

Basic Training for Operation P.R.A.Y.

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1. Introduction: Why we pray with students – and how God uses simple moments to change lives.

Prayer is the heart of this ministry. When we show up near a school and offer prayer, we're creating a moment where a student can encounter the love, hope, and presence of Jesus right where they are. You don't need special training, a perfect script, or years of experience. You simply need a willing heart and a desire to love students the way Jesus does.

This step gives you the foundation for everything that follows. You'll learn the purpose behind OPERATION P.R.A.Y., what makes this ministry unique, and how God uses ordinary people to make an extraordinary impact. Every volunteer begins here — with a simple understanding that prayer is powerful, students are hungry for hope, and God delights in using you.

2. First Things First: Preparing your heart, your mindset, and your posture before you ever step onto a campus.

Before you pray with a single student, the most important work happens inside you. This ministry isn't about performance or perfection — it's about showing up with a heart that's aligned with Jesus. Take a moment to pray, breathe, and remember why you're there: to love students well.

As you arrive near a school, stay aware of your surroundings and stay connected to the Holy Spirit. You're stepping into a public space, so your posture matters. Be calm, friendly, and approachable. You're not there to convince or correct — you're there to love, listen, and bless.

This step lays the foundation for everything that follows. When your heart is settled, your spirit is open, and your focus is on Jesus, students will feel it. They'll sense peace, safety, and sincerity — and that opens the door for meaningful prayer.

3. What Are We Trying to Accomplish? A simple mission: help students encounter the love of Jesus through prayer.

At the heart of OPERATION P.R.A.Y. is one clear purpose: to create moments where students can experience the love, hope, and presence of Jesus. We're not trying to debate, convince, or pressure anyone. We're simply offering prayer — a gentle, powerful invitation that meets students right where they are.

Every time you show up near a school, you're creating a space for God to move. A student may be carrying stress, fear, loneliness, or questions they've never voiced. Your presence and your willingness to pray can open a door for encouragement, healing, and connection.

Our goal is not to fix students — it's to love them.

Our goal is not to preach at them — it's to pray with them.

Our goal is not to replace their church or youth group — it's to point them toward hope.

When you understand this simple mission, everything else becomes clear. You're there to be a light, a listener, and a reminder that God sees them and cares.

4. Love is the Key: Every prayer begins with love — because students feel your heart before they hear your words.

Love is the foundation of everything we do. When a student approaches you (or you approach them), the very first thing they should feel is kindness, safety, and genuine care. Before you pray, before you speak, before you ask a single question — your posture communicates the love of Jesus.

Students today are incredibly perceptive. They can tell instantly if someone is judging them, rushing them, or trying to “fix” them. But they can also tell when someone truly sees them. That's why love is the key. It softens hearts, builds trust, and opens the door for meaningful prayer.

Loving well looks like:

- Being patient
- Listening without interrupting
- Smiling and staying relaxed
- Speaking gently
- Respecting their boundaries
- Letting the Holy Spirit lead

When your heart is rooted in love, everything else flows naturally. Students don't need perfect words — they need to feel valued. They need to know someone cares. And that simple act of love often becomes the moment God uses to touch their lives.

5. The Approach: A friendly, respectful way to start a conversation with students in public spaces.

Approaching a student doesn't have to feel awkward or complicated. When you show up with a calm, friendly posture, students can sense that you're safe and genuine. The goal isn't to "get through a script" — it's simply to begin a natural, human conversation.

Here's what a healthy, relational approach looks like:

1. Start with warmth. A smile, relaxed body language, and a friendly tone go a long way. Students respond to authenticity.

2. Keep it simple. A gentle greeting like, "Hey, how's your day going?" opens the door without pressure.

3. Respect their space. Stand at a comfortable distance. Don't rush toward them or block their path. Let the interaction feel natural.

4. Introduce yourself. Share your name and, if appropriate, mention that you're part of a local prayer team. Keep it light and conversational.

5. Let the Holy Spirit lead. Some students will engage right away. Others may be shy or unsure. Follow their cues. You're not trying to force a moment — you're offering one.

6. Transition gently. When the moment feels right, a simple question like, "**Is there anything I can pray for you today?**" creates a smooth, respectful bridge into Step 6.

The approach sets the tone for everything that follows. When you're calm, kind, and present, students feel it — and that's what opens the door for meaningful prayer.

6. The Prayer Engagement: A simple, relational way to pray with students — loving, natural, and easy to follow.

Praying with a student is one of the most meaningful parts of this ministry. It doesn't need to be long, complicated, or "churchy." These simple steps help keep the moment warm, safe, and Spirit-led.

1. Smile and be friendly. Your warmth sets the tone. A genuine smile helps students feel safe and welcomed.

2. Introduce yourself (and your team). Share your name and ask for the student's first name. Repeat it back to them — it shows care and builds connection.

