

Teaching Activities Manual for

The  
Catholic  
Youth Prayer  
Book

Second Edition

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Edited by  
Steven C. McGlaun



saint mary's press  
touching the hearts of teens

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# Introduction to *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book, Second Edition*

## *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book, Second Edition*

Welcome to *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book, Second Edition (CYPB)*. Within the covers of the *CYPB*, you will discover a sampling of the wealth of the Catholic prayer tradition. The *CYPB* was developed to share a glimpse of the Catholic prayer tradition with young people. In no way does it encompass every aspect of Catholic prayer; instead, it is a taste of this rich and deep aspect of our faith. Our hope is that by incorporating the *CYPB* into your class, you will be able to help your students develop a deeper understanding of prayer and a desire to be in constant conversation with God. In addition, we hope that their desire for prayer will lead them to seek out prayer styles and experiences that nourish their faith life.

## The Fullness of the Catholic Tradition

The Catholic tradition of prayer is far too rich, deep, and ancient to be contained in a book the size of the *CYPB*. From Blessed Henry Suso to Henri Nouwen, from Thomas á Kempis to Thomas Merton, from Saint Teresa of Ávila to Blessed Teresa of Calcutta—Catholic prayer spans the devotional, the liturgical, the cultic, the quiet, and the charismatic. The hope of providing a comprehensive book of Catholic prayer is not practical. This prayer tradition is large and diverse because the body of Christ is large and diverse. This vast tradition contains the experiences of countless disciples of Jesus Christ who authentically have sought him with their whole hearts. They emblazoned paths to Christ that we can now walk down and help our young people walk down.

The immensity of this prayer tradition cannot be contained; nonetheless, the Church has the responsibility of preserving such richness for younger and future generations. The *CYPB* hopes to provide a small sampling of the Church's prayer. The Church is diverse, and our young people are diverse in their cultures, personalities, and experiences. Jesus Christ is the truth and the way and the life. He is the goal of all life, and he provides many ways to reach union with him. The *CYPB* intends to help young people discover the way they can best foster an intimate relationship with the Lord.

## Overview of *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book, Second Edition*

Catholic prayer is relevant, ancient, universal, personal, and liturgical. This is the manner in which the *CYPB* was conceived. **Part I, "Prayers for Daily Life,"** contains prayers that speak to the expressed experience of teenagers. The *CYPB*'s authors surveyed a diverse audience of teenagers to discover what was on teens' minds. This fresh discovery of the teenagers' hearts led to the writing of the prayers.

In **Part II, “Prayers from the Catholic Tradition,”** we explore prayers specifically from the Catholic Tradition. As our ancestors and models of faith, the saints teach us the way of being disciples. Also, death cannot separate the body of Christ; we are still united to the saints. The traditional and devotional prayers from the book remain relevant to our daily lives and foster unity among all believers.

In **Part III, “Methods for Personal Prayer,”** two distinct types of prayer are presented. First is the prayer of the global Church. In recent years, the Universal Church has more dramatically realized its universal nature. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in addition to Western Europe and North America, people have embraced faith in Jesus Christ and have expressed Christian hope and desires through their culture. This array of expression enlivens us all; it edifies and builds up the body. Bringing a global perspective to prayer was vital for this prayer book to be authentically Catholic.

Second, through the goal of our faith is necessarily communal, being united with the Father as Body and one Spirit in Christ, ultimately the individual must respond by fostering a friendship with Jesus in both Word and Sacrament. This friendship with the Lord is like any relationship; it requires time and intimate sharing. It requires that the Word probe our hearts to speak affection, challenge, comfort, and disturbance. The Word must surround us, as the hands of the potter surround clay, to shape us into the image of Jesus. We believed providing tools for fostering such an intimacy was vital to this book.

