

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

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1. Introduction

Get ready for a great adventure in following Jesus in His Kingdom! If you are reading this now, you are either thinking about joining us in this ministry or have already started to do some outreach at your local high school. We want to help you be successful in this ministry, and the Basic Training section is designed to do just that. You can learn from us that we have seen and done in bringing the love of Jesus to the youth of our local communities. We also want to give you some practical steps and the do's and don'ts we've encountered in the school of hard knocks. We are praying for you to enter this wonderful partnership with us and Jesus to reach our nation's youth. We're so glad you are here! LET'S GET STARTED!

2. First Things First

Some may be asking: "Do I really need training to do this? I already know how to pray!" The simple answer is "Yes!" In my (Todd) experience of doing prayer outreach for over ten years is that we all need to learn how best to engage with others in an effective and fruitful way. I have observed and trained many fellow believers in this model of outreach. Many of those who are just starting out will do things that are "religious" but not helpful in connecting people with God. We need to start out in humility and continue to be learners if we are to be effective. Let's begin there.

In the section under "Adopt a School" we present the six basic steps to getting started. Clarifying comments and insights follow each step.

***Pray** - Pray and ask God to confirm your desire to be a part of this dynamic movement to battle for the next generation of teens.*

Are you qualified? If you know Jesus and love Him, and you love people and want to connect them with a loving God, then you are qualified. If you have prayed and the Lord is confirming your desire to begin this outreach, you can rest assured that when He guides, He provides. Remember that our goal is to connect youth with Jesus by using the vehicle of prayer engagement. We are **not** recruiting people to attend our local church. We are letting them experience the love of Christ and then connecting them to the school's Christian club on campus. (More on this later).

Select a High School - *Select a high school near you and contact the school's Christian club advisor. Partner with the club advisor to invite students to join you in after school prayer and plug new believers into the club's fellowship.*

Selecting a school is usually about location and proximity to the team that will pray. The real key here is to contact the club advisor (faculty member) of the Christian club on the campus. Almost every public high school has a Christian club (some may have more than one). The club advisor is your key connection with the school. Contact the school office and ask the best way to contact (email) the advisor. Let them know who you are and what you are doing. Tell them that you want to refer students to their club. They should be more than happy to partner with you by giving you the information about when and where the club meets on campus. This is who the Bible calls the "person of peace." Luke 10:5-6

Team Up with a Prayer Partner - *Contact a prayer partner to join you in praying one day a week at the same location and time. "Jesus sent them out two by two."*

Team ministry is always better than doing it alone. I have done "prayer booths" alone, but I always try to have at least one partner working with me. We all have different strengths and gifts. Pray for a partner or two who have the same passion to reach out to the youth at your local high school. The beauty of this ministry is that it doesn't take a large group to do it. Two to four people is ideal when doing this outreach, and they only have to commit to about an hour each week!

Read Book - Read [Street Level Prayer by Todd Volker](#), the "How To" on street ministry and view our [Basic Training](#) page.

I (Todd) want believers to be well equipped in ministry and learn what I have found in doing prayer outreach for many years. [Street Level Prayer](#) will help you in this type of outreach, and I hope you will find it useful. By the way, I don't make any money on my books, as I have priced them as low as Amazon will let me (\$5 for paperbacks, \$.99 for Kindle). I just want to give away what God has given me.

Buy Supplies - Buy a **Need Prayer?** sign. Choose from a [Need Prayer? A-Frame sign](#) or [Need Prayer? banner](#) for an EZ up or [Need Prayer? canopy](#). Bring folding chairs, a journal to jot down prayers, and the school's Christian club info cards to give to new believers.

A sign will tell passersby what you are doing! In some locations an EZ up with a [Need Prayer? banner](#) is appropriate. In others, just a [Need Prayer? A-frame sign](#) (or two) on the sidewalk is all you need. Chairs are helpful if you have a canopy, but most of the outreach will be done on your feet engaging with students as they leave campus. You will need to go to them and ask if they would like prayer. We are active in our approach but not pushy. It is helpful to jot down the student's first names and their prayer requests in a journal so you can remember when they come back. The connection cards to the Christian club on campus will have meeting information such as: time, location, and club advisor's name. This is our main vehicle for continued discipleship for these youth.

Set Up and Pray - *Set your schedule to pray each week on the same day, at the same time, at the same location. Consistency is the key for an ongoing ministry.*

Download the school's calendar from their website for dismissal time and holiday schedule. Pick a day that has a consistent dismissal time (some schools have a varied schedule) and a weekly day your team is free. Your team may primarily consist of retired persons or college students depending on time availability (not everyone is free at 2:50pm on Tuesday!).