3. Ask how you can pray for them. A simple question like, “**How can I pray for you today?**” opens the door. Listen attentively and let them share at their own pace.

4. Pray short prayers — less than a minute. Brief, focused prayers help students stay comfortable and engaged.

5. Pray the love of Jesus over them. Every prayer should communicate God's kindness, peace, and care. This softens hearts and creates space for the Holy Spirit to move.

6. Keep your eyes open while praying. This helps you stay aware of the student's comfort level and engagement.

7. Avoid physical touch. Some students may be sensitive to touch. Keeping hands off ensures everyone feels safe.

8. Use conversational language. Pray the way you talk. Avoid “church language” or overly formal words. Simple, natural language helps students connect.

9. Stay loving and relational — not weird or religious. Your posture matters. Be calm, kind, and authentic. Students respond to sincerity, not intensity.

10. Watch this short training video. Check out the [“How to Pray With a Gen Z Teenager”](#) video featuring Todd Volker, filmed during a campus Christian club meeting.

7. The Follow-Up and Referral: Discerning what God wants to do next after the initial prayer.

After you finish praying with a student, you'll need wisdom to know what to do next. Some students will say thank you and head on their way — that's usually a sign the moment is complete (for now). But if a student lingers, stays close, or continues talking, it may be an indication they want something more. This is a great time to gently ask the next question and see where God is leading.

A simple way to move forward is to ask:

“Have you ever accepted Jesus into your heart?”

Then pause and wait for their answer.

If they are already a Christian:

Most Christian students will tell you where they attend church. This opens the door to ask whether they attend the Christian club on campus.

If they don't, you can hand them the club's info card and encourage them to check it out.

You can also follow up by saying:

“We're here every Wednesday (or your designated day), so come back and tell us how God answered your prayer!”

If they are not a Christian, or they're unsure:

This may be an opportunity to share the Gospel briefly and offer them an invitation to receive Christ.

You can begin with a gentle question:

“Have you ever had a time in your life where you asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior?”

If they haven't, you can share the Gospel in a simple, clear way:

“You were created by God to have a relationship with Him because He loves you. Unfortunately, we are separated from God because of our mistakes and bad decisions in life. The Bible calls that sin. God sent His Son Jesus to live a perfect life for us and to pay for all our sins when He died on the Cross. He rose from the dead three days later so we could have life forever with Him. We need to surrender our lives to Jesus so that new eternal life can start — right now.”

Then offer the invitation:

“Would you like to do that with me right now? It's a simple prayer — you can repeat after me — so you can begin to follow Jesus from this day forward.”

8. Leading Them to Christ: A simple, gentle way to help a student receive Jesus when their heart is ready.

1. The Heart Behind This Step

If a student is responding, God is already at work in their spirit. Your role is simply to help them say “yes” to the true King.

In the "sending of the Twelve and the Seventy-Two", the disciples were instructed by Jesus to proclaim the Kingdom of God, or in other words, the Good News or the Gospel. The Kingdom of God (or what Matthew calls the Kingdom of Heaven) is the primary message that Jesus preached. Jesus is King (Jesus is Lord and not Caesar), and where he reigns, is where the Kingdom is.

Helping people come to faith in Christ is facilitating their allegiance to the true King of Kings. The words of Jesus are “full of the Spirit and life” and the Father will use these words to bring people to salvation in Christ Jesus (John 6:63, 65).

When we proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom, there is power to bring salvation to the hearers. When people respond, it is a simple matter to have them pray to confirm what is already going on in their spirit.

2. Use the A-B-C-S to Guide the Prayer

This keeps the moment simple and clear:

- **A — Admit you need Jesus to save you from your sin.**
- **B — Believe He died for your sins and rose again to give you life.**
- **C — Commit your life to following Jesus as your King.**
- **S — Spirit — Ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit to live out your purpose in His Kingdom.**

You can't "mess this up." Rebirth is God's work — you're just helping them respond.

3. Sample Prayer (Student Repeats Each Line and wording may vary)

This is one example prayer of leading a student to receive Christ:

Lord Jesus, thank you that you love me.

*I **Admit** I have made mistakes and some bad decisions.*

I have sinned against You, myself, and others.

I ask you to forgive my sins.

*I **Believe** You paid for my sins on the cross when you died.*

I believe You rose from the dead so I might have eternal life.

*I **Commit** my life to following You as my Savior and Lord.*

*Fill me now with the Holy **Spirit** of God so I can live this new life.*

In Jesus Name, Amen.

4. Why This Step Matters

Every person is spiritually separated from God because of sin. Salvation heals the human spirit by applying the power of the cross to our deepest need — reconciliation with God.

When a student receives Christ, they receive forgiveness, new life, and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

5. What to Do Immediately After: Always give them an information card for the Christian club on campus.

This is where discipleship begins.