**Part IV, “Liturgical Prayer,”** presents prayer in the light that Catholic prayer is liturgical. At the Second Vatican Council, Pope Saint John Paul II declared that it is in the liturgy that salvation is accomplished: “For the liturgy, ‘through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,’ most of all in the divine sacrifice of the eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.” Yes, it is accomplished in the Eucharistic liturgy, but not exclusively. Rather, it is accomplished in all liturgy! Also, the Second Vatican Council declared that the Liturgy of the Hours is the prayer of all Christians, not just of the clergy and vowed religious. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church provides perfect praise to God. With the Psalms, we have a gift from God: the words with which God desires us to praise him. We hear the Word of God and are shaped by it. We praise again with the great canticles from Luke’s Gospel and then offer our needs to the Father. Finally, we pray the perfect prayer—the Lord’s Prayer. The Liturgy of the Hours provides an accessible rhythm for prayer that the laity is more and more rediscovering. Many young people have a desire to pray, but they do not know the first steps to establishing a life of prayer. The Liturgy of the Hours is an ancient rite of prayer. We have modified this ancient rite to speak to the needs and concerns of young people. It is our hope that this twenty-eight-day cycle of prayer, in addition to the totality of the *CYPB*, will help young people grow in their friendship with the Lord and in union with the entire Body of Christ.

## What You Will Find in the Teaching Activities Manual

The *Teaching Activities Manual for “The Catholic Youth Prayer Book, Second Edition”* (TAM) accompanies the *CYPB*. It provides activities and prayers you can incorporate into your theology class following the Pray It! Study It! Live It!® model found in numerous Saint Mary’s Press resources. It is not a comprehensive teaching manual. Instead, it presents the tools to introduce the *CYPB*’s different prayer elements into the classroom in a manner that complements and enhances your current curriculum.

### For Each Chapter

The format of this TAM follows the format of the *CYPB*. Most chapters of the *CYPB* have a corresponding chapter in the TAM. Each chapter of the TAM typically provides the following:

#### Study It!

- one core activity (approximately 30 to 50 minutes in length) designed to explore a major topic from the chapter
- two to three additional, shorter activities addressing topics presented in the chapter

#### Pray It!

- one to two prayer experiences designed to help the students experience the prayer tradition from the chapter

#### Live It!

- two to three activities you can assign the students to complete outside the classroom to experience more fully the prayer tradition presented in the chapter

### Content Example: Chapter 11

For an example of the content of this TAM, let’s look at chapter 11, “Praying the Lord’s Prayer.” The core activity invites the students to look at the individual petitions present in the Lord’s Prayer and explains them in terms the students can more easily understand. This activity concludes by having the class pray the Lord’s Prayer, interjecting the petitions or life applications they developed earlier in the activity. A handout accompanies this activity. In addition, three shorter activities from the chapter explore the Lord’s Prayer to help the students better understand this prayer. The prayer activity for this chapter utilizes the section from the *CYPB* titled “Praying as a Poem,” engaging the entire class in the prayer experience. A handout accompanies this prayer experience. Finally, the chapter has two Live It! suggestions for the students to complete outside the classroom.

## Final Thoughts

The *CYPB* is a wonderful resource for introducing the students to the wide and rich scope of the Catholic prayer tradition. When used in conjunction with your existing curriculum, the *CYPB* can help the students truly experience the power of prayer. By utilizing all the aspects of this TAM—activities, prayer experiences, and Live It! suggestions—you can guide the students not only in learning about these prayers but also in experiencing them and applying them to their daily life. Prayer is essential to who we are as Catholics. As such, it is vital that we help young people embrace the prayer traditions of the Church. Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of the Christian Brothers, recognized the importance of prayer both as an essential lesson to pass along to students and as a necessity for the ministry of teaching. As you begin the journey of incorporating this resource into your curriculum, may these words from Saint John Baptist de La Salle embolden you:

Nothing disposes us better to receive the Holy Spirit than prayer. This is why Jesus Christ assures us that our heavenly Father will give his Spirit, full of love and goodness for us, to all those who ask him. (*Meditations*, p. 106)



# Part I

## Prayers for Daily Life

# Chapter 1

## Prayers through the Day

Study It! Core Activity (40–50 minutes)

