

# HEART TO HEART TALK

1. Rank the following items from **most important (1)** to **least important (10)** in your daily life.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time with friends           | <input type="checkbox"/> Having a good time             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing well in school                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading the Bible              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time with God in prayer     | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looking the best you can             | <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time with family      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watching TV and surfing the Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling good about who you are |

2. What do you think?

People who pray are generally happier than people who don't pray.

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Always true  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes true |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usually true | <input type="checkbox"/> Never true     |

Why?

3. Decide which of the following do you think are **A (appropriate)** or **I (inappropriate)** reasons to pray.

- To find a mystical union with God
- To regulate stress in your life
- To take part in spiritual warfare
- To turn inward to find spiritual power
- To spend time in God's presence
- To make yourself feel good.
- To ask God to meet your needs
- To thank God for blessings
- To complain to God about your problems
- To ask God to help others
- To get bailed out of trouble
- To worship and love God
- To request insight to biblical truth
- To do what Christians are supposed to do



4. On the scale below, where would you rank yourself and your prayer habits?



I pray all the time—I'm the ideal model

Prayer? What's that again?

5. The following Bible verses are examples of types of prayers. Which verse represents the way you pray?

- |                |                 |                  |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Psalm 66:18-20 | Matthew 6:9-13  | 1 Timothy 2:1, 2 | 1 John 5:14, 15 |
| Matthew 6:7, 8 | Philippians 4:6 | James 5:16       |                 |

## THIS WEEK

Prayer is an essential part of the Christian life! Your kids need to be encouraged to talk—and to listen—to God. Despite the importance of prayer, many teenagers spend very little time doing it for a number of reasons. Maybe they don't know how to pray, what to ask for, or doubt if God listens. Use this TalkSheet to discuss prayer, its role in Christian growth, and how it brings people closer to God.

### OPENER

Ask your kids this question—do they ever notice that when people get stuck in a bind, go through hard times, or feel lost, that's when they call on God for help? That's when the nation and the media talks about God and about prayer. But then the good times come back. And what happens? People go on their way, doing what they want, when they want. But they still expect God to be there for them—at their beckon call.

You may want to bring in a Do NOT DISTURB sign that people hang on their bedroom or hotel room doors. Do your kids ever hang up this sign on their door? Do they ever tell God not to interfere with what's going on in their life? Or do they ever flip the sign over to the maid service side? Why do people always run to God when they want things in their lives cleaned up or fixed? What does God feel about being a convenient God who will be there whenever people want him?

### THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Ask the kids to compare their rankings with the reality of their lives. How far up on the importance ladder should prayer be? If their perception of the importance of prayer in their lives versus the reality of prayer in their lives is inconsistent, explore the reasons why.
2. Does prayer have much to do with happiness and the quality of someone's life? Many Christians who take prayer seriously would say yes! Check out what your kids think.
3. What does prayer mean to your kids? Check out how they responded to these statements. You may want to take a poll of their answers and talk about each one. Why would some reasons for prayer seem more appropriate than others? Which are definitely not good reasons to pray?
4. Where would your kids rank themselves? If you don't want to ask for specific rankings from your group, ask where you think Christian teenagers in general would rank. Would your kids consider prayer to be an important part of their lives? Why or why not?

5. Discuss the different types of prayer examples found in the passages from the Bible. What was different about each one? What models of prayer are the best to follow?

### THE CLOSE

Prayer is a conversation between a person and God—just like a chat on the phone with a friend. Encourage your kid to find a prayer style that's comfortable for them and to set a goal for their prayer life—maybe to pray everyday for a short time, to pray a certain time during the day, or whatever works for them. The closer they come to God, the closer he'll come to them (James 4:8).

Close with a time of prayer with your group and them to share their requests and joys with each other. If your group members don't feel comfortable praying out loud, pray out loud for them and give them some time of silent prayer.

### MORE

- Your youth group activities calendar can double as a prayer calendar. The next time you create your calendar, write the names of kids and adults involved in your group in each of the daily squares. Point out to your kids that on different days can pray for the specific person listed. Hand out the calendars and encourage your students throughout the month to keep up their prayer support for members of the youth group. Later follow up with them to see how the activity worked and why or why not.
- What's God's model for prayer? Check out the Lord's Prayer with your group. You may want to go through this with your group and break it up into sections. Break your group up into small groups and give each small group a phrase of the Lord's Prayer. Ask them to discuss what the section of prayer means and then write it in their own words. Then together as a group, put all the sections of the prayer together and write a master group interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. Keep this master list for discussion later on and possibly make copies for your kids to take home with them if they need a prayer boost.