeping company with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY

**Bible Verses:** Ephesians 5:15-17, 20

*Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Verse to Memorize:** Ephesians 5:15

**[Life Lesson]** Make the most of every opportunity to talk and listen to God in prayer.

**Object Lesson:** You will need 20 cups for every eight to ten girls.

**In preparation:** For each team, place 20 or more cups in a designated space, putting half of them upside down and the other half right-side up.

## Object Lesson Instructions:

1. Divide the girls into teams of eight to ten.
2. Within each team instruct half the girls to be the “ups” and the other half to be the “downs.”
3. When the signal is given, the “up” team needs to turn as many cups right-side up as possible, and the “down” team needs to flip as many cups upside down as possible.
4. When designated time limit is over, determine the winner by counting the cups to see which team has the most turned their way.

*After cups are picked up, have the girls sit down, and ask...* If you were one of the “ups” and you saw a cup that was upside down, what did you do? **Listen to responses.** If you were one of the “downs” and you saw a cup that was right side up, what did you do? **Listen to responses.** That’s right! I watched all of you make the most of every opportunity to flip those cups in the way that you were assigned! You worked with a sense of urgency and determination to help your team.

**Message:** Our prayer life should be driven with a sense of urgency and determination to make the most of every opportunity to talk and listen to God.

Life is full of opportunities. Each day offers a buffet of choices you can make with your time. There are opportunities to study and work, to read, watch TV, or play games. In your relationships you can choose to be gentle or grumpy, generous or greedy, grateful or to hold a grudge. You have more choices than you can imagine!

God tells us in His Word, in the book of Ephesians, chapter five, verses 15, 16, and 20 to be careful to make wise and good choices. *Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Are you making the most of every opportunity to talk and listen to God in prayer? Or does the choice to pray get crowded out of your life by all the other things that compete for your time and thoughts? If we’re going to make wise choices, we need to listen to God through His Spirit and through His Book, the Bible. If we’re going to make the most of every opportunity, there should be a prayer on our lips as we get out of bed, walk to school, come to GEMS, and spend time with our family.

Much of what we do is done with a sense of urgency. If we’re not up at a certain time, we’ll be late for school. If we don’t finish our homework, we’ll get poor grades. If we don’t practice the piano each day, we won’t be prepared for our next lesson.

May we have the same urgency in our prayers – being quick to thank God, quick to listen, and quick to talk to Him about the choices before us.

**Let’s pray:** Dear Heavenly Father, please place a sense of urgency in our hearts that we would make the most of every opportunity to talk to You, listen to You, and to give You thanks. Help us to make wise choices today and always. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



# PRAYER BREATHE LIFE INTO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

**Bible Verses:** Matthew 13:18-23

[Jesus said.] *"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When people hear the message about the kingdom and do not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their hearts. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to people who hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to people who hear the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to people who hear the word and understand it. They produce a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown"* (TNIV).

**Verses to Memorize:** Matthew 13:22-23

**[Life Lesson]** Worries choke the life out of a relationship with God; prayer breathes life into that relationship.

**Object Lesson:** You will need three actresses, overalls, plaid shirt, straw hat, seed pouch, pager, cell phone, sleeping bag, and three copies of the script below.

**In preparation:** Have the actresses practice ahead of time so they can present this well!

## Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23 Drama

**Farmer:** *(enters, wearing overalls, plaid shirt, straw hat, and a seed pouch, crosses to opposite exit, scattering imaginary seed while saying...)* A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. *Scatters some imaginary seeds over Katie's head, exits.*

**Katie:** *(enters briskly, wearing pager on belt, oblivious to the farmer, begins to cross, looking at watch)*

**Janey:** *(follows)* Oh, Katie.

**Katie:** *(stops, doesn't turn, sighs)* Yes, Janey.

**Janey:** *(approaching)* Have you thought about our conversation?

**Katie:** *(turns)* Yeah. Say, listen Janey. That Jesus thing is a really good idea. But my schedule is already way too full to add something else to it right now. Maybe next year, when things settle down a little, I'll make a commitment to Jesus. But right now... *(looks at watch)* Oh, I'm late for cheerleading practice. *(backs toward exit)*

