


Teaching Activities Manual for

The  
Catholic  
Youth Prayer  
Book

Rebecca Rushing

Edited by  
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# Introduction to *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*

## *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*

Welcome to *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book (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, your students will 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 Catholic Youth Prayer Book*. 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 Catholic Youth Prayer Book* 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*

Catholic prayer is relevant, ancient, universal, personal, and liturgical. This is the manner in which *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book* was conceived. **Part I, “Prayers for Today’s Teenagers,”** 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, while the goal of our faith is necessarily communal, being united with the Father as body and one spirit in Christ, it is ultimately the individual who 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. The Second Vatican Council declared that it is in the liturgy that salvation is accomplished: “For the liturgy, ‘through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,’<sup>1</sup> 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 Catholic Youth Prayer Book*, 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)* 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*. Each chapter of the *CYPB* has a corresponding chapter in the teaching activities manual. Each chapter of the TAM 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 your students experience the prayer tradition from the chapter

#### **Live It!**

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

### **Content Example: Chapter 8**

For an example of the content of this TAM, let's look at chapter 8, "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 student book 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 your students to complete outside the classroom.

### **Final Thoughts**

*The Catholic Youth Prayer Book* is a wonderful resource for introducing your students to the wide and rich scope of the Catholic prayer tradition. When used in conjunction with your existing curriculum, the *CYPB* can help your 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 your 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 Today's Teenagers

# Chapter 1

## Prayers for Living

Study It! Core Activity (30–40 minutes)

### What Is Prayer?

#### Supplies Needed

- copies of *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*, enough for each pair of students
- paper, enough for each student
- pens or pencils, enough for each student
- a chalkboard
- chalk
- 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 your students select a partner for the activity. Distribute a copy of *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book* 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 chalkboard, 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 your 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 your students to read through the introduction to *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*, finding statements that match their own definitions of prayer from the interviews and the definition from Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

6. Conclude by having your students read the prayers in 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

#### Supplies Needed

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

#### Preparation

- Make enough copies of resource 1–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 your 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 pen or pencil and a sheet of paper 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
- a tape or CD player
- The Catholic Youth Bible*® or another Bible, marked at Romans 3:12–14
- The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*
- 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

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 1 of *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*.

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 your students to pick their favorite prayer from chapter 1 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 your 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 your 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

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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)

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The prayer of the righteous

is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

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# Acknowledgments

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The prayers, devotions, beliefs, and practices contained herein have been verified against authoritative sources.

The quotation by Pope John Paul II on page 8 is from “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness,” number 2, at [www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html), accessed November 14, 2005.

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“Litany of Mary of Nazareth” on handout 3–A is a condensed version of a litany published by Pax Christi USA, 532 W. Eighth Street, Erie, PA 16502; phone 814-453-4955; [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org). Used with permission.

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### **Endnote Cited in a Quotation from *The Holy See***

1. Secret of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost.