

**Spontaneous Prayers.** Keep in touch with God, like you would text a friend, spontaneously and randomly. Once a day, at random times, stop and tell God what you are thinking and/or feeling and why. Sometimes teens do not feel like this is prayer, but we can talk with God in many ways, just like we would our friends.

**Prayers of Forgiveness.** The Lord's Prayer reminds us that we can ask God's forgiveness of our sins but we should do that in the same way that we forgive the trespasses of others. This can be a daily practice for teens. Teens will feel better if they know they can take hurts and offenses to God and leave them there. This prevents the formation of bitterness and the anxiety that comes from holding unforgiveness. A prayer of forgiveness can look like:

- Admitting to God things you wish you had not done, thought or said. Then accepting His forgiveness.
- Admitting to God things others have done that hurt you or caused damage. Then with His help, forgiving them.

**Prayers of Praise.** We are instructed at least 250 times in the Bible to "Praise the Lord." That is a LOT. If God tells us to praise Him that many times, we should. Teens need to know that praise is not necessarily a showy thing. It is not a feeling, or a shout, or loud singing. These things could be part of praise but there are as many ways to praise God as there are people.

*By Vickie Tillman, 7 Sisters Innovative Homeschool Helps*

## Going Further — Church Support

**Fusion** is a great place for students (grades 6-12) to meet friends and learn more about God, faith, and much more! Fusion meets Sundays from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Get more info here:

- <https://staffordcrossing.org/fusion>
- Email [fusion@staffordcrossing.org](mailto:fusion@staffordcrossing.org)

# Teaching Your Teen to Listen to God

Helping families  
trust and follow Jesus

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It hit me recently, that I don't do much active, in-person instruction with my kids on the topic of how to pray. Prayer—especially listening prayer—is SO necessary to their spiritual growth. But it is also so personal that it is almost embarrassing to talk about. (To me it is almost like having “The Talk” with my kids.)

On the other hand, how can I send them off into the world unarmed with the greatest tool for survival?

So here it is: Prayer is important. Prayer must be taught. Half of prayer is listening.

### Here are some tips for learning to listen to God:

Ever have a conversation with someone who never lets you get a word in edgewise? (I sometimes wonder how one person can have so much to say?)

Ever feel like that's how it goes when you talk to God? Just that: YOU talking to God, a one-way conversation?

But how do you listen to an Invisible Person?

I can't tell you exactly because God doesn't give formulas, but if you try it, you'll find out. Listening to Him is the loveliest part of a day!

While I can't give you a formula for listening to God, I can give you some tips that might help your prayer time become more of a two-way conversation:

**1) Start by getting stuff off your chest.** The stressors in life are going to be nagging you while you try to listen. God cares about them. Talk to Him about them.

**2) Physically quiet yourself.** Did you know that the part of your brain that processes spiritual information is near the “watch-out!” parts of your brain? Sometimes we have to physically turn off the brain's stress centers in order to allow our spiritual processing centers to be attentive. We do this by deep breathing. Oxygen turns off the stress hormones that are activated by the stresses in life. BREATHE, BREATHE, BREATHE...

**3) Get your mind on God.** Spend a few minutes thinking specifically about God, about Christ. Think about Jesus being the author and finisher of your faith. Think about His sacrifice for you. Think about the throne room of Heaven.

**4) Now be quiet.** No problem solving, no requests. Breathe and listen. If

your mind wanders, direct it back to thoughts of Christ. Mostly be quiet and listen.

What you might hear at first is the crickets chirping outside your window, but eventually, you will start to recognize a still, small Voice. That Voice has been speaking all along. You just needed ears to hear—and practice listening.

**5) Be grateful.** When God has spoken, be sure to be grateful. Then, WRITE it down! (You WILL forget if you don't.)

### Here are some easy, accessible prayer prompts that I give my high schooler to help him grow in his walk with God:

**Prayers of Gratitude.** God created us for gratitude. While He is quite sufficient in himself so does not need our gratitude, He created us to be healthiest- spirit, soul and body- when we are living a life of gratitude.

There are multiple ways that gratitude helps our moods and physical health. Check out this post that usually convinces teens of the benefits of gratitude.

Teens often feel comfortable praying by journaling. A gratitude journal is a practical way to pray. It is so cool because there is no way to do it wrong! They simply list the things they can think of that they are grateful for, large or small.

**Prayers for the Nation.** We are instructed in I Timothy to pray for our leaders and humankind: “*exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*” I Timothy 2:1-2 (KJV)

One day each week, pray for the leaders in each branch of the federal government; one day each week, pray for the leaders in each branch of the state government; one day each week, pray for local leaders.

One thing that can be helpful to teach teens is to pray with humility. We can tend to tell God how to run our country, state or local politics, but He knows best. Thus, it is wise to pray first asking that God give you the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Why not pray the same for the leaders?

*Continued on next page*