### Sanctifying the Day

#### Supplies Needed

- copies of the *CYPB*
- the film *The Prince of Egypt* (1998, 90 minutes, rated PG), and a device to play it
- paper, enough for each group of three or four
- pens or pencils, enough for each group of three or four

#### Preparation

- Cue the film to the point where Moses is before the burning bush.
  1. As a class, read the Study It! sidebar “Sanctifying the Day,” from chapter 1 of the *CYPB*.
  2. Show the class the clip from *The Prince of Egypt*. Play the clip to the point where the wind lifts Moses off the ground.
  3. Divide the class into groups of three or four.
  4. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each group. Ask the groups to brainstorm ways they are in the constant presence of God (a smile; good friends; caring teachers; an outstretched, helping hand; the beauty of nature; an offer of forgiveness; and so forth). Ask the groups to write down their ideas.
  5. Ask each group to cite Scripture passages that support the belief that those things do indeed reflect God’s presence in our lives.
  6. Direct the groups to develop reminders of God’s love they can take with them. For example, they could create a prayer card to carry in their backpack, write a prayer to be said at the change of each class period, or write a relevant Scripture verse on the front of their notebook for each class. Encourage the students to be creative.
  7. Invite each group to share with the class its list of ways we are in the presence of God and its reminder.

## Study It! Additional Activities (5–15 minutes each)

### Psalm 23

#### Supplies Needed

- paper, enough for each student
- pens or pencils, enough for each student

1. Ask the students to brainstorm an image of God that is relevant to their life. Possible options are coach, parent, teacher, or friend.

2. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each student. Invite the students to rewrite Psalm 23, using the words and imagery they brainstormed that are relevant to the life of a student. For example, “The Lord is my coach . . .”

3. Ask for volunteers to share with the class their rewritten versions of Psalm 23.

### Prayer for Holy Words

#### Supplies Needed

- copies of the *CYPB*

1. As a class, read “Prayer for Holy Words,” from chapter 1 of the *CYPB*.

2. Brainstorm words that bless others and words that hurt or offend others. Encourage the students to use words appropriate for the classroom.

3. Keep track of the words in two lists on the board, one list for the positive words, one for the negative words.

4. Ask the students to consider which words are most often found in their conversations, and encourage them to resolve to use only words that bless. Explain that doing this will have a positive impact on both the speaker and those with whom the speaker interacts.

### Top Ten Reasons to Pray

#### Supplies Needed

- paper, enough for each group of four or five
- pens or pencils, enough for each group of four or five

1. Divide the large group into smaller groups of four or five students.

2. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each group, and instruct the groups to brainstorm their top ten reasons to pray throughout the course of the day. Ask the groups to record these reasons. Encourage them to be creative and positive.

3. Ask a spokesperson from each group to read the group's list to the rest of the class. Collect the lists and post them on a classroom bulletin board.

(This activity is adapted from Maryann Hakowski, *Teaching Manual for "PrayerWays,"* p. 18.)

## Pray It! Prayer Experiences

### Ignatian Examination of Conscience

#### Supplies Needed

- The Catholic Youth Bible*® or another Bible, marked at Psalm 19:15
- copies of the *CYPB*

1. Begin by having a student proclaim Psalm 19:15 as the opening prayer.

2. Explain that you will lead the class through an Ignatian examination of conscience like the one found in the Pray It! sidebar "Ignatian Examination of Conscience," in chapter 1 of the *CYPB*.

3. Invite the students to sit comfortably, with their hands folded and their eyes closed. Begin reading the following points, providing ample reflection time after each point.