3. What Are We Trying to Accomplish?

The Operation P.R.A.Y. goal is for students to experience God's love through prayer, share the good news of the Gospel, and receive salvation, deliverance, and healing. We desire to connect them with a loving God through our speech and mannerisms as we pray. We want to overcome the negative "Christianese" stereotype of weird and overly religious and replace it with being relational, kind, and attentive with this generation. It is important we overcome this barrier so they may completely experience the love of Jesus. Here are some "how to" bullet points:

- Smile and be friendly.
- Introduce yourself (and team members) and ask the student's first name(s). (Repeat the names back to them so we get it right!). This is a relational exchange - this is the first step in making them feel heard and important.
- Ask them how we can pray for them. Listen attentively to their requests.
- Pray short prayers - less than a minute!
- Pray the love of Jesus over them in each prayer - This will help open their hearts to God.
- Use conversational language when praying and avoid using "church language."
- Remember - Loving and relational, **not** weird, and religious.

4. Love is The Key

We desire that in every conversation and prayer exchange, the students experience the love of Jesus. That experience of love will come first through us as we talk with them. We must treat everyone with respect, even if they are not always respectful. We can show love by being kind, active listeners and ask clarifying questions to let them know we care about what is happening in their lives. Attentive body language is also important. Have an open posture (arms not crossed) and nod in the affirmative as they share their stories. We are here for them, and we want to pray for their heartfelt needs. It is through the prayer exchange they will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the love of Christ to their spirit. When they say “yes” to the offer of prayer, they are in fact saying “yes” to a touch or revelation from God.

Here is the exciting thing: When we invite the presence of Jesus into this prayer exchange, He will indeed come and reveal His love for them. Something wonderful happens in that holy moment and Jesus breaks in with His Kingdom of “*righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit*” (Romans 14:17). God’s love is the thing we all have been searching for to fulfill our lives. And the number one thing that every human being desires is to be loved. These young people are no exception. They are looking everywhere for that love (in all the wrong places), but when Jesus reveals His love for them, everything changes. This can happen in a 30 second prayer exchange! They might not recognize it fully at first, but when the love of God is made real in them, they will want more. In each of us there is a “God shaped void” that only Jesus Christ can fill. It all begins and ends with the love of God. This is why we do this ministry!

It is impossible to overstate the importance of love that needs to be demonstrated in our ministry. Jesus said the way people will know we are his followers (disciples) is by our love. It is the most important thing we can do, and love should be evident in all our interactions with others, both Christians and pre-Christians. Paul the Apostle makes a very strong case in 1 Corinthians 13 that love is essential in the functioning of all the gifts of the Spirit. If we love people by respecting them, being relational, listening attentively to their story, and asking good questions, that experience of love from us and God is always a win. Love never fails!

5. The Approach

This outreach is somewhat different from the typical “Need Prayer?” booth that I describe in the book [Street Level Prayer](#). In this application of prayer outreach, we don’t sit back and wait for the students to come to us. We reach out and engage them in a conversation. There is a fine line between engaging and being pushy. We use questions to get them to stop and interact with us. Here are some examples to start the conversation:

- Hi, do you need any prayer?

- Hi, can we pray for you today?
- How can we pray for you today?
- How's it going? Can we pray for you today?

If they say, *"No, I'm good."* You can reply by saying, *"Ok. Let me bless you."* Ask their name, and quickly pray a blessing over them. It could be as simple as: *"Father, bless (their name) as she/he walks home. Watch over and protect her/him. In Jesus name, amen."*

When they choose to stop and pray with you, here are some follow up questions:

- What do you need prayer for? Grades, grandparents, family?
- Anything specific going on in your life we can pray for?
- Anything at school that we can pray about?

Then listen attentively to their story and ask a question or two to get more insight to their prayer needs. The next step is to introduce yourself and ask their first name to make it personal. Now we can engage in a short prayer. This is where the action is and we want to get to the prayer and not just have a conversation.

6. The Prayer Engagement

We pray for their needs (what they want prayer for), bless them and pray the love of God over them. God can do much in a very short prayer. If there is more than one student, we will ask each one too, how we can pray for them.

Here is a sample prayer for Julia who asks for help in her biology class:

"Heavenly Father, I ask in the name of Jesus that you bless Julia today. Help her do well in her Bio class. Thank you that you love her and have given her a good mind to learn and study. I ask that you show her right now how much you love her, and she is your daughter that you love and delight in her. Bless her in such a way she knows you created her to have a close relationship with you, Jesus. In your name I pray, Amen."

Notice that the prayer is short (about 30 seconds) and has an emphasis on the love of God and affirming the value of the individual as created by God. It doesn't take much time for the Holy Spirit to do His work for the individual. When the person says "yes" to prayer, they receive good things from the Lord.

7. The Follow-Up and Referral

We now come to the point after the initial prayer that we need wisdom as to what to do next. Some of the students are ready to get on their way and that is a clue we are done

(for now). If they are still hanging around it might be an indication they want something more. We can ask the next question to see what God wants to do for them next:

“Have you ever accepted Jesus into your heart?”