We do **not** invite them to our own churches because:

- They need peers their age who are already following Jesus.
- Students are far more likely to attend a church when invited by friends.
- It prevents misunderstandings with parents or school staff.
- It avoids appearing sectarian or “recruiting.”
- It strengthens our credibility with the school.

Connecting them to the Christian club avoids many potential problems and is the most effective next step.

9. Pray for Healing: You may not have many opportunities to pray for physical healing with teens, but you can be prepared for when the moment arises.

You may not have many opportunities to pray for physical healing with teens, but it’s necessary to be prepared when the occasion arises. It may be obvious if you see a cast or brace, or it may come when the student shares a health concern. We should see this as an exciting opportunity for God to demonstrate His love for them in a tangible way.

Your opening question is simple:

“Would it be alright if I prayed for your healing right now?”

If they agree (almost all will), here are some basic guidelines to follow:

- If they have pain, ask what level it is between 1 to 10 (before and after the prayers).
- Pray short prayers — less than a minute.
- Don’t touch them as you pray — this avoids problems, and God can touch them without you making physical contact.
- Invite Jesus to come and bring His Kingdom right now.
- Avoid using “church language” and pray in a normal tone and volume.

- Tell the body to come under the authority of Jesus Christ and the specific problem to be made whole.
- After the short prayer, ask: **“As I was praying for you, what was happening?”**
- If pain persists, you can pray again (short prayers) and then ask about their level of pain again.
- If they encountered improvement or complete healing, rejoice with them. If not, tell them to come back next week for more prayer.

Example Prayer:

Here is an example prayer for Rafa, who injured his knee at football practice:

“Heavenly Father, I invite You to bring Your Kingdom right now for Rafa. I thank You that You love him, and he is Your son. I ask You to bring healing to Rafa’s knee right now in the name of Jesus. I tell the knee to come under the authority of Jesus and all the structures of the knee be made whole and all the pain to leave his body. Amen.”

After praying, ask him:

“What was happening as I was praying for you?”

Listen to his answer and have him test the knee.

“What is your pain level now?”

Based on the results, you can pray up to three times with short prayers. Even if there is no visible change, you can be assured that something good has happened because when we invited Jesus to come, His Kingdom of “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” will always show up.

If we treat people with respect and kindness, the offer to pray for healing is always a blessing. We will often see healing happen on the street because God loves His kids and wants to bless them. It’s always a win-win.

10. Unusual Circumstances: How to respond wisely, calmly, and lovingly when situations take an unexpected turn.

On rare occasions, a student may request prayer for something we know is wrong, immoral, or against the will of God. Instead of refusing to pray for them, we pray for the Lord to meet the needs of that person according to His love for them.

1. When a student requests prayer for something immoral

For example, if Kevin says, **“Can you pray that I hook up with this girl Janet? She’s hot and I want to have sex with her.”**

Sometimes this is simply a student testing or teasing us to see our reaction.

Turn it around gently and say:

“I can pray for God to meet your needs in this area.”

Then pray something like:

“Heavenly Father, thank You that You love Kevin and want to reveal Yourself to him. I pray the longing in his heart will be fulfilled with a relationship with You. Let him know You love him right now. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

2. When a student reveals they are a victim of physical or sexual abuse

The proper course of action is to encourage the student to report this to a school authority such as a counselor, administrator, or trusted teacher.

All school employees are mandated reporters and are required to report this to the proper governmental agencies.

You can pray with the student for courage to report this and for the comfort and presence of Jesus to be with them.

We are not able to do more than pray at this point.

3. When a student wants to argue theology or doctrine

Experience has shown that this is almost always unfruitful and tends to hinder the outreach.

Most of these students belong to a religious sect or group and simply want to start an argument. If you are sharing the Gospel and genuine questions arise, that is different.

But what we’re addressing here is confrontation — someone trying to debate specific doctrines or interpretations.

It is best not to engage.

Kindly say:

“We’re not here to argue or debate — we’re here to pray.”

Even if you “win” the argument, you usually lose the moment. Your time is taken away, and opportunities with other students are lost.

Our purpose is to pray for and love the students we encounter. We cannot do that well if we get sidetracked by distractions.

4. When parents or school staff challenge your right to be there

This is unlikely, but it may happen.

We need to handle this with wisdom and humility.

If you are not on school property (and you should not be), you have the right to be on the sidewalk or other public property.

But asserting your rights is not the first thing to say.

It is best to calmly explain:

- You are simply offering prayer to students who want it
- You are a group of Christians from various local churches
- You refer students to the campus Christian club sponsored by the faculty advisor
- You are not handing out literature
- You are not recruiting for any church
- You are only there to pray for students who request prayer

If needed, you can direct the parent or staff member to the website for more information.

Avoid making a scene or escalating the situation.

Stay friendly, respectful, and humble.