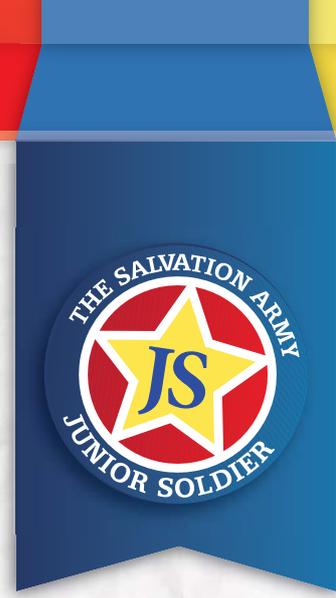


Junior Soldiers

Unit 10 : Lesson 6

Creative Prayer Stations



PURPOSE : For the children to explore, understand and experience some different ways they can pray and what they might pray for.

‘Don’t be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.’

Philippians 4:6–7 CEV

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Mark 11:22–26

Philippians 4:4–9

John 15:1–10

Matthew 6:5–15

Matthew 19:13–15

Think about a time in your life when you were impacted by prayer. This might have been through answered prayer, someone praying over you or perhaps a very real and special connection with God. I wonder what the lasting impact has been for you. Every day we have the opportunity to spend time in prayer and there are times when these experiences have been life-changing. God wants to connect with us and spend time in prayer with him each day—this might be praying about the ins and outs of our lives, praying for others and their situations or giving thanks for what he is doing for us and providing for us and those around us.

Because Jesus spent time showing how much he cared for children, it helps us to understand how important it is that children need to experience God, too. They need their own interaction and connection with God; not just reading and listening to others speak about their experiences with God. It is so important for them to have opportunities to experience God first-hand, just as you may have experienced in your own prayer life or interaction with God. We want children to feel free to explore different ways to pray that suit their personality and learning styles, and how they feel good about connecting with God. It is extremely important that we don’t just set up one model for children to follow and observe of how we pray and spend time with God—we are all different and will have different ways that suit us best in regards to prayer.

Today's lesson allows the children to explore a number of different ways they might like to connect with God, as well as some topics or areas they can talk about. This lesson is about giving examples for the children to try out and allow them first-hand experiences, to see what they like and what they don't and how they might be able to use them in their everyday lives. While they are experiencing these prayer stations it is important for you and other leaders to engage and model how you pray and connect with God.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- *Everyday Zoo: Every Which Way to Pray*, by Joyce Meyer (Zondervan, 2012)
- 'I pray' clip (www.sarmy.org.au/en/Resources/MeetingResources/TSAEvents/2010-I-Pray/)
- Textas
- Paper
- Magiclay
- Charade cards

For 'The Main Thing'

- Long strips of paper (10cm strips cut lengthways from an A3 sheet of paper)
- Textas
- Wristbands
- Fine permanent markers
- Cardboard people
- Picture/drawing of your church
- Paper Magiclay (plasticine or other modeling product)
- A couple of copies of the local newspaper
- Band-aids
- Church prayer list
- Paper
- Ribbon strands in orange, yellow and red
- Bibles

For 'Tying In'

- Paper
- Glue

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home & Beyond cards for each child.

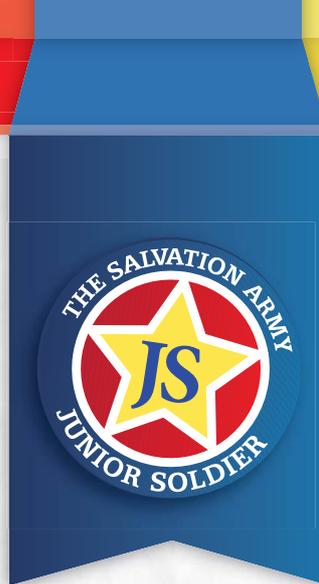
Connecting In

Every which way to pray...

There are so many possibilities when it comes to praying. The book below is a great fun way to help children to see that there is not just one way to talk to God.

Everyday Zoo: Every Which Way to Pray, by Joyce Meyer (Zondervan, 2012)

This book is filled with a cast of quirky animal characters who interact and explore prayer and what that looks like as they engage with others in their community. Readers will discover that prayer is simply talking to God like a friend wherever and whenever and should be the easiest thing we do each day.



Link: 'Well, we have just read about prayer and how we can pray anywhere and anytime we want; there are no strict guidelines to what prayer should look like. Some of you might have heard of prayer stations, and that is what we are going to do today. Basically we are going to go around the room choosing different areas that are set out for us and spend some time praying for different areas in our lives and others in creative ways.'