- Begin by thanking God for the day.
- Then, ask the Holy Spirit to help you see the day through his eyes.
- Think through your day, hour by hour. Getting out of bed and ready for school . . . arriving at school and seeing your friends . . . going through your morning classes . . . lunch . . . afternoon classes . . . after-school activities . . . coming home . . .
- What are you grateful for? When did you see God working? For those moments, pray, "Thank you, God, for . . ."
- What are you sorry for? Everyone sins. The greatest damage, however, isn't in the moment of the act itself but is in the effects the act has on others, yourselves, and your relationship with God. You can feel shameful, or you may think you are a bad person. How much better it is simply to acknowledge your sins and shortcomings and to ask God and others to forgive you.
- After you have contemplated your day, ask God to help you grow closer to him.
- Last, ask God to guard you while you sleep, to keep your heart and mind fixed on him, and to help you wake up ready to serve throughout another day.

4. If appropriate, allow the students time to either journal about the experience or offer up personal prayers of intention and gratitude.

5. Conclude by praying, as a class, the prayer titled "A True Friend to Jesus," from chapter 1 of the *CYPB*.

## Prayer through the Day

### Supplies Needed

- copies of the *CYPB*
- newsprint
- markers

1. Begin by inviting the students to take a prayerful attitude. Start with the sign of the cross.

2. Invite the students to pray together the morning prayers “Psalm 33:20–22” and “Take This Day” from chapter 1 of the *CYPB*.

3. Following the prayers, ask the students to recall moments in their morning when it would have been possible for them to offer these prayers. Record their responses on the sheet of newsprint.

4. Invite the students to offer a silent prayer to remember to give thanks and praise and offer the day to God each morning.

5. Next, ask the students to pray together the midday prayers “Psalm 19:14” and “You Are Near,” from chapter 1 of the *CYPB*.

6. Following the prayers, ask the students to recall moments today or yesterday when it would have been possible for them to offer these prayers. Record their responses.

7. Invite the students to offer a silent prayer to remember to stop in the hectic pace of the day to invite God into their lives, joys, and struggles.

8. Next, ask the students to pray together the night prayers “Night Prayer Antiphon” and “While I Sleep,” from chapter 1 of the *CYPB*.

9. Following the prayers, ask the students to think of moments they will experience this evening when it will be possible for them to offer these prayers. Record their responses on the sheet of newsprint.

10. Invite the students to offer a silent prayer to remember to pause at the end of the day to give thanks for the day and ask for guidance in the morning.

11. Conclude by asking the students to look at the list of prayer opportunities on the sheet of newsprint and commit themselves to offering prayers at a few of these moments tonight and tomorrow.

## Live It! Take-Home Experiences

### **Meal Prayer**

Encourage the students to invite their family and others they share a meal with to pray before and after meals. The students can choose to copy the “Prayers at Meals” section from chapter 1 of the *CYPB* and keep it on the dining table or another spot where the family eats together.

### **Daily Log**

Invite the students to begin a log lasting a week, with each daily entry beginning “God, I saw you today when . . .” You can choose to incorporate this log into your class by beginning or ending each class with an opportunity for the students to write in the daily log.

# Chapter 2

## Prayers for Life Events

Study It! Core Activity (30–40 minutes)

### What Is Prayer?

#### Supplies Needed

- copies of the *CYPB*
- paper, enough for each student
- pens or pencils, enough for each student
- a sheet of newsprint
- a marker
- masking tape

#### Preparation

- Prepare a large sheet of newsprint with the following quotation from Saint Thérèse of Lisieux:

For me, prayer is an aspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy; finally, it is something great, supernatural, which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus. (*Story of a Soul*, p. 242)

1. Have the students form pairs for the activity. Distribute a copy of the *CYPB* to each pair.

2. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each student. Have the students interview their partners, asking the following questions and noting the responses:

- What is prayer? How would you define it?
- Why do people pray?
- When do people pray?
- How do people pray?
- Where do people pray?

3. When all the pairs have completed the interviews, have the partners share each other's responses with the class. On a board, keep a running list of the responses.

4. Post the prepared quotation by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux in a visible place in the classroom. Invite the class to discuss Thérèse's definition of *prayer*. The following questions can serve as a starting point:

- How is this a different definition of prayer than revealed in your interviews?
- How is it similar to the definitions of prayer in the interviews?
- What does this definition reveal about what is important about prayer to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux?