**Janey:** Maybe after cheerleading practice, we can...

**Katie:** Sorry, I have dance rehearsal after that.

**Janey:** Well, maybe after dance rehearsal...

**Katie:** I promised the girls I'd help them make posters and banners for Friday night's game. Sorry.

**Janey:** Well, maybe...

**Katie:** *(backing away, looking at watch)* Listen, I really have to go. Check with me next year, huh? *(exits)*

**Janey:** Next year. *(turns exits opposite)* Oh, well...

**Farmer:** *(enters, crosses to opposite exit, scattering imaginary seed while saying...)* Some of the farmer's seeds fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. *(scatters some imaginary seeds over Katie's head, exits)*

**Katie:** *(enters, weeping, crosses to Janey)* Oh, Janey, am I ever glad to see you. My life is a mess.

**Janey:** *(enters, crosses to Katie)* Oh, Katie, I'm sorry to hear that. Do you want to talk about it?

**Katie:** I got suspended from the cheer squad because I was so busy that I missed too many practices. Brandon broke up with me because I wasn't spending enough time with him. And now my dance teacher is on my case for missing rehearsals right before the big competition.

**Janey:** Oh, Katie, I'm so sorry.

**Katie:** I really need the Lord. Do you think you could help me? You know... How do I...

**Janey:** All you have to do is pray and admit that your best efforts have fallen short of God's best intentions for you and you'll turn control of your life over to Him.

**Katie:** *(folds hands, prays)* Lord, you know how out of control my life is. I need You to guide me in everything I do. Help me, Lord. Be the Lord of my life just as you are for Janey. Amen.

**Janey:** *(hugs Katie)* Good for you. Welcome to God's family!

**Katie:** What do I do now?

**Janey:** Well, let's start by praying and studying the Bible together . . .

**Katie:** *(reaches for beeper)* Oh, wait. My beeper is vibrating.

**Janey:** What is it?

**Katie:** *(smiles)* It's Brandon. I think he wants to get back together with me. Say! This Jesus thing really works!

**Janey:** Be careful what you attribute to Jesus. Brandon isn't a Christian. I'm not sure the Lord wants you to date someone who . . .

**Katie:** *(putting beeper back on belt)* Can you believe it? My beeper hasn't gone off for three days and here it is vibrating again. *(reads beeper again, smiles runs to exit)* It's my cheer squad advisor. I'll bet she wants me to cheer for Friday night's game. See ya!

**Janey:** What about praying together? *(exits opposite)* Oh, well.

**Farmer:** *(enters, crosses to opposite exit, scattering imaginary seed while saying...)* Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. *(scatters some imaginary seeds over Katie's head, exits)*

**Janey:** *(enters carrying sleeping bag, crosses to Katie)* Oh, Katie, I finally was able to track down a sleeping bag for you.

**Katie:** *(enters, crosses to Janey)* Oh, Janey, that was sweet. But I'm sorry to say I won't be able to go on the mission trip after all.

**Janey:** Oh, Katie! Why not?

**Katie:** My dance team won the district championships and we have to practice non-stop to get ready for regionals.

**Janey:** Oh, Katie, I feel sorry for you.

**Katie:** Oh, don't worry about the deposit. I knew when I signed up to go on the mission trip that the deposit was nonrefundable.

**Janey:** I'm not talking about the deposit. I'm talking about the blessings you'll miss from doing the Lord's work, and the special times of prayer that we will have there. *(remains on stage after Katie exits, freezes)*

**Katie:** Oh, well. *(looks at watch)* Listen, got to go. *(sings)* Rehearsals, you know! *(runs to exit)*

**Farmer:** *(enters, crosses to opposite exit, scattering imaginary seed while speaking)* Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. *(scatters some imaginary seeds over Janey's head, exits)*

**Janey:** *(pulls cell phone from purse or pocket, dials number, puts it to ear, strolls to exit talking on phone)* Hello, Ashley? This is Janey. Hi. Do I ever have an opportunity for you! Yes. We just had a cancellation from the mission trip and now you not only get to go, but you get to go for free!

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**Applaud, thank actresses, and say...**

**Message:** There are a number of things that keep seeds from taking root and growing: birds eat the seeds, the soil is too rocky or shallow, and thorns and weeds choke the life out of the plants.

In the same way, there are a number of things that can keep our lives from taking root in Jesus and growing in a relationship with Him: troubles, worries, greed, and selfishness strangle the life out of our relationship with Jesus. When we never take time to study our Bibles or to talk and listen to God in prayer our relationship with Jesus remains on the surface, leaving us vulnerable to the evil one's attacks.

