

# 8 Ways to Pray

*A little creativity can deepen your talks with God.*

**1. Journal your prayers.** But don't just journal requests. Write out questions, heartaches and struggles. Don't forget to journal praises, too. Be creative. Put your prayers into poems. Write a letter to God. Then go back and read your journal entries in a week or a month. There's a good chance you'll be reminded of how God has answered your prayers. And when you're feeling down, your past praises remind you of God's goodness and love for you.

**2. Take a prayer walk.** Hike in a forest preserve and praise God for his beautiful creation. Walk around your neighborhood and pray for the family in each home you pass. Or take a "prayer walk" on the sidewalk around your school.

**3. Pray over your calendar and schedule.** Got a test coming up? Pray for peace of mind. Pray for the players of Friday night's basketball game-both sides. Ask God to bring non-Christians to your winter youth retreat.

**4. Pray Scripture.** Let's say that during your Bible reading time you come across 1 Peter 5:7: "God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him" (CEV). Turn that verse into a prayer: "Lord, I'm going to trust you and give you all my worries. I know you will take care of me." Do this with Scriptures that express needs and also with those that praise or thank God. Hey, why not personalize the Lord's Prayer? Take each sentence or phrase from this well-known prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) and write it in a way that applies directly to your life.

**5. Pray about the news.** When you read or hear about a troubling issue, pray for the people involved. Pray for politicians and other national and community leaders who make the news.

**6. Partner up.** Find someone to pray with regularly. Plan to meet at a coffee shop once or twice a week, or get together before school. Praying with a friend is great for personal accountability. It's also a cool way to take a friendship to a deeper level.

**7. Be quiet.** If prayer is a conversation, then you also need to listen *in silence*. And silence means getting away from distractions like music and TV. A quiet, little-used corner at the library could be the best place. As you listen, don't expect to hear a voice. But do expect God to tug at your heart, move your conscience, or help you realize something you need to do or change.

**8. Keep a prayer on your lips.** *Dozens of thoughts pass through your mind daily. You daydream. You may think bad or gossipy thoughts. Turn those daydreams and not-so-great thoughts into prayers. Ask God to help a person hurt by gossip. Ask him to forgive you for thoughts that take your mind places it shouldn't go. Turn daydreams and other passing thoughts into moments to recognize God's presence in your life. As you learn to keep a prayer on your lips, you'll come a little closer to understanding what it means to "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIV).*