I Pray...

Show the group the 'I pray' clip (www.sarmy.org.au/en/Resources/MeetingResources/TSAEvents/2010-I-Pray/)

Link: 'The children in this clip are talking about prayer and some of the things in everyday life they pray about.'

- I wonder what some of the things you pray for are.
- I wonder what some of the times and places are where/when you might pray. (*Give the children some time to respond to this*).

'Today we are going to explore prayer through a variety of prayer stations; there might be some stations that you really enjoy but there might be others you don't like so much. It is really important to have the opportunity to try a variety of ways to pray and connect with God to see what works best for you. This might also change depending on the situation or how you are feeling on a particular day. God just wants to spend time with you: anytime and anywhere.'

The Main Thing

Prayer stations

It is important to remember while engaging with the prayer stations, that you—as a leader—should be setting the example of how the children might like to be involved and pray. As you move around and monitor the different stations that you have set up, it is important for you to take part in the activities. While this activity is predominantly about a variety of ways we can pray and connect with God, it is also a great opportunity for the children to think about some key areas of their lives, the important people around them and how God fits into these areas.

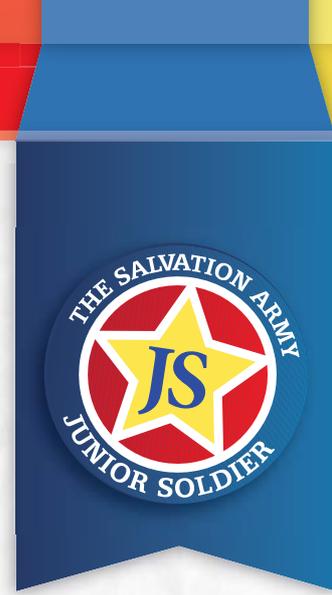
There are six stations listed below as examples of what you might like to set up for the children to explore and engage with. Our suggestion is that you would provide a minimum of four stations during this lesson, even if you only have a small group of children. If you only use some of the stations, you might like to add the others into sessions later on to give other options of how they might like to pray.

You will need to ensure that you have all the items (or similar objects) for the stations ready and set up. Make sure that the space between stations is big enough so that people using a station won't be disturbed by others using a different station. If you have enough leaders, you can set the stations up so that one leader is responsible for each of the stations helping and guiding the children to engage. You might like to allow the children to freely move around the stations or, if you have a small group, you might like to move around the stations together. Another option is explaining what each station is for and how the children participate before they start, and then having leaders on hand to assist children that might need some help.

You might like to cover the tables/spaces with butchers paper that you can write the instructions on with bright textas. You want to make the stations clear and engaging.

Station Option 1 – Schools (Concertina Prayer Book)

For this activity, you will need strips of paper long enough that they can be folded many times to create a concertina (e.g. 10cm strips cut lengthways from an A3 sheet of paper) and some textas. It would be good to have an example pre-made at the table so that the children can see what it looks like when finished.



Instructions for children:

Fold the paper back and forth many times until you get a concertina. On each section of folded paper, write the name of someone from your school that you could pray for. You might like to think about who teaches you, your classmates, your friends and other children that you might have seen being bullied or that you think might need some extra prayer.

Station Option 2 - Family (2 Tags)

For this station you will need two wristbands of different colours for each child (you can find these at Officeworks or other office supply shops or they can be ordered online) and fine permanent markers to draw/write on them.

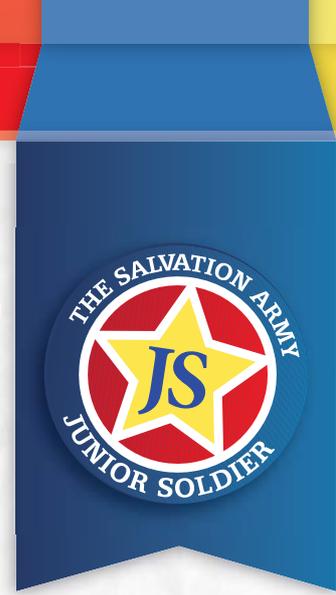
Instructions for children:

Read this Bible verse:

These words that I am commanding you today must always be on your minds. Recite them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting around your house and when you are out and about, when you are lying down and when you are getting up. Tie them on your hand as a sign. They should be on your forehead as a symbol. Write them on your house's doorframes and on your city's gates.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Think about your family and the things you would like to celebrate (things we want to thank God for) and some challenges (things we might want God's help with). Write/draw your celebrations on one of the wristbands and write/draw your challenges/prayer requests on the other wristband. Help each other to place the wristbands on and carry them with you throughout the day and week. Talk to God about these as you notice your wristbands, whether you are at school, home, church or out playing with friends.