Martin Luther, a great man of faith who was born in 1483, once said, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." Prayer not only grows our relationship with Jesus, it's a sign if there really is a relationship with Jesus in the first place!

As our GEMS season comes to a close, the evil one is going to work overtime to keep you away from prayer. If he can keep God's people from praying, he has nothing to fear. Prayerless people are powerless people.

Many of you are seeking to be an activist for Jesus Christ. That's awesome! But I'm going to let you in on a truth that you may have overlooked. It's impossible to change the world for Jesus if we're not connected to Jesus through prayer. Prayer strengthens your relationship with Jesus and gives you power to do His work. Today and always be a person of prayer, a person mighty in prayer!

**Let's pray:** Dear Jesus, please forgive us when we allow troubles, worries, and selfishness to choke out our relationship with You. We want to be people of prayer, girls and women who are mighty in prayer. Continue to grow and nurture our relationship through prayer, Bible study, and our Christian friends at GEMS. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# DEVOTIONAL/OBJECT LESSONS

## [Prayer – No Worries]

**Scripture:** Philippians 4:6

**You will need:** a newspaper, a Bible, whiteboard/chalkboard, and markers/chalk.

**Optional:** Using newspapers, create a large W. Post the W on a wall in the room where you're meeting for this devotional/object lesson.

**In preparation:** On the chalkboard write five large W's from top to bottom.

*Hold up your newspaper and say...* When newspaper reporters interview people and write the stories that we read in the daily paper they use the five W's to guide them. Does anyone know what those five W's are? *Listen to responses. Write the correct answers on the chalkboard/whiteboard:*

**Who?**  
**What?**  
**When?**  
**Where?**  
**Why?**

When we read a newspaper article those are the questions we expect to be answered. Who is involved in the story, what did they do, when did they do it, where did they do it, and why did they do it?

Let's investigative newspaper reporters and scoop out the five W's in this year's theme verse, Philippians 4:6. (*Read this verse from your Bible.*) In God's book, the Bible, it reads, *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God*

Let's see if we can answer the five W questions about prayer.

**Who** should pray? *Listen to responses.* That's right. Everyone! Anyone can and should speak and listen to God in prayer.

**What** should we pray about? *Listen to responses.* Very good. Anything! God tells us in the verse that we just read that we should pray about all situations, all requests, and all the things that we're thankful for.

**When** should we pray? *Listen to responses.* Excellent. Anytime! God never sleeps so we can speak and listen to Him around the clock – day and night.

**Where** should we pray? *Listen to responses.* Great job. Anywhere! You can talk and listen to God wherever you are – in the bathroom when you're brushing your teeth, in the backyard when you're playing with your dog, in school, in the car, in the mall – anywhere!

**Why** should we pray? *Listen to responses.* That's right. We should pray because God tells us to do so. He instructs us to present our requests to Him.

Prayer. It's a good thing to learn about. It's an even better thing to put into practice. Let's pray together right now.

**Prayer:** Father God, thank You for what You've taught us about prayer. It's a delight to learn that anyone can pray to You about anything, at anytime, anywhere. Thank You that when we pray, You've said we'll have no worries. Thank You that we can cast all our worries and cares upon You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## [Make Us One, Father]

**Scripture:** John 17:21

**You will need:** a Hula Hoop for every five girls, a tea light for every girl, permanent markers, and matches.

*Separate the girls into groups of five; give each group a Hula Hoop and say...* Today's [tonight's] devotional begins with a challenge. There are five of you assigned to each Hula Hoop. Please stand up and hold the Hula Hoop at waist height. Each person should put the tips of two fingers (using one finger from each hand) under the Hula Hoop. When I give the signal, your goal is to lower the Hula Hoop to the ground without it slipping off anyone's fingertips. All fingertips must be in contact with the hoop at all times. It'll take a lot of teamwork and cooperation, but you can do it!

1. Give the signal to begin.
2. After the teams have mastered it once, have them do it again, except this time without talking.
3. When finished have everyone sit around their Hula Hoops and listen to this Object Lesson/Devotional Thought.

