

Lesson Plan for Lesson 35

Personal Prayer

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 35, “Personal Prayer,” in the handbook.
- Gather sheets of newsprint and markers.
- Write the following phrases on a sheet of newsprint:
 - an appropriate place
 - an appropriate time of day
 - the proper posture
 - an ability to center
 - an awareness of and openness to God

Pray It! (5 minutes)

Tell the participants that class will begin with a common vocal prayer that they probably memorized as children, the Hail Mary. **Direct** them to turn to page 450 in the handbook if they do not have it memorized. **Lead** them in praying the prayer together.

Study It! (35 to 45 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. Vocal Prayer

1. **Direct** the young people to close their eyes and take a few moments to recall a prayerful moment they have experienced. **Ask** the following questions to help guide them in recalling the details of the prayer experience:
 - How old are you in this memory?
 - Where are you? What are you looking at, if anything?
 - Is anyone else present with you? If so, who?
 - How are you praying? With spoken words? Through song? In silence? Through meditation?**Ask** the participants to open their eyes. **Invite** a few of them to share their memories with the class.
2. **Direct** the young people to read the chapter introduction and the section “Vocal Prayer,” on pages 383–385 in the handbook. The content covers points 1 through 4 on the handout “Lesson 35 Summary” (Document #: TX003428).
3. (*Optional*) **Direct** the participants to the Reflect directions on pages 385 and 386 in the handbook, and lead a discussion based on the questions presented there.



B. Meditation

1. **Ask** the young people to make a list of all the things in their day that require them to use or make noise. Then **tell** them to make a list of all the things throughout their day that are quiet. When they have finished, **discuss** how those noisy times or quiet times affect their day—in positive or negative ways. How can prayer be noisy or quiet?
2. **Direct** the participants to read the sections “Meditation” and “Contemplative Prayer,” on pages 386–388 in the handbook. The content covers points 5 through 7 on the handout “Lesson 35 Summary.”
3. **(Optional) Invite** questions and observations on the content. You might also invite discussion on the Reflect question on page 388 in the handbook.

C. Challenges of Prayer

Direct the young people to read the section “Challenges of Prayer,” on pages 388–391 in the handbook. The content covers points 8 and 9 on the handout “Lesson 35 Summary.”

Note: If you are running short on time, you may wish to just briefly summarize this section of the handbook.

Live It! (15 to 20 minutes)

1. **Direct** the participants to form groups of four or five. **Give** each group a sheet of newsprint and markers. **Assign** each group one of the following elements of prayer: place, time, or posture.
Explain the task as follows:
 - Each group will have 5 minutes to come up with an example of how its assigned element is used in each of the major types of prayer from the chapter: vocal, meditative, and contemplative prayer (three examples for each group). For example, “A quiet room is a good place to meditate,” or “The church chapel is a good place to recite the Rosary with others.”
 - Then each group is to list three situations involving its assigned element that would make prayer difficult.
 - Assign someone to write your group’s examples on the sheet of newsprint.
2. When the groups have finished, **ask** them to display the results of their discussion. **Display** the newsprint list of the elements of prayer that you prepared before the session. **Note** that the young people have already begun to explore the first three elements on the list—that is, appropriate places, times, and postures. **Present** the last two elements, an ability to center and an awareness of and openness to God, which describe the mental necessities.
3. **Summarize** the lesson by sharing the following comments in your own words:
 - Vocal prayer, which uses words either spoken aloud or recited silently, focuses on your conversation with God that grows over time. Memorized prayers are the first way most people learn to pray vocally.
 - Meditation is a term used broadly and somewhat loosely. When you meditate you use your thoughts, imagination, emotions, and desires to ponder God’s presence and activity in your life and in the world.



- Contemplation has to do with deep awareness of the presence of God arrived at not by rational thought but by love. Contemplation is union with the indwelling Christ that takes place in the heart at prayer.
- Everyone experiences difficulties at times in prayer. Those times call for commitment and perseverance in our prayer life. The fruit will be deeper growth in our relationship with God.

Optional Activity: Use the handout “Prayer from Morning to Night” (Document #: TX003429) to help the participants reflect on their own prayer lives.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Following any announcements, **lead** the group through the following meditation prayer very slowly. After reading each phrase, take a deep breath. **Ask** the group to do the same. **Invite** the young people to repeat each phrase after you.

- “Be still, and know that I am God.”
- “Be still, and know that I am.”
- “Be still, and know.”
- “Be still.”
- “Be.”

After the prayer, sit together in silence for a moment and then end with the Sign of the Cross.

