



# Connecting With God:

## Ways to Pray Study Guide

### PAGE 1

BEFORE VIEWING, DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS OR HAVE THE STUDENTS JOURNAL THEIR ANSWERS:

- 1) What does “praying” mean for you?
- 2) When do you usually pray?
- 3) How do you like to pray?
- 4) Have you ever thought about praying when you were in the woods or sitting by a stream or ocean?
- 5) Have you ever thought about praying when you were listening to music?
- 6) Is only the music you sing at Church “holy” music?
- 7) When you get up in the morning and stretch, do you ever think of using that “stretch” to thank God for the gift of life that day?

AFTER VIEWING THE VIDEO, DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS.

[THE IDEAL WAY TO USE THIS LESSON WOULD BE TO SHOW THE VIDEO COMPLETELY, THEN REPLAY THE FIRST PART ON “PRAYING WITH MUSIC”. STOP THERE AND DISCUSS THE FIRST SECTION OF QUESTIONS. CONTINUE THIS WAY WITH EACH OF THE OTHER TWO SECTIONS.]

#### PRAYING WITH MUSIC

- 1) “From God each of us gets our own personal rhythm.” What kind of rhythm do you see in yourself? Are you a mellow, easy-going rhythm? Are you an energetic, always ‘on the go’ rhythm? Are you some of each?
- 2) What kinds of music do you like? What do these types of music tell you about how you look at life?
- 3) Music can help us get in touch with our emotions. What are some of the things you’ve learned about yourself from music? Maybe you use music to comfort you when you are sad. Maybe you run to your music when life seems overwhelming and you feel powerless. Maybe music is something you share with your friends when you are happy.
- 4) Music can also help us see ourselves as God sees us. Think of two things you like about yourself. These are gifts from God. While listening to music that you find peaceful, thank God for the many gifts He has given you.
- 5) There are also things about yourself that you wish were different. Maybe you would like to express yourself the way your favorite artist does. Maybe you dream about having the love of someone the same way your music talks about. These invitations are also from God. While listening to this music, ask God to help you make your dreams come true.
- 6) Because music is so important to all of us, it is also an essential part of our liturgies. Certainly you have attended Masses where the music was contemporary and easy to sing. However, you can also pray with your parish music each week. Consider what the rhythm, the style, the words say about how your parish members pray. Look for similarities in the themes of the music and those of the readings or feasts the Eucharist celebrates each Sunday.

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#### PRAYING WITH OUR BODIES

- 1) Sr. Dorothy states that we get our message across with our body language, even when we don't follow up with words.
- 2) Think of a time when someone pointed out to you that you were sending "strong non-verbals" with your body. What message were you sending at that time?
- 3) "The way you move your body can be a prayer to God." The video gave us many ways to move our bodies in prayer. What ways are natural for you? What ways are uncomfortable?
- 4) Can you think of any time when you might pray with your body? Is it easier to do this alone or with others?
- 5) There are times in our lives when we are faced with situations that leave us without words, such as the death of a mutual friend. These occasions can cause us to doubt if we are saying the right words of comfort; therefore, we often just embrace the person as a way of showing our support. What are some times in your life when you have relied on body movement to share a prayer with someone.
- 6) Although praying with our bodies might seem strange at first to us, we most often think of Jesus at a time when He was praying with His body, that is, His death on the cross. Discuss how various traditional postures give different meanings to our prayer. Example: When we raise our arms or extend our hands with their palms up, what are we saying about our willingness to be open to God or others?
- 7) At the celebration of the Eucharist the Church calls the presider and the assembly to use several different body movements in their prayers. Notice what these various postures are and what meanings we assign to this prayer. Example: Kneeling, genuflecting, handshakes, Father's arms during the Eucharistic prayer.
- 8) When we receive the Body of Christ at Communion, we hold our hands in a special way. What does this body movement say about our belief in Who we are receiving?