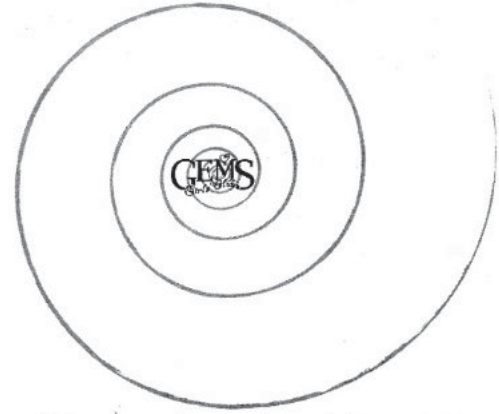
*Say...* In God's Word, the Bible, it records one of the prayers that Jesus prayed for His disciples and for all future followers of Jesus – that includes you and me! Jesus prayed, *"I pray, also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you"* (John 17:20-21). Jesus prayed that His followers would be united in their love for God and one another, united in their work to tell other people about Jesus, and so united in the way they live for Jesus that the world would come to know Him, too.

Your Hula Hoop team had to unite to accomplish its goal. Keeping the Hula Hoop on your fingertips while you lowered it to the ground took cooperation and teamwork.

The same holds true for followers of Jesus. God doesn't send us out on our own to walk His way, He goes with us and gives us traveling companions, too! Some of your traveling companions include your family, classmates and friends who trust in Jesus, and the girls and counselors right here at GEMS! One of the best ways to encourage your traveling companions to live for Jesus is to pray for them, so we're going to do that together.

*Distribute the permanent markers; ask each girl to write her name on the bottom of the tea light and then place her tea light around her team's Hula Hoop. After the counselors have lit all the tea lights, dim the lights, and say...* Please go around the team circle and share one prayer request with your group. Once everyone has shared a request, hold hands and pray sentence prayers for one another. Each person should specifically pray for the prayer request of the girl on her right. Choose one person to begin and then go around the circle and pray.

*When girls have finished praying, say...* Thank you for praying for one another. When you unite in prayer for one another, you encourage your traveling companions and shine God's light in this world.



Very good! These are the people and places that are neighbors to our club. You could go home and do the same thing on a piece of paper, writing down the people and places that neighbor your home.

Listen to Paul's prayer request. *Pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you* (2 Thessalonians 3:1b). Paul wanted the good news of Jesus to spread rapidly through the neighborhood and around the world. We should continue to pray Paul's prayer request today!

Please stand and join hands in one continuous line. *When girls are finished forming a line, stand at one end of it and say...* We're going to form a spiral similar to the one that is drawn on the whiteboard/chalkboard. I'm going to stand in the center with God's Word as a reminder that it's through Jesus that we share God's love with our neighbors. I'd then like you to wrap around me in a loose spiral. *When the girls are finished forming a spiral say...* Can you picture how God's love can ripple out from our club when we pray for our neighbors? Please let go of each other's hands, hold out your hands in a cupped, open position, and think about one of the neighbors of our club or of your home. Please close your eyes and I'll lead us in prayer for these people.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the privilege of prayer. Tonight (today) each one of us is thinking about a specific neighbor of our GEMS Club or someone who lives near our homes. For the next minute or so, please hear our silent prayers for these people who we are holding up to You in prayer. *After 90 seconds say...* Please let Your love and the good news of Jesus spread rapidly from this place. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## [Praying for Our Neighbors]

**Scripture:** 2 Thessalonians 3:1b

**You will need:** a whiteboard/chalkboard and markers/chalk, a Bible, and a large area for the girls to spread out.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a passionate follower of Jesus who lived in Germany during the terrible days under Adolf Hitler's rule said, "Christ stands between us, and we can only get into touch with our neighbors through Him."

Let's look at what those words mean. *In the middle of the whiteboard/chalkboard write the name of your GEMS Club. From that center point draw a spiral, with each circle around the GEMS Club name getting wider and wider.*

*Point to the name of your GEMS Club. Say...* In this place is God's love. We talk about it, experience it, and show it to one another. From this place God's love spreads to our neighbors. Who are some of the people, churches, and businesses, that are neighbors to our GEMS Club? *On the spiral write the names of those who live in close proximity to your club. Continue writing names as the girls think about the people, churches, and businesses that surround your club.*

## [Praying for Our Country]

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 2:1-2

**You will need:** a letter written to the President or Prime Minister of your country, and pictures of the President, Prime Minister, other national government leaders, and your city's mayor.