Station Option 3 - Church (Person)

For this activity, you will need: four cardboard people templates for each child (you can purchase these as cardboard cutouts or you might like the children to cut them out) and either a photo or drawing of your church (on some butchers paper) stuck to the wall. You might even like the children to do the outline of the church to start this prayer activity.

Instructions for children:

Take the four people cut outs and think about your church. Write or draw your response to each of the following questions on your people, using one topic for each person.

- I wonder how I can serve or do for others in my church.
- What or whom can I pray for at my church?
- I wonder how I can worship God in my church.
- I wonder what you are thankful for at your church.

As you are writing or drawing your responses, pray. Ask God that he will help you to remember to keep praying for these things. Stick your people onto the picture/drawing of your church.

Station Option 4 - Community/Mission (Paper Magiclay Item)

For this station you will need some paper Magiclay (you might also like to use some plasticine or other modeling product).

You will also need a couple of copies of the local newspaper to help children think about their community. If you are moving around the stations as a group, you might like to get the children to brainstorm first about what issues there are in your community that might need some prayer.

Instructions for children:

Have a look through the paper and chat to others at this station about what you think might need praying for in your community. Use your paper Magiclay to shape/make something that you would like to pray for. Some examples that you might like to think about are:

- A sports club you belong to
- Your local school
- The emergency services in your area
- Homeless people
- People who have lost their jobs

Pray about your issue and then share with someone else what you have made. Explain to them why you have made it and what you have talked to God about.



Station Option 5 - Compassion/People who are sick (Band-aid)

For this station you will need to have a list available of the church prayer list (people who are sick etc.). Provide paper and pens/textas for children to write with. You will also need the verse from 3 John 1:2 below, either printed or written out and placed on the table.

Instructions for children:

The list of people at this station represents people who are sick within our church community. Let's care for them by praying for them, and then let them know you have prayed for them by writing/drawing a letter or note of encouragement. You might like to include the verse below in either your prayer or your note of encouragement.

*I pray that all goes well for you.
I hope that you are as strong in body, as I know you are in spirit.
3 John 1:2*

Station Option 6 - Big Bud/Mentor/Important people in your life (Plait)

For this station, you will need enough ribbon for each child to plait together three strands (e.g. 40cm of each colour), one red, one yellow and one orange. If a child is not able to plait you will need to need to help them by completing it together.

Instructions for children:

Read Ecclesiastes 4:12—

*...one can be overpowered, but two together can put up resistance.
A three-ply cord doesn't easily snap.*

Plait the three different colours of ribbons together. As you do this, think about how God (yellow) and your Big Bud or another important adult in your life (red) help you (orange) to be the best you can be.

- I wonder what you would like to thank God for today.
- Who are those important people in your life that you would like to thank God for?
- What sorts of things would you like to thank God for about these important people?
- I wonder if there is anything you would like to ask God to help you and you Big Bud with.
- *Thank you, God, for providing me with people who care for me and love me, and thank you that you are a special part of that connection. Amen.*



Tying In

'Today we have prayed about a lot of different areas that are a big part of our lives. If we kept going, I'm sure we could think of even more!

- I wonder what other **things** or **situations** you think we could pray about and **how** we might be able to do that in different ways. *(It is important to give the children opportunity to reflect on what they have done and how they might apply the different ways they have prayed, along with the different topics they have prayed about, to new situations. This will help to solidify their learning and apply their exploration into their everyday life.)*



Those are some great suggestions. We can pray about everything that happens in our lives. We can also pray in different places and at different times in heaps of different ways, just like we did today.'

Read together:

'Don't be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 4:6–7 CEV

- I wonder how this verse makes you feel?
→ I wonder what you think it might be saying to you?

To finish, pray with and for the children, thanking God that in him we have a friend we can talk to at any time, in any place and in any way.

Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Anywhere, anytime, anyhow...

'Don't be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 4:6–7 CEV

- Remember you can pray **anytime** you like, **anywhere** you are and **any way** that you like!
- You might like to talk to members of your family or Big Bud and see what ways they like to pray.
- You might also like to keep a list of the ways you like to pray and share them with your group the next time you meet.





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