

Challenge Task Supplement



Prayer

Praying with children can be a real joy. The following tips may help you to encourage your Junior Soldiers develop an effective and dynamic prayer life. Your prayer pals may also find this a useful guide when they are working with their Junior Soldier on the 'Prayer' challenge task.

1. Teach children about prayer.

As well as actually praying, teaching children about prayer is vital – that prayer is talking to God, He is interested in the details of everyday life, He answers prayer though we may have to wait for Him to answer, His answer may not be what we expect, and so on. Sessions 6, 7 and 8 in this unit particularly deal with prayer and would be a good start.



2. Encourage praying in a variety of ways.

Different ways suit different people, and different ways suit different ages. The Salvation Army has been focusing on prayer with the 24/7 initiative and if your corps is taking part, it would be good to encourage the Junior Soldiers to take part in this. The 24/7 manual has some ideas and suggestions for incorporating children into this time. Check out the website at <http://www.24-7sa.org.au/main.html> for a copy of the manual. There are also prayer ideas listed in the 'Worship Ideas' pages in the front of this, and the Unit 1 leader's manual.

3. Keep it simple.

Always use, and encourage the Junior Soldiers to use, simple or straightforward language in prayers of their own making. Be careful to model this simplicity in your own prayer.



4. Keep it short.

Prayer and prayer ideas should normally be short. It is always better to stop before they get bored. If they ask for more or clearly want more, that's a different matter.

5. Record requests and answers.

To help create the expectation that God answers prayer, keep a prayer-request list with the Junior Soldiers. Ask them to tell you when and how God has answered their prayers. You could also encourage them to do this at home in their own prayer times. Prayer pals are asked to follow their Junior Soldier up in order to complete their 'Prayer' challenge task, this would make it easier for them to do if the Junior Soldier is already doing this as part of his/her prayer time.

6. Stay real.

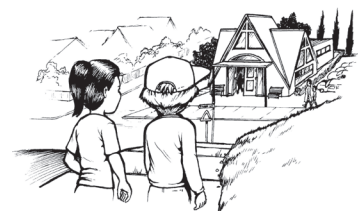
Involve children in praying about real issues in the group, the corps and the world, as a prayer taskforce. Of course you will need to make sure the issues are appropriate for the Junior Soldiers to hear and pray about.

7. Think carefully...

about what you expect from Junior Soldiers who are new to the Christian faith. We do not want them to pray prayers that have no meaning for them, because they are still learning how to pray and what to pray for etc.

8. Recognise different aspects.

Don't see Junior Soldiers praying aloud as the ultimate



achievement in prayer with them. There are more important things to aim for.

9. Teach praying alone and in small groups as well.

If you pray with Junior Soldiers in a group, do not just pray with them all as a group. Depending on the age of the Junior Soldiers, encourage them to find their own space within your learning area and to work at the discipline of praying alone. Also, guide them into praying for each other in pairs or triplets, to help them learn mutual support and caring.

10. Involvement is key.

Make sure the Junior Soldiers are fully involved in the praying. Ask them for prayer requests, stress that their prayer is essentially between them and God, encourage them to be honest in their silent and spoken prayer. Involve them in something to look at, touch, listen to, or do with their bodies. Be imaginative in getting them involved, in whatever ways they feel comfortable.

Adapted from *'Helping Children to Pray: 10 top tips'*
by Terry Clutterham in **KidsWise** Issue 2, 2003.
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