

NATIONAL WEEK OF PRAYER FOR YOUTH GUIDE

Section #1: Praying With a View of Christ (15-20 minutes)

Let's begin our time in prayer, by focusing on the One who has created our students, has called our students, has His hand on our students and has provided a way for our students to experience the life they were designed for. As we pray, keep in mind that our Saviour loves the teenagers of our country infinitely more than we could ever dream or imagine.

Read through Colossians 1:15-20

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."

All things (including our students), have been created by Christ. None are an accident.

Vs. 16

"For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;"

Spend 3 minutes thanking God for the students He has created and brought into your life. In particular, pray for those who have been difficult to love, and ask Christ to remind you that these students have been created by Him, in His image.

All things, including every one of our students, have been created for the eternally significant purpose of glorifying Christ...in particular, reflecting the love of Christ by sacrificially loving others.

Vs. 16b

"...all things were created by him and for him."

Spend 3 minutes thanking God for students you know who are fighting to reflect Christ well. Now think of students you know who are failing at the purpose they were created for; who are pursuing significance and identity in anything other than Christ. Ask Christ to stir in their hearts a longing to pursue the purpose they were designed for.

Christ absolutely holds our world together, including the lives of the students we are involved with. Without Christ, we would experience hopelessness, chaos and destruction. At times, He allows us to taste what life is like when we do not give him the position of the one holding our lives together, that we might see our need for His loving hand of control and protection.

Vs. 17

"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Spend 3 minutes thinking of students who have moved out from under the protective hands of our loving God, whose lives seem hopelessly out of control. Pray that they would respond to the chaos within their lives as Paul did, by "not relying on themselves, but on God who raises the dead."

Christ is the absolute fullness of God, and yet He humbled Himself as a man, to bear the sins of mankind on the cross, that through His death, we might be reconciled to God and experience the peace we were designed for.

Vs. 19-20

"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."

Spend 3 minutes thanking Christ for providing a way for our students to experience peace with God. Think of 2 or 3 particular students you know who have yet to experience the supernatural work of Christ renewing their lives, and ask Christ to begin a powerful work of transformation. Think of at least one student you have seen transformed by Christ's work on the cross. Thank God for this student, and pray they will continue to grow in the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, take a look at vs. 21-23:

"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant."

As we move into our next section of prayer, take 3 minutes to thank God that he has reconciled you. Pray that He would enable you to continue in your faith and hope in the gospel, and thank Him that you get to share that Gospel in the context in which He has placed you...working with parents, students and student leaders. How incredible is this!?!?!?

Section #2: Praying Through Key Burdens of Our Country (25 – 30 minutes)

A number of years ago, The EFC Youth and Young Adult Round Table came up with five priorities/burdens for youth and young adult ministry in our country. Let's spend the next 25-30 minutes praying through these burdens.

Burden #1: The Youth Worker (5 – 7 minutes)

In many ways, the youth workers of our country function as elders, “shepherding the flock of God that is among them.” We all know what a high calling this is. 1 Peter 5:1-4 speaks to this reality and should be a guide for us as we pray for the youth workers across our country...

1 Peter 5:1-2a

“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

Pray youth leaders would realize they are stewards of God's flock...this speaks to the seriousness of their calling. (vs. 2a)

Pray for the hearts of youth leaders across the country, that passion would be restored, especially in the midst of discouragement. (vs. 2b)

Pray that youth workers would have a clear vision of eternity, and a resolve to persevere in their pursuit of the crown that is promised to those who endure. (vs. 4)

Pray for the integrity of youth workers, that they will reflect well the reality of Jesus Christ to the students they serve. (vs. 3)

Pray for protection from the temptation of greed, and other “lesser gods” that call for the attention of youth workers, especially for those who may be struggling to make ends meet. (vs. 2b)

Burden #2: The Church (5 – 7 minutes)

In light of this reality, think of some churches you know that are struggling. Surrender them to Christ, asking that He would continue to do His work inside those specific walls.

Let's begin by remembering who the church belongs to and who will build and sustain the church.

