

Appendix C

Prayer Survey Responses

From Valley Lutheran High School

Twelve questions on the topic of the teaching of prayer were presented to a random number of students at Valley Lutheran High School in Saginaw, Michigan. Exactly 100 survey sheets were returned. Not every question was answered by every student. My intention was to see if students going through the Lutheran School system would be able to make any positive suggestion for the teaching of prayer. The answers presented here are a few samples of the many given.

What attitude do you think most young people have towards praying?

- It is not important.
- Most young people think that prayer does not relate to them.
- It's not necessary. They will be just fine without it.
- I think that most people don't think that prayer is necessary in everyday life.
- It takes up too much time.
- They pray only when they need too.
- Some take prayer very seriously, and others act like it's nothing.
- I think most young people don't like to pray and when they do they just want to get it over with.
- Young people think of prayer as a checklist, and just another bullet point in your plan for the day.
- They don't take it seriously.
- They think they are too cool and don't have enough time for it.
- They think prayer is boring.
- That it doesn't matter.
- I think most seem to have a negative bored attitude.
- It is something we should do but don't.
- I think they probably feel like it's an obligation, like something I "gotta" do, instead of "gitta" do.
- It is just something you do in church or Bible study.
- Most young people honestly only seem to pray when they want something.
- They probably think it is a waste of time, it is pointless, God doesn't listen to anything I say.
- We think it's not that important and we are afraid of being judged by others.
- I think most people don't think much of praying.
- They probably think it's un-cool...I'm childish for talking to God.
- Most young people think that prayer is something you have to do or forced to do.
- It's a chore. Something that you have to do not what you want to do.
- I think that people are worried about what others will think about them if they are caught praying.
- They don't think it is a part of their life.

What do you want teachers to teach about prayer?

- Not just who they are, and how they pray, I want the teacher to teach about why they pray and what mind they have when they pray.
- I want them to teach how to pray properly.
- How will God listen under all circumstances?
- Why do we pray?
- How can we connect with God?
- Teachers should teach the power of prayer and how it can change your life.
- Teach how important it really is.
- Tell us what to pray about when there is nothing to pray about.
- Give us tips on how to do it without nerves.
- Good methods for praying and life stories about how prayer changed their lives.
- Give how to organize your thoughts when you go into prayer.
- Present how to structure prayer.
- Teach that it is a huge way to connect with God.
- I want them to teach the importance of prayer.
- They should encourage and talk about its power and importance.
- I want teachers to teach students that prayer is their personal time with God.
- Teachers should emphasize the positives not negatives.
- He's always listening and He always answers our prayers.
- Teach how to pray and what to pray about.
- Teachers should teach to pray continually every day.
- Teach how to concentrate and stay focused on God.
- I want to hear about their honest prayer life.
- Teach how to keep it going and focus on it.
- I want teachers to encourage it.
- I want teachers to teach it is a conversation and there is no set way to pray.
- Teach us to do it ourselves.
- Teach us the guidelines.
- Even though you don't think so God is actually listening and acting upon it.
- Explain what makes up prayer.

What methods should teachers use to teach prayer?

- They should lead with examples of themselves.
- Use the Bible.
- They should make students comfortable with praying.
- They should use examples.
- Pray with us.
- Biblical analysis of prayer
- Pray with us in class.
- Use examples and actual prayer to learn more about it.
- Memorize different prayers.
- Give a student a disaster to pray for.
- Have a student assigned for a specific reason.

- Base prayers on the Bible.
- Pray from the heart.
- Give more time to prayer.
- Speak with passion.
- Show prayer from the Bible.
- Use prayer journals.

How can technology be used to teach prayer?

- I don't think it can.
- I feel like everyone tries to push use of technology when, frankly, we don't constantly need it. So I don't think it's necessary for prayer.
- Use it for research of other religions prayer practices.
- Use it for online prayers.
- Get a devotion app.
- Use to look up passages on prayer.
- You could look up problems over the world that could need some prayer.
- Find good examples of prayer.
- Use cell phones for texting prayers.
- Have a prayer group online where you can pray together.
- Use videos showing prayer presentations.
- Use Christian websites for praying.
- Technology isn't that useful, the Bible is more important.
- People can pray together over Skype.
- Use technology to set an alarm for a prayer time.
- Honestly, I would stay away from technology while praying because it can cause distraction.
- Use for daily reminders of prayer.
- Text a prayer and that you are praying for another person.