We're going to begin with a current events quiz. I have

\_\_\_\_\_ (number of pictures that you have) pictures of people who are leaders in our country. Let's see if you can identify them by name.

**One by one hold up the pictures and ask for the leader's name. Give hints if necessary! When finished say...** This may feel a little bit more like a history class than GEMS Girls' Clubs, but there's a reason that we're talking about our nation's leaders at GEMS. God wants you and I to pray for these people!

In God's book, the Bible, He tells us in the book of 1 Timothy, chapter 2, verses 1-2, *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.* God wants us to pray for and give thanks for all those in authority over us. That includes your parents, your teachers, policemen and firefighters, and the government officials that lead our country.

What are some things that we can pray for our leaders? **Listen to responses that may include that God protect them, that God give them wisdom to make decisions that please Him, and that God help them live lives of holiness, purity, and peace that serves as an example to the people in our nation.**

Let's pray for our nations leaders right now. **Distribute the pictures of the leaders to girls within the group and ask them to lift those pictures in the air as together you lift up your nation's leaders to God.**

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the men and women who are in authority over us. Thank You for the people who are serving as leaders in our country. Please protect them as they work, guide the decisions they make for our country, surround them with wise, godly advisers, and help them live lives of purity, holiness, and peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Hold up the letter you wrote to the Prime Minister or the President. Say...** This is a letter that I wrote to our nation's leader on behalf of our club. When you leave, please sign your name on the bottom of this letter. We're going to tell this person of our prayers. As you sign it, make a commitment to pray for this person once a week. Choose a day of the week that will be the day you pray for your leaders and tell a friend which day you chose so you can remind one another to pray!

## [When God Says, "No"]

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 12:8-9a

**You will need:** a bowl filled with candy bars or candy (have enough for each person at club).

**Hold up the bowl of candy and say...** What do I have in my bowl? **Listen to responses.** Would you like to have one? **Listen to responses.** Have you ever asked your dad or mom if you could have a piece of candy and they said, "No"? **Listen to responses.** What are some of the reasons they gave for saying

no to you? **Listen to responses that may include that it will spoil your dinner, that you already had some, that too much candy will rot your teeth or give you a stomachache, etc.**

Sometimes when we pray to God He says yes and at other times He says no. In God's book, the Bible, we learn that God said no to one of the Apostle Paul's prayer requests. Paul had a thorn in his flesh. We're not told exactly what the thorn was, but we do know that Paul begged God to take it away. This is what Paul said, *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:8-9a).

Have you ever prayed for something three times, thirty times, or three thousand times, and God answered with a "No"? That was Paul's experience. Paul prayed and God denied his request. At first Paul didn't see this as a good thing, but after God told Paul that His grace is enough for Paul's needs, and that His strength and power is made perfect in Paul's weakness, Paul accepted God's "No." He was grateful that the thorn kept him humble, weak, and dependent on God.

When you are sad or angry with God's "No" to your prayers, think about Paul. Although God didn't give him what he asked for, he got just what He needed – a deeper, more dependent relationship with God.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, when You say "No" to my prayers, help me to respond like Paul who chose to quit focusing on his trouble and instead to focus and rely on You. May Your will be done in my life and in all the situations that I bring to You in prayer. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**When finished praying, distribute the candy to the girls!**

## [God Hears]

**Scripture:** Psalm 5:3

**You will need:** a chalkboard/whiteboard and chalk/markers.

**In preparation:** write the following words on the chalkboard/whiteboard:

Bonjour  
Annyong ha shimnikka  
Dobry den'  
Hola



There are five words on the chalkboard/whiteboard. As you

look at them is there any word that you are able to pronounce and translate for us? *Listen to responses. Thank all volunteers!*

Let's take it from the top together. Please say, "Bonjour" (bohn-zhoor). Bonjour means good day in French.

Please say, "Annyong ha shimnikka" (An-YOH HASHim-ni-kah). Annyong ha shimnikka is the Korean phrase for hello.

Please say, "Dobryy den" (DOH-bree den). Dobryy den is how you say hello in the Ukrainian language.

Please say, "Hola" (OH-lah). Hola is how you say hello in Spanish.

The arrangement of these dots is how you say hello in the Braille language. The Braille system is a method that is widely used by blind people to read and write.

