

SESSION 1: LIFE IN AN ANXIOUS WORLD

LOOK AROUND: STUDENT TAKE-HOME SHEET

Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Put on my yoke, and learn from me. I'm gentle and humble. And you will find rest for yourselves.

—MATTHEW 11:28–29

A HELPFUL WAY TO PRAY

Listening to our anxiety helps us learn about who we are as an individual, what situations make us feel unsteady, and what healthy coping strategies work for us. When we recognize where God is present and at work in our rocking boat and practice listening to God, we can experience peace and share that peace with others.

Try these five steps to help guide you through a simple prayer practice. You can pray quietly in your heart, or write your thoughts down in a journal.

THE DAILY REPLAY

- 1. Become aware of God's presence.** *Find a quiet place, away from distractions. Take several moments to breathe, relax, and invite God to be present with you.*
- 2. Review the day with gratitude.** *What are the good things that have happened today? What can I give thanks for?*
- 3. Pay attention to your emotions.** *What moments throughout my day have been difficult or tense? Where is God at work in the midst of my anxious moments? What might God—or anxiety—be trying to tell me?*
- 4. Forgive, and ask for forgiveness.** *Who am I angry or frustrated with? Are there things I can forgive and let go in order to have peace? What would I like to be forgiven for?*
- 5. Look toward tomorrow.** *How can tomorrow be different? What would I like to ask God to help me with?*

The Daily Replay prayer can be done anywhere, at any time. Try writing each one of the five prayer steps on a sticky note. Then place your sticky notes in places where you'll see them (on your bathroom mirror, next to your bedside lamp, or in the car) to remind you to stop and reflect throughout the day.

GROW YOUR CIRCLE

Practice talking about anxiety

Think of an adult you trust who might be a good person to call on if ever you need someone to talk to. This week, your challenge is to strengthen your relationship with that person and practice talking about how you feel.

Look over your schedule (preferably with a parent) to see if you can find an hour to meet with that person this week. Think about where you might like to meet with them (perhaps at your home, at church, or in a coffee shop). Contact that person and ask them if they would be willing to meet with you this week.

If you're not sure what to say, try this:

"My youth group is learning about how to live a healthy life in an anxious world. We've been challenged to build ourselves a circle of people we can talk with if we ever need to. Because you're someone I trust, I would like to invite you to be a part of my circle. Would you be willing to meet with me this week so that I can practice talking about anxiety and pray about it together?"

REMEMBER: This person should be a trusted adult. And be sure to talk with your parents about who you will be meeting with beforehand.

Four things to do when you meet

1. Talk with your trusted adult about the list of things that are making you feel anxious lately.
2. Ask your trusted adult about what makes them anxious, and what helpful practices they've learned over the years as they listen to and learn from their anxiety.
3. Pray together.
4. Ask your trusted adult if they'd be willing to let you call them if ever you need someone to talk to about how you feel.

I met with _____ [Name] on _____ [Date] at _____ [Location].

Things they said during our meeting that were helpful to me:

Sometimes stress and anxiety can become more than we can handle. Keep this number in your phone or someplace you can find it. If you ever feel like harming yourself, or if you're worried about someone you know, call the lifeline right away. **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK or suicidepreventionlifeline.org**