

TOPIC TWO: PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

GOALS:

To help the candidate grow in understanding, valuing, and practicing an active prayer life
To help the candidate grow in overall pursuit of the values and lifestyle taught and modeled by Jesus

RATIONALE:

Prayer is an essential skill for effective membership in the faith community and for maintaining an overall Christian lifestyle.

BACKGROUND:

We are not concerned about instant sanctity here. The focus is on possessing and developing those skills and habits that will lead the candidate to closer identification with Jesus over the years.

How one prays is not as critical as that one prays. Your discussion with your candidate, therefore, should focus on nurturing a positive attitude toward prayer and helping him or her to develop a style of praying that is suitable for him or her at this point in life.

The overall spiritual life involves us in both positive practices and in a program of self-discipline aimed at rooting out or curbing weaknesses and bad habits we may possess. In your discussion with your candidate, try to maintain that balance between nurturing the good that is already there and curbing negative elements that may be present.

PRAYER SERVICE

OPENING PRAYER (Together)

God calls me often and in many ways: through people, through events, and through His inspiration in my heart. How do I respond? I, too, call upon God -- do I expect Him to respond?

READING: Colossians 3:12-16

RESPONSE:

Sponsor: For the gift of *conviction* to live radically the *Gospel* you have preached to us. .

Candidate: Lord, give us *your conviction*.

Sponsor: For the gift of *servanthood* to empty ourselves as you did, to be willing to bend low, to heal wounds, and to share love . . .

Candidate: Lord, give us your spirit of being *servant*.

Sponsor: For the gift of *hope* to stand with all creation, to wait believingly for rebirth, for growth, for completion . . .

Candidate: Lord, give us *your hope*.

Sponsor: Finally, we pray for the grace to *recognize* your gifts when they are given, to own them, to claim them, to acknowledge them as only ours to give away . . .

Candidate: Lord, give us *your own power of recognition*.

CLOSING PRAYER (Together)

Our Lord and our God, the good news of opportunity comes to us in a variety of ways. Our hearts are full to overflowing with gratitude to you, who are the source of all good things. Our prayer has been that in all things we might do your holy will, in the great as well as small events of our lives. We lift our hearts in thanksgiving that new opportunities, by your design, are part of our life-journey. May we use these great blessings to bring us closer to you, our God, and the world closer to peace. Amen.

ACTIVITY I: OBSTACLES TO PRAYER

Listed below are four elements that affect our ability to pray and common obstacles related to them. Share together how these "problems" affect your own prayer life and try to identify practical things you and your candidate can do to overcome them.

1. Time

- a. Can't find time?
- b. Don't take time?
- c. Other?

A possible solution:

2. Inner Quiet:

- a. Can't seem to settle down?
- b. Can't concentrate?
- c. Other?

A possible solution:

3. External Quiet

- a. Can't find a suitable quiet place for prayer?
- b. Can't find a place with a good atmosphere for praying?
- c. Other?

A possible solution:

4. Aids to Prayer

- a. Can't find the right book or other aid for praying?
- b. Don't know how to use the Bible well for prayer?
- c. Other?

A possible solution:

Summarize your discussion and help your candidate develop a "program" for praying to be tried between now and your next session together.

ACTIVITY II: SCRIPTURE SEARCH – PRAYER

1. Read together each of the Scripture passages below about prayer.
2. Discuss each passage together in the light of these questions:
 - a. What truth or principle does it seek to teach us about prayer?
 - b. Does my own prayer reflect that truth? Should it?
 - c. What can I do to ensure that my prayer will possess that quality described in the Scripture passage?

Luke 2:41-43

Matthew 6:5-15

Mark 13:5-36

Matthew 13:57-58

Mark 7:24-29

Matthew 8:14-21

Mark 8:11-12

Matthew 18:19-20

ACTIVITY III: SCRIPTURE SEARCH – CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE

1. Read together each of the following Scripture passages.
2. Discuss each passage together in the light of these questions:
 - a. What is Jesus really asking of his followers in terms of lifestyle?
 - b. Do I expect people, myself included, to act like that? Why or why not?
 - c. To what degree is that principle part of my own lifestyle?
What do I need to do, if anything, to improve in this area?

Luke 12:22-34

Matthew 5:43-48

Luke 8:1-10

Matthew 6:1-4

Luke 18:18-30

Watch: Sign on to Formed. On the Home page pull down the menu from the “Programs” button. Click “Youth Programs” on the menu. Click on the “YDisciple” tile. Chose the “Prayer” section from the dropdown box. Click on Practicing Prayer with Jackie Francois. Advance the video to the second session (beginning at 3:25) and watch the complete session (ending at 9:32).

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PROGRESS REPORT

Date: _____

Name: **Sponsor** _____

Candidate _____

Sponsor: What I discovered in this lesson(s) was:

Candidate: What I discovered in this lesson(s) was:

Sponsor: What specific tasks/assignments should your candidate work on in relation to this topic:

- a. between now and your next meeting?

- b. in a long-range manner?