5. Ask the students to read through the introduction to the *CYPB*, finding statements that match their own definitions of prayer from the interviews and the definition from Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

6. Conclude by having the students read the prayers from chapter 1 of the *CYPB* and choose one that speaks most directly to their life situation. Have them share with their partner why they chose the prayers they did. Encourage the students to pray the prayers often during the coming week.

## Study It! Additional Activities (5–15 minutes each)

### Scripture Mix and Match

#### Preparation

- Make enough copies of handout 2–A, “Scripture Mix and Match,” so each student will have a complete set of Scripture passages. Cut apart the passages as scored, and then cut apart each passage at the break so the first part of each passage is on one slip of paper, and the second part is on another. Make separate piles of each complete set of Scripture passages.

1. Mix up the individual piles of Scripture passages and distribute one complete set to each student. Have the students try to match the correct ending with its beginning.

2. When the students are finished, have them discuss each verse and what it teaches us about the following:

- what prayer is
- how to pray
- why to pray

### Prayer in Song

1. Choose five secular (nonreligious) songs with the word *pray* or *prayer* in the lyrics or title; for example, “I Say a Little Prayer for You,” by Diana King; “Livin’ on a Prayer,” by Bon Jovi; or “Unanswered Prayers,” by Garth Brooks. Ask the students to help find songs to use. Preview the lyrics of any song before you use it.



2. Have the class listen to the various songs and reflect on the image of prayer presented.

3. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each student. Invite the class to spend a few minutes journaling about how music can be an invitation to prayer or how it can present an incomplete image of what prayer truly is.

## Pray It! Prayer Experiences

### Prize Litany

#### Supplies Needed

- a recording of “Glory and Praise to Our God,” by Daniel Schutte (OCP, from the Saint Louis Jesuits’ collection *A Dwelling Place*, 1976), or a similar song, and a device to play it
- THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE* or another Bible, marked at Romans 3:12–14
- a copy of the *CYPB*
- paper, enough for each student
- pens or pencils, enough for each student
- a recording of “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High,” by Rick Founds (Maranatha Praise, 1989), or a similar song of praise, and a device to play it

1. Play the opening song, “Glory and Praise to Our God.”

2. Invite a student to proclaim Romans 3:12–14.

3. Read aloud, or have a second student read, the Pray It! sidebar “Joyful Hearts, Give Praise!” from chapter 2 of the *CYPB*.

4. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each student and ask the students to list five things they prize about God.

5. Divide the large group into small groups of four and ask them to create a litany prayer based on the individual lists within their groups.

6. Ask each group to proclaim its litany, starting each item with the phrase “Praise to you, God, for . . .” For example, “Praise to you, God, for families who love and care for us.”

7. Conclude by having the class sing “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High.”

### Prayer Option

Ask the students to pick their favorite prayer from chapter 2 of the *CYPB* and illustrate their response to God through drawing, writing, or another creative medium. You might also have the students find a Scripture passage connected to the prayer. Invite them to share their responses with the group.

## Live It! Take-Home Experiences

### **Looking at the World around You**

Ask the students to find a newspaper article about suffering in your community or worldwide. Encourage them to resolve to pray daily for the people or the situation.

### **Example of Saint Cecilia**

Direct the students to think of someone they know who, like Saint Cecilia, has endured great suffering and yet has remained a peaceful, joyful, loving, and compassionate person. Encourage the students to let that person know, either by a personal conversation or by writing a note, that he or she has been an inspiration.

# Scripture Mix and Match



Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said,

“Speak for your servant is listening.” (1 Samuel 3:10)

Do not worry about anything, but in everything

by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)

Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones:

I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. (Ezekiel 37:5)

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites;

for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others.” (Matthew 6:5)

“But whenever you pray, go into your room and

shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.” (Matthew 6:6)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,

give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought,

but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. (Romans 8:26)

I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?

My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1–2)

When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken;

and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31)

The prayer of the righteous

is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)