

Taking Middle School Youth Deeper in Prayer

By **Life Teen** | OCTOBER 15, 2010

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“Prayer...brings the saving power of Christ into the decision and actions of everyday life.” – John Paul II

That statement is so true! As youth ministers, we can all hopefully attest to the wonders of prayer in everyone’s life. But we also know that diving deeper into prayer is not something that happens overnight. Add that challenge to the life of a middle school youth, and suddenly you feel as though you’re trying to climb Mt. Everest!

Here’s a few practical ways you can bring your middle school youth into a deeper prayer life:

- **Start with yourself.** It’s no secret that the middle school youth in your group look up to you. So know that if they see you pray, it means a lot. Likewise, if they never see you challenge yourself in prayer, they will never want to do so either. Setting the bar high for your youth means setting your personal prayer level up there as well.
- **Challenge the Core to go deeper.** Your Core Team spends the most relational ministry time with the youth. Help them get into a deeper prayer routine, and it will help them become more balanced in life. In turn, they can then focus on challenging the youth as well.
- **Have faith in the youth to rise to the challenge.** St. Francis of Assisi once said, “Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” Don’t discredit them simply because they have the attention span of Dori from *Finding Nemo*. If you keep your expectations low, they will never want to rise above where they are. By setting the bar high, you challenge them to build up the tools necessary to have a solid prayer life.

- **Make it a habit.** Don't be afraid to let your youth group ooze with prayer. Begin with a large group prayer. Have a musician or band there for a few praise and worship songs to begin or end the night. Have small groups pray together at some point in the night. Occasionally offer Adoration or reflective time as a part of Edge Nights.
- **Give a variety of opportunities.** There are lots of different ways to pray! At the middle school age, the focus should be on introducing them to different forms. In high school, they can take those introductions deeper into devotion. Some examples of prayer are *Lectio Divina*, the rosary, meditations, prayer petitions, praise & worship, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and novenas.

Take advantage of every prayer opportunity. There are so many opportunities to pray each and every day; it's just a matter of recognizing them. Carry an index card with you so you can write prayer requests down. When a youth asks you to pray for a family member or struggle, don't just say "I'll pray for you." Physically pray with them at that moment, and then again later that day/night on your own! By making it a habit to seek God in all things, the youth will build an inclination towards God.