

Teach Us to Pray

Session 1: Leader's Guide

Congratulations on stepping up to facilitate a "Teach Us to Pray" group! We're confident you'll be blessed as you see God work.

Setting expectations

"Teach Us to Pray" is about being equipped and equipping others from our God-given strengths. If people are used to Bible studies in which they mostly listen to a teacher, you'll want to set the expectation that this is different. The video sessions are much less of the overall experience than individual and group participation. While Scripture is incorporated at times, it is not a Bible study.

Feel free to lead from your "shape." A main emphasis of "Teach Us to Pray" is that God made each believer, each "living stone," differently. We are most effective praying from our God-given "shape" and leading others according to our strengths. For instance, someone with a strong gift of hospitality will bring a different style of leadership than someone with a mercy gift. All styles are valuable!

Each participant will equip someone else after the sessions. You'll want to gently emphasize this from the very beginning. People learn differently when they know the goal is to equip someone else. Assure them that you'll walk alongside them in this.

This is for every believer. Whether someone is new to their faith or has been a believer for decades, they will grow and get out of the sessions what they put into them. "Teach Us to Pray" is really a framework. You and the participants will create the depth of the experience with God's leadership.

Discussion guidelines

This 6-session series is highly interactive, so you'll be pausing the video at times to facilitate discussion. You'll want these conversations to be a safe space for everyone to participate. To help accomplish this, here are some guidelines:

Trust God's leadership. Take a few minutes to pray before the group arrives. Ask God to lead your discussion times and to give you wisdom (James 1:5) and unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3).

Invite people into the discussion, but don't require it if someone isn't comfortable sharing or praying. One way to do this is to ask, "Would someone like to go first?" Then ask who'd



like to go next after that. If people are shy to start, you can offer to go first to model what's expected. Make sure everyone is invited to participate. Sometimes more introverted people need to be asked.

Set a time expectation for sharing. Discussion times will vary based on the size of your group. For instance, a 25-minute discussion time with eight people means that each person has just over three minutes to share. By saying something like, "Let's take about three minutes each to discuss this," you're making sure everyone has an equal chance to participate and knows what to expect.

Be sensitive to each person while staying focused. There's a lot to cover in the sessions, so you'll want to stay focused. If someone starts talking about their day and gets off track, for instance, you can gently ask him or her if the group can hear more about that and pray at the end of the session. Then keep going. However, if the person shares an emergency such as the death of a close family member, stop and offer prayer and support right away.

Helping people start their faith journey with Jesus

In Session 2, we'll be talking about how God has uniquely gifted us to pray. We receive spiritual gifts when we become a follower of Jesus Christ. So if there's someone in your group who has not yet taken this step of faith and would like to, [this handout](#) from Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church will show you how to help them start their faith journey.

Group discussions for this session

The first time you'll be instructed to pause the video is for a time of getting to know each other. A screen will appear for you to pause on with the discussion items. The second time you'll pause the video is to discuss a time when you sensed God speaking to you. The final discussion is about characteristics of a thriving prayer life and how to cultivate them. Then resume the video for the brief closing portion.

Closing the session

Each session is designed to be about an hour and a half. You can adjust discussion times based on the size of your group and how God leads.

If time permits, let people linger to talk about the session after the video ends and continue sharing fellowship for a few minutes if they'd like.

Make sure you have each person's email address before they go so you can send a reminder to everyone for Session 2 the day before you meet.

After the session

Email the participants a brief note saying you're glad they're part of the group and excited to see how God will work through "Teach Us to Pray." Include the handouts on "8 Characteristics of a Thriving Prayer Life" and "Hearing God's Voice."

Questions or testimonies?

Send them to prayer@wooddale.org.