Those who are deaf, use sign language. Let's say hello together in sign language. Place your hand near your forehead as if you were saluting someone and then move your hand away from your forehead in a forward and downward motion.

Does anyone else know how to say "Hello" in another language? *Listen to responses.*

Have you ever been in a room where people were speaking in a language that you didn't understand? I've had that experience and all I can do is smile and shrug my shoulders, letting them know that I'm so sorry, but I don't know what they've just said!

We pray to an amazing God who not only hears our prayers, but also hears and understands the prayers of **all** His children from every nation, tribe, people and language (Revelation 7:9). In God's book, the Bible, in the book of Psalms, chapter 5, verse 3, it says, *In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.*

God hears and understands your prayers. He also hears and understands the prayers of His children in France, Korea, the Ukraine, Mexico, and around the world. Isn't He amazing?

We're going to pray together in a way that you may not have previously experienced. For the next few minutes, we're all going to pray aloud at the same time. That may sound really different to you, but God is able to hear and be attentive to each of our prayers and to all the other people who are praying right now around the world.

Let's pray. *After a few minutes of everyone praying aloud conclude by praying...* Thank You, Heavenly Father, for hearing our voices and the requests we laid before You. We wait expectantly. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## [Presents vs. Presence]

**Scripture:** Psalm 21:6

**You will need:** a gift bag filled with the following items: a handheld mirror, a bandage, a test that has an A+ on the top (write it large with red ink), a cell phone, and a map.

*Place the gift bag on a table in front of the group and say...* Many times when we talk to God in prayer we ask for specific things. *Take the handheld mirror out of the gift bag and say...* Maybe sometimes we ask God to make us beautiful. *Take the bandage out of the gift bag and say...* Maybe sometimes we ask God to heal us. *Take the test out of the gift bag and say...* Maybe sometimes we ask Him to help us get good grades or to do well on a homework project. *Take the cell phone out of the gift bag and say...* maybe sometimes we ask Him for popularity or more friends or a cell phone to call our own. *Take the map out of the bag...* Maybe we even ask Him to make it possible to go to different places – a friend's party, a visit to Grandpa and Grandma's house, or a trip to Disneyland.

*God invites us to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests (Ephesians 6:18). Hold up the gift bag and say...* If we only look at prayer as a means to get the presents that we want from God, we're missing the greatest gift that God gives to us in prayer – the opportunity to enjoy His presence!

In God's book, the Bible, in the book of Psalms, chapter 21, verse 6, it says, *Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence.* God is generous to us, giving us unending blessings and presents. A far greater gift is the joy of being in His presence, speaking and listening to God in prayer.

Let's celebrate God's presence by praying together.

Dear Father God, thank You for the gift of Your presence in our lives. Forgive us when we spend more time seeking Your presents and the gifts that we want, instead of delighting that You are present, never leaving us or forsaking us. Make us more and more aware that You are present at all times and in all places. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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## [In Everything Give Thanks]

**Scripture:** Ephesians 5:19b-20

**You will need:** a large poster board and markers, and one inflated balloon for every five girls.

**In preparation:** create a large thank you card by folding the poster board in half. On the front of the card write, "Thank You!" On the inside of the card write, "Thank You God for..." Blow up the needed number of balloons.

1. Divide the girls into groups of five.
2. Ask each group to stand in a circle.
3. Give each group a balloon.

**Say...** In our theme verse, Philippians 4:6, God tells us that by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, we should present our requests to Him. We're going to spend the next seven minutes or so giving thanks to God. Each group should toss the balloon in the air and bounce it back and forth between its members. Do your best to make sure everyone gets lots of opportunities to bounce the balloon and make sure you don't let it fall to the ground! Each time you touch the balloon shout out something that you're thankful to God for. Maybe you'll say food, friends, flip-flops, or Frisbees. Do your best not to repeat what someone else has already said. Go ahead and give thanks to God!

**After seven minutes ask the girls to sit down. Say...** When I was a child anytime that someone would give me a gift, say a kind word, or do something special for me, if I didn't immediately respond by saying, "Thank you," my mother would say, "What do you say?" She taught me the importance of expressing gratitude.

God teaches us the importance of having a grateful heart, too, listen to the things God tells us in His Word:

*Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:19b-20).*

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:17).*

*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18).*

And then our theme verse: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Philippians 4:6).*

As you listen to God's commands it's as if God is telling us over and over again, "What do you say?"

**Hold up the thank you card made out of poster board. Say...** for tonight's (today's) prayer, we're going to give God thanks by putting a pen to paper in this large thank you card to God. As you leave this room, write down one thing that you're thankful to God for and then sign your name by it.

Robert Louis Stevenson once said, "The man who forgets to be thankful has fallen asleep in life." Let's make sure that we're fully awake and fully thankful for all the blessings that God has given to us.

## [When You Pray]

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:5, 6:6, 6:7

**You will need:** a roll of toilet paper.

*Pass the roll of toilet paper to the girls, instructing each girl to tear off three to five squares. When all the girls have their toilet paper in hand say...* I'd like you to turn to a partner and tell her some of the excuses that you have for not praying more. If you chose three squares, you should give three reasons, if you chose four squares, give four reasons, and if you tore off five squares, give five reasons.

*When girls have finished sharing with another say...* What are some of the reasons or excuses that you shared for not praying more? **Listen to responses.**

There are so many excuses we can give for not praying more than we do. It's important to understand that no matter how much we may justify our reasons for not praying more, in the end they are still only excuses. Listen to these three verses from the book of Matthew chapter 6. Take note that each verse begins with, "When you pray" not "If you pray."

**When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full (Matthew 6:5 TNIV, emphasis added).**

**When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you (Matthew 6:6, emphasis added).**

**When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words (Matthew 6:7, emphasis added).**

Jesus doesn't say, if you pray, if you find time to pray, if you feel like praying, if you're not too sleepy to pray, if you don't have anything else to do then you can pray. There's no room for excuses. He told His disciples and He tells you and me through His Word, "When you pray."

When Judy Morford reflected on her prayer life she said this, "Because of my changing schedule over the years, I've asked myself, *Just what does God expect of me in my prayer life?* The answer I come up with is He wants a love relationship. A true love will always find a way."

True love between you and Jesus will make a way for your prayer life, too. Please tuck the toilet paper in between your palms, fold your hands, and let's pray together.

Dear Heavenly Father, please forgive us when we make excuses for not praying to You more. Thank You for prayer and the way it deepens our love relationship with You. Please grow a burning desire within our hearts to love You more. Let that love make a way that eliminates excuses and increases prayer. In Jesus' name, Amen.



## [He Heals the Brokenhearted]

**Scripture:** Psalm 147:3

**You will need:** an index card, a pen, and a Band-Aid for each girl.

*Distribute an index card, pen, and Band-Aid to each girl. Say...* What are some of the things that make you happy? *Listen to responses.* Those are great answers. There are so many things that God brings into our lives that bring us much joy.

This world is also full of troubles. What are some of the things that make you sad? *Listen to responses.* Those answers are so true. God never promises us in His Word, the Bible, that our lives will be free of heartache. In fact Jesus said, *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33b).

In the Bible, in the book of James, chapter 5, verse 13 (TNIV), it says, *Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.*

Those are God's instructions for how we are to respond to the circumstances in our lives. When we're in trouble, we need to pray. When we're happy, we need to sing songs of praise. And then God responds to our prayers and praises. He receives our sincere songs of praise and draws near when we tell Him our troubles.

Each one of us has had troubles in the past or maybe is knee deep in trouble right now. On your index card, please write down your trouble or jot down something that breaks your heart.

*After every one is finished writing say...* On your Band-Aid please write, "God heals the brokenhearted." Psalm 147:3 reads, *He [God] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.* Psalm 34:18 says, *The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

We often use Band-Aids when we slip, fall, and skin up our knees and elbows. Although the Band-Aid doesn't take away the pain, it does protect the wound and is a wonderful thing to use as part of the healing process.

Please take your Band-Aid and stick it on top of the trouble that you wrote down. Simply placing the Band-Aid on top of your trouble won't take away the pain, but God's promise provides protection and God's arms provide strength as He heals your broken heart and binds up your wounds.

Please cup the index card in your hands as we pray together.

Heavenly Father, thank You for the promise that You heal broken hearts and bind up wounds. We're responding in obedience to You. When we're happy, we'll sing songs of praise. When we're in trouble, we're going to pray. Please draw near to these girls and give healing to their physical, emotional, and spiritual wounds. In Jesus' name, Amen.