



# ‘Spirit of Prayer’

**Materials Needed:** *Spirit With Us*, nametags, candle, enough Bibles or children’s Bibles for each group, clay, grape juice, loaf of bread, paper, pencils and crayons, copies of Prayer Bingo handout (page 73).

**Schedule** (90 minutes):

- Welcome, Set the Environment (10 minutes)
- Opening Activity (10 minutes)
- Read the Story (10 minutes)
- Discuss the Story (10 minutes)
- Together Time Activity (30 minutes)
- Closing Ritual (20 minutes)

**Objectives:** To introduce the Sacrament of the Eucharist as the primary source of our continuing relationship with our God.

To use Jesus as our model of the need for consistent personal prayer.

**Theme:** There are many different ways to spend time with God in prayer. The Eucharist nourishes our relationship with God.

## Background for Program Leaders:

- 1) Read “Spirit of Prayer” in both Storybooks.
- 2) Read the commentary, Theme and Optional Activities for “Spirit of Prayer” on the Grown-up’s Pages in the Activity Books.

- 3) This session will be spent mostly in a prayer experience. All prayer is important to our relationship with God and God’s Spirit, but the highest of all our prayers is the Eucharist. Be willing to share your enthusiasm for the Eucharist with the participants.

**Set the Environment.** Welcome all the participants and ask them to wear nametags. Ask some of the families to help you set up a prayer table with a candle, a Bible, the grape juice in a pitcher or carafe and the loaf of bread.

**Opening Activity.** Play “prayer bingo” with your group. (See diagram on page 73.) Each participant should try to cover all the boxes with names of other participants who fit the categories. No one may use his or her own name or anyone else’s name more than twice (three times if your group is small).

At the end of the time allotted, ask what categories were hard to fill. See which people in the room could have filled in their names.

**Getting Started.** Have each family discuss: What’s the most fun you’ve had spending time with a friend? Why?

**Read the Story.** In family groups, read the material appropriate to the ages of the young people.

**Discuss the Story.** Staying in the family groups, discuss:

- 1) Is there someplace where it's easier for you to pray? Why?
- 2) What do you like about praying?

**Together Time Activity.** Give each participant a small clump of clay. Play quiet music in the background. Lead them through this prayer experience:

“Hold the clay in your hand and work with it until it is soft.

“We are in the hands of our God who takes us from the hardness of our lives, our stony hearts, and gives us soft, living hearts.

“I’m going to read to you from the Bible about times when Jesus prayed. As soon as you hear something that makes you think about how you pray, I want you to form the clay into some type of symbol for yourself. Think of this symbol as a way to show who you really are to God, for when we pray we show our true selves to God.

“Just as we aren’t perfect, your symbol doesn’t have to be perfect, either!”

Then begin to read the following passages in which Jesus talked about praying or prayed: Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 6:5-15; Matthew 14:22-24; Mark 1:35-37; Mark 6:41-44; Luke 4:14-21; Luke 6:12-16; Luke 22:39-46; John 17:9-24.

Because you will be passing around bread to eat during the Closing Ritual, allow some time for participants to wash their hands.

**Closing Ritual.** Have the participants bring their symbols to the prayer circle and place them in front of themselves. Open by praying:

“Spirit of Prayer, you help us bring our hearts, our minds and our whole selves to God in prayer. Jesus taught us that whenever two or more of us gather, you are with us. Jesus also told us to remember him whenever we break bread together and give thanks. Be with us today as we share this bread with thanks for all we have received. Amen.”

Then break the loaf of bread in half and pass to either side of you in the circle. As the participants break off a piece of the bread, they may briefly explain their clay symbol, if they wish. Then they consume the bread. If the size of your crowd and the available time allow, you may also wish to pour the grape juice into two glasses and start them around the circle as well. Close with the doxology: “Through Jesus, in Jesus and with Jesus, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, forever and ever. Amen.”

**Dismissal.** Remind everyone to read “The Church at Home” and “The Woman Who Laughed With God” and to complete the activity pages for these stories before the next gathering.

# Prayer Bingo

Carries a rosary	Knows the Hail Mary	Has owned a missal	Keeps a journal	Says Morning Offering
Plays in nature	Attends daily Mass	Prays before meals	Knows the Our Father	Kneels to pray
Talks to God like a friend	Had a prayer answered	<b>FREE SPACE</b>	Has a cross or crucifix	Complains to God
Thinks God has a sense of humor	Uses music in prayer	Likes to pray alone	Likes to pray with others	Thanks God often
Learned to pray at home	Learned to pray at school	Asks God for help	Asks God to forgive	Knows the "Jesus Prayer"