Matthew 16:18

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Spend some time meditating on this reality, and thanking God for this powerful promise.

While Christ will build and sustain His church, His primary method of choice is to do so through fallible human beings (like Peter!).

Pray for denominational and para-church leaders across our country, that they would have wisdom and vision to know how to respond to cultural changes in terms of structure, programs etc.

Pray for local church and para-church leaders, that they would have wisdom and vision to know how to bring students and young adult leaders into their local communities, so as to experience and contribute to the local expression of the whole body of Christ.

Pray for church and para-church leaders, that they would not bow to gods of “programming and tradition”, but rather, with humility and wisdom, bow to the head of the church, Jesus Christ, and see programs and traditions as tools for His glory.

Burden #3: Evangelism (5 - 7 minutes)

Our temptation as the church, is to either isolate, or assimilate. But our call is to engage and transform culture, understanding that Christ was clear this would be dangerous (John 17:14-19)

Let's let Matthew 28:18-20 direct our prayers for evangelism and mission.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Pray that youth leaders and church leaders would have courage to become radically missional, understanding that Christ has authority over all areas of our world and culture, not just our church buildings. (vs. 18)

Pray for wisdom as youth leaders think through ways of strategically engaging students from outside our walls, and then intentionally moving them towards maturity in Christ. (vs. 19a, 20a)

Pray for wisdom as youth leaders think through how to engage diverse nationalities within their own communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ (vs.19a)

Pray that youth workers would be very aware of Christ's presence in their own lives, enabling them to do more than they can ask or imagine as they move beyond their walls and help their students do the same.

Burden #4: Today's Adolescent Realities (5 - 7 minutes)

Our students live in a world that is rapidly changing. While our core desires are the same (a longing for love, to belong, a sense of significance and purpose), our culture continues to offer our students ways other than Christ to meet them. Colossians 2:6-8 should guide our prayers as we ask the Lord to give our students wisdom in journeying through adolescence.

Colossians 2:6-8

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."

Pray that our students will grow deep roots in their relationship with Christ. That it will be more than simply an emotional experience. That daily they will be aware of His presence, relying on His power.

Pray that students will somehow develop maturity in a culture that seems to promote immaturity. Pray for an understanding that every good gift they receive is not something they are entitled to, or something they have earned, but rather a gift from their loving Father. May they become a "thankful, mature generation".

Pray that our students would become discerning, that they would not believe and fall for the deceptive philosophy of our culture, specifically in the areas of:

- sexuality
- identity
- truth/relativism
- relationships
- money and possessions
- significance

Spend a couple of minutes praying for specific students who may be struggling in these areas.

Burden #5: Theological/Biblical Foundations (5 – 7 minutes)

The hope for youth leaders and students is that they will grow in their vision and understanding of Jesus Christ. This is more than knowledge; this is theology and understanding that informs and transforms experience. Our prayer is that both our leaders and students will become theologically rich, committed to Christ in the Word.

Pray that youth leaders will be committed to true discipleship and that they will both train both themselves and their students to be godly. Pray that the discipline needed would be driven not by legalistic duty, but rather by God-honoring desires.

1 Timothy 4:7

“Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;”

Pray that youth leaders would be committed to journeying with their students toward maturity, by being committed to pointing them to Christ in the Scriptures as they “teach, rebuke, correct and train in righteousness”.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Pray for the people and institutions that are equipping and preparing youth leaders to shepherd students. Pray that while we develop more effective ways to train our leaders, the foundation of our training would include richer theological understanding and practice.

Section #3: Praying for Each Other and Our Organizations (5-10 minutes)

Sometimes we forget, that as youth workers, we are part of a much larger community than simply our own church. God is at work beyond our walls. Spend some time praying specifically for youth workers beyond your walls...

Pray for another youth worker in your community.

Pray for another youth worker in your denomination/organization.

Pray for a youth worker who is the head of an organization or denomination.

Pray for a youth worker from another part of the country.

Pray for a youth worker who is doing ministry in another country.