How can prayer times be made special times?

- Be by yourself, alone with God.
- Have a special place or certain person to pray with.
- Pray for special things.
- By really connecting with God
- Be quiet and focus on what you are doing.
- Teachers could give students private prayer time right before class starts.
- Do it your closest friends and holding hands.
- Pray as a family and have fun with it.
- Have it as a quiet calm time.
- Do it in a special place.
- Not do it every single day at one specific time. Change prayer time on different days.

What are the major beliefs you want taught about prayer?

- God is always there and willing to listen.

- Prayer strengthens your life with God.
- Prayer isn't asking but talking.
- Just praying once a day could change somebody's life, big time.
- Prayer is communication with God.
- God is always listening.
- God will answer, but it might not always be the answer we want, but we still need to trust what is best.
- God answers prayer.
- Prayer can be done anywhere at anytime.
- How to properly pray
- Prayer can change lives.
- Clarify that you don't have to use a formal setting with God.
- Prayer works.

What do you consider to be strengths in Lutheran schools in teaching prayer?

- It teaches kids how and why to pray.
- Lutheran Schools have the right to pray.
- They teach us that prayers are necessary.
- We have time to pray in school.
- We can pray a lot.
- A prayer can be said anytime and is allowed in class.
- We get in the habit of praying.
- We can pray openly.
- We learn how to pray and connect with God.
- We can pray unlike public schools.
- We pray together.
- We are taught at a young age.
- We can do it daily.
- We teach by example.
- Chapel and religion classes

What are weaknesses in teaching prayer?

- We often learn and keep repeating the same prayer and after a while it doesn't mean anything to us.
- They don't teach us how to pray. They only teach you should pray.
- Some students are just forced to pray.
- Not everyone understands why we do this.
- Prayer is made uniform, not unique.
- Similar prayers get monotonous.
- Teachers don't make it personal enough. It is not a relationship.
- Some think they have to do it a certain way.
- Having people take it as an "I want prayer."
- Students pray so much in school they won't do it on their own time.

- Kids don't pay attention.
- We always ask for things in prayer, but we don't thank and give adoration to God.
- We are not praying enough.
- Not explaining prayer enough.
- How to say prayers
- It's not personal.

What do you personally and passionately want to happen in your prayer life?

- Become closer with God.
- To talk with God daily
- Pray more often (Many students put this down.)
- Know how to pray correctly for a long duration.
- To improve my relationship with God
- Prayers answered
- I want to be able to pray all the time and want to pray.
- For me to pray a lot each and every day
- I want to establish closer communication with God.
- To go to prayer in everything
- To pray more often in different ways... both spur of the moment and formal.

What questions do you still have about prayers?

- How does God listen to so many people at the same time?
- How do you stop yourself from only praying when you need something?
- How come sometimes answers take so long to happen?
- Can you teach prayer?
- Can one teach prayer? There isn't a certain way to pray.
- Can you pray too much?
- Why pray when God already knows what we're going to say?
- Does prayer always work?
- How are you suppose to hold your hands?
- If two people pray for opposite things whose pray gets unanswered?
- Why do we pray, other than getting close to God?
- How can people pray deeply?
- Who started prayer?
- Is prayer ever not heard?
- How powerful are prayers?

What hinders young people's prayer life?

- Procrastination
- Poor time management
- Embarrassment
- They don't think it is cool.
- Sports and friends
- Technology

- Putting prayers on the back burner instead of other things
- They think they are too good for it or too busy.
- We're afraid what people will say about us, being judged.
- The busyness of daily life
- It's not too cool around friends
- Insecurity

Is there anything else you would like to suggest?

- Make it interesting
- Have students do the explaining. We can take it better from them.