

CURRICULUM SERIES

THREE WEEKS

# Pray It, Say It, Walk It



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# Pray It, Say It, Walk It

## UNDERSTAND IT

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This curriculum is a three-week series designed to help teens understand how our faith comes to life when we connect with God through prayer, when we connect with others through our faith stories, and when we connect with the world around us through the gifts God has given us. It's conversational in style and would work well in a small group setting for high school students.

## THE CENTRAL TRUTH OF EACH WEEK

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### WEEK 1: PRAY IT!

Our prayers are the way in which we connect with God. When we pray, we don't need to be fancy, but we do need to be honest and open. We'll use the Psalms and the Lord's Prayer as our guides.

### WEEK 2: SAY IT!

Our faith stories are a way in which we can connect with others about the impact God has had on our lives. You have what it takes to share your faith. God requires us to "go into all the world" and make God a big deal.

### WEEK 3: WALK IT!

Our gifts are how we connect the things God has given us with the needs of the world around us. We're called to serve God and God's people with our gifts: our words, hearts, talents, abilities, resources, hands, feet, and lives.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Aqueelah Ligonde is an enthusiastic speaker and leader with a passion for today's generation of women, youth, and leaders. Aqueelah served as the associate pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Queens, New York, and she's worked with organizations such as Princeton Seminary Institute For Youth Ministry and Youth Specialties. She serves on the board of GenOn/Logos Ministries, and she's a staff consultant with Ministry Architects. She's currently pursuing a doctor of ministry degree from Louisville Theological Seminary.



# Pray It!

## UNDERSTAND IT

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### THIS WEEK'S CENTRAL TRUTH

Our prayers are the way we connect with God. When we pray, we don't need to be fancy, but we do need to be honest and open. We'll use the Psalms and the Lord's Prayer as our guides.

### KEY VERSES

- Psalm 86
- Matthew 6:1-14

### PREP

If you have the available technology, you can tweak the INTRODUCE IT activity to include images from the internet to help visually engage students. Spend some time thinking about how you'd like to shape it for your group.

Make sure you have a whiteboard and markers or a large notepad to write on.

## INTRODUCE IT

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### SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*I'm going to list a few normal, everyday things, and you're going to guess how much they cost. Then I'm going to list off the fancier versions of those everyday things, and you'll have some fun guessing how much those fancy things cost.*

#### Normal stuff:

- Tall brewed Starbucks coffee = \$1.85
- Quarter Pounder with Cheese = \$3.79
- Average cost of an NFL ticket = \$85
- Average cost of a plane ticket = \$379
- Cost of the original 4GB iPhone = \$499
- New Honda Accord = \$23,000

#### Fancy stuff:

- Most expensive Starbucks drink ever: Java Chip Frappuccino in a Trenta cup, 16 shots of espresso, a shot of soy milk, caramel flavoring, banana puree, strawberry puree, vanilla beans, matcha powder, protein powder, and a drizzle of caramel and mocha = \$23.60
- Most expensive cheeseburger: FleurBurger at Fleur in Las Vegas = \$5,000
- Average cost of 2017 Super Bowl Tickets = \$4,000-\$5,000

- Most expensive elite luxury charter jet: Private Jet Services = \$11,000 per hour
- iPhone X fully loaded with wireless earbuds and maximum storage = \$1,700
- Most expensive car in the world: McLaren P1 LM = \$3.7 million

## SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*There are times in life we try to be fancy, and that's not a bad thing. But it can become a bad thing when it gets in the way of honesty. If you honestly can only afford the Quarter Pounder with Cheese, then you'll be in a whole lot of trouble if you order the most expensive cheeseburger in the world.*

*When it comes to prayer, honesty is just as important. We don't need to be fancy when we pray, but we do need to be honest and open, because that's how we communicate with God.*

## STUDY IT

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### READ

Psalm 86

Note: Divide Psalm 86 into multiple sections and have different teens read the text out loud.

### SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*In the Psalms, David writes some very beautiful prayers to God—Psalm 86 is one of them. In this prayer, David is very honest about where he is in his life. But he's also very grateful to God for what God has done. Prayer is an important part of our life journey, and it's important in our relationships with God and each other. Prayer helps us connect with God, listen for God's voice, and communicate with God about every part of lives.*

*Let's read Psalm 86 again—this time I want you to listen for clues about how you think David would describe prayer.*

### DO THIS

Have the students reread Psalm 86.

### ASK

*Put yourself in David's shoes. Using only one word, how would you end the phrase "Prayer is . . . "?*

### DO THIS

On the whiteboard, create one column with a header that reads, DAVID SAYS PRAYER IS . . . List the students' responses in that column. Encourage them to use a different word each time and to consider action words, descriptive words, symbols, emotions, etc.

### ASK

- *Looking back at this list, what stands out to you? Are there any connections between each of these things?*
- *Would you describe prayer the same way David would? Why or why not?*

### SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*David gave us great examples of how to pray, but the ultimate guide would have to be what Jesus taught the disciples in Matthew 6:1-14. Let's read that together.*

## READ

Matthew 6:1-14

Note: Break up the passage into multiple sections and have different teens read the text out loud.

## SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*The Lord's Prayer is the most well known prayer in the Christian faith. Jesus even said, "This, then, is how you should pray . . ." which is a pretty strong indicator of how important this guide should be to us. Let's do the same thing we did with David's prayer. We'll reread it, and this time I want you to listen for clues about how you think Jesus would describe prayer.*

## DO THIS

Have the students reread Matthew 6:1-14

## ASK

*Now put yourself in Jesus' shoes. Using only one word, how would you end the phrase "Prayer is . . . "?*

## DO THIS

On the whiteboard, create a second column with a header that reads, JESUS SAYS PRAYER IS . . . List students' responses underneath that column. Encourage the students to use a different word each time and to consider action words, descriptive words, symbols, emotions, etc.

## ASK

- *Looking back at this list, what stands out to you? Are there any connections between each of these things?*
- *How much of this stuff do you include in your prayers right now? What's missing from your prayers, and why do you think that is?*

## CONNECT IT

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## SAY SOMETHING LIKE . . .

*Let's recreate the Lord's Prayer in modern language. We can use slang, abbrevs, emojis, GIFs, or anything else we want.*

## DO THIS

Read the Lord's Prayer line by line. With each line, ask for a new volunteer to write on the whiteboard the group's ideas for how the Lord's Prayer would sound today.

After the modern-day Lord's Prayer is finished, break into small groups for the following discussion questions.

## ASK

- *Do you think God answers prayer?*
- *If so, how? What does a prayer sound like if you're not asking for stuff?*
- *What part—if any—do you play in helping God to answer prayers (your own or those of others)?*
- *In what ways do you find it difficult to pray?*
- *What are some things that keep you from praying more?*

- *How could Matthew 6 help shape your prayer practice?*
- *How might you pray differently than you do now in church or in private?*

Note: Depending on the time you have available, you could have each small group write their own group psalm. Each person could write a different section and compile to create one big psalm. This could be shared during worship, at the close of youth group, or posted for the whole church to see. You could even make copies for the teens to take home to use in their personal prayer time.

## **LIVE IT**

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### **PRAY**

*God, you love us completely, without hesitation and without condition. Help us accept that love and respond to it by honestly opening ourselves up to you in our prayers. Teach us how to do it, guide us through it, and use it to draw us closer to you. Amen.*