

Talk to God

For teens ages 12–14 · about 45–60 minutes · Buried & Raised · game **Talk to God** · built on **Matthew 6:9–13, Philippians 4:6, and 1 Thessalonians 5:17**

Your students pray at meals, in youth group, maybe before a test — but many have never learned what prayer actually is. For some, prayer feels like a performance: say the right words, sound spiritual, check the box. Others stopped trying because God felt silent while their phone stayed loud. Anxiety, group chat drama, and midnight scrolling compete for the same attention God wants. This session rebuilds prayer as honest conversation with a Father who listens — not a vending machine, not a stage, not background noise while life runs past Him.

Before you teach anything, pray.

Some students think prayer is only for crises or for people who sound holy on a mic. Some feel guilty for short attention spans. Ask the Spirit to make this room safe for honesty — that teens would discover God as Father, not an audience grading their performance.

The heart of the lesson

Jesus taught His disciples to pray with the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13) — not a magic formula, but a pattern: honor God’s name, want His kingdom, depend on Him daily, confess sin, resist evil. Paul wrote, “**Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God**” (Philippians 4:6). And the Thessalonian church heard a simple rhythm: “**Pray continually**” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) — living awareness of God, not nonstop monologue.

Pray like God’s your Father — because He is.

The root issue behind weak prayer is often distrust: we treat God like a distant judge or a wish-granter instead of a Father who already knows and still invites us near. Symptoms look like prayer only when desperate, repeating empty phrases, or skipping prayer because scrolling feels more immediate. God’s way out is relationship — talk honestly, regularly, with Scripture-shaped words and open hands. Performance prayer impresses people; real prayer connects with God.

Silence with God beats scrolling past Him.

Teens need practical handles: morning whisper, anxiety dump before bed, Lord's Prayer as training wheels, listening as well as speaking. No shame for beginners — every deep prayer life started with simple “help me” sentences. The goal is dependence rooted in trust, not spiritual showmanship.

MATTHEW 6:9-10

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done...”

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

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

How the session flows

- 1 Phone vs. Father.** Hook on attention and Matthew 6:9. ~8 min
- 2 Real prayer pattern.** Lord's Prayer, anxiety, continual prayer. ~12 min
- 3 Play the game.** “Talk to God” on screen. ~12-15 min
- 4 Quiet honesty.** Reference card, private reflection. ~5 min
- 5 Worksheet.** In class or take-home reinforcement. ~15 min
- 6 Talk now.** Simple prayer, invitation to start today. ~8 min

Screen for the game, printed cards and worksheets, pens, optional soft worship for closing. Leaders ready to pray one-on-one with students who want to begin or restart a prayer life.

Leading it, part by part

Phone vs. Father

Ask: when did you last talk to God — not a quick bless-this-food line, but actual conversation? Many teens give hours to screens and seconds to the Father. Read Matthew 6:9: Jesus says **Our Father** — family language. Prayer is not a talent show for youth leaders; it is a child talking to Dad who loves to listen.

Real prayer pattern

Walk through the Lord's Prayer in plain language: worship (hallowed be Your name), surrender (Your will), daily dependence (give us today our bread), forgiveness, protection. Teach Philippians 4:6 for test anxiety, friend drama, family stress — bring everything with thanksgiving, not panic-only prayers. Explain 1 Thessalonians 5:17 as staying in touch through the day: a sentence in the hallway, a breath before opening TikTok, an honest whisper at night.

Contrast performance prayer (long words to impress) with real prayer (honest, simple, trusting). God already knows your request (Matthew 6:8) — He wants your heart, not your vocabulary.

Play the game

Run “Talk to God” on screen. Round 1 sorts performance prayer from real conversation. Round 2 drills the Lord's Prayer and key verses. Round 3 puts teens in real scenarios — anxiety, scrolling, friends who think prayer is fake. Round 4 lightning. Twelve to fifteen minutes. Afterward, bridge: winning points is fun, but the real win is talking to your Father, not performing for a crowd.

Quiet honesty

Hand out the reference card — private, five quiet minutes. Let students name where prayer feels awkward, dead, or only-for-emergencies. Nobody collects it. Honor the silence; some students will pray honestly here for the first time.

Worksheet

The worksheet is structured learning — fill-in, true/false, lookup, one real-life answer. It reinforces Matthew 6, Philippians 4, and 1 Thessalonians 5 without duplicating the private card. Use in pairs if energy is high; send home if time is short.

Talk now

Invite students to pray one honest sentence aloud together or silently — no pressure to sound eloquent. Offer leaders at the sides. Challenge: before Friday, replace five minutes of scrolling with five minutes talking to the Father. Read Philippians 4:6 once more. Pray like God's your Father — because He is.

Take it further

- What does “Our Father” in Matthew 6:9 change about how you pray?
- What is the difference between performance prayer and real conversation with God?
- How does Philippians 4:6 speak to anxiety you actually feel this week?
- What could “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) look like at school?
- Why does Jesus warn against praying to be seen by others (Matthew 6:5–6)?
- When do you tend to scroll instead of talk to God — and what would one swap look like?
- How does the Lord's Prayer train worship, surrender, and dependence?
- What would change if you believed God listens before you even find the words?

A final word

Do not shame students who pray rarely, and do not hype prayer as another performance metric. Present the Father who invites honest children, the Son who taught us how to pray, and the Spirit who helps our weakness (Romans 8:26). Give them Scripture, the game, the card, and a door to start today. Somewhere in your room a teenager is ready to stop scrolling past God and actually talk to Him. Pray like God's your Father — because He is.