Wait for their answer. If they are Christians, most will tell you where they attend church, and this opens the door to ask them if they attend the Christian club on campus. If not, you can hand them the club’s info card. At this point, you can follow up by saying, *“We’re here every Wednesday (or the day you’re designated to pray), so come back and tell us how God answered your prayer!”*

If they are not a Christian, or not sure, you may want to go to the next step, which is briefly sharing the Gospel and offering them an invitation to receive Christ.

You can start by asking this question:

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

If not, share the Gospel briefly by saying something like this:

“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!

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 onward.”

8. Leading Them to Christ

Although, I have covered “Leading Someone to Christ” in my book, [Street Level Prayer](#), I do want to review this important area of ministry. 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.

I use the **A-B-C-S** just to help guide the prayer. You can't really get this wrong because rebirth is already happening in them. Lead them in a prayer to: **A**dmit you need Jesus to save you from your sin. **B**elieve that he died on the cross to pay for your sin and rose from the dead to give you life. **C**ommit your life to now following Jesus as your King. Ask him to fill you now with the Holy **S**pirit so you can live out your purpose in his Kingdom.

Here is a sample prayer of leading a student to receive Christ:

*Each line is repeated by the student, just like saying a vow.

*Lord Jesus, thank you that you love me.
I **A**dmit I have made mistakes and some bad decisions.
I have sinned against You, myself, and others.
I ask you to forgive my sins.
I **B**elieve 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 **C**ommit my life to following You as my Savior and Lord.
Fill me now with the Holy **S**pirit of God so I can live this new life.
In Jesus Name, Amen.*

(This prayer can take many forms and the one above is just an example.)

How important is this step?

Our human spirit is separated from God by our sin, and this means that our spirit is sick. It is apart from the source of life, the Creator God. Healing the spirit is the appropriation of the power of the cross to Man's basic problem, alienation from God. It is communicating the love of God in Christ to heal sin and its effects. It is pronouncing the free gift of forgiveness through the blood of Jesus shed on the cross, which is appropriated through faith and the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit who comes to dwell in the believer.

IMPORTANT! Then we want to give them an **information card to the Christian club on campus**. The discipleship process will begin with the club. It is important to get them into fellowship with other Christian students. You may be asking, "Why don't we invite them to our own church?" There are several good reasons for not doing that. First, we want to get them connected with peers who are already following Jesus. As they make new friends in the club, they will be invited to churches and youth groups. It is very hard for individuals to attend a church where they don't have a friendship connection. Secondly, we want to avoid appearing sectarian (or cultish) by recruiting them to "our" church. Parents may become concerned or upset that their child is being directed to "another" church. Referring students to the Christian club also gives us a connection with the school and credibility when questioned by staff or other adults when they ask, "Who are you and what are you doing?" In short, referring to the Christian club avoids many potential problems.

9. Pray for Healing

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 seeing 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.
- Ask them after the short prayer: *"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, and if not, tell them to come back next week for more prayer next week.

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."

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, I will usually 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

Student requests prayer for something that is immoral.

On rare occasions, a student might 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. For example, if Kevin asks: *“Can you pray that I can hook up with this girl Janet? She’s hot and I want to have sex with her.”* At times this is just the student testing or teasing us to see our reaction. Turn it around and say, *“I can pray for God to meet your needs in this area.”* Then pray: *“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.”*

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.

Student wants to engage you in a discussion about theology or doctrine.

Experience has shown this, in almost every case, is unfruitful and tends to hinder the outreach. Most of these students are in some type of religious sect or cult, and they just want to start an argument. If you are in the process of sharing the Gospel and genuine questions arise, that is one thing. What we are talking about here is a confrontation where the individual wants to pinpoint specific areas of doctrine or interpretation of the scriptures. It is best not to engage with them (it takes discipline not to) and tell them we are not here to argue or debate, but to pray. If they don’t want prayer, just move on so you can continue to offer prayer to others. Engaging with them, even if you win the argument, you most likely lose the battle. Your time is taken away and opportunities lost. Our purpose is to pray and love the students we encounter. We can’t do that well if we get sidetracked by these distractions.

Parents or school staff challenge your right to do this outreach.

This is unlikely but might occur. We need to handle this with some finesse. If we are not on school property (and we should not be), we have a right to be on the sidewalk, or other public property. But pushing our rights is not the first thing we want to say to those that challenge us. It is best to explain we are simply offering to pray for the students and nothing more. We are a group of Christians from various churches in the area and we refer the students to the campus Christian club sponsored by (name of faculty club

advisor). We are not handing out any literature or recruiting students for a particular church. We are simply there to pray for students who want prayer. You can refer the parent or staff member to our website if they have questions or need more information. We want to avoid making a scene or a major confrontation. Be as friendly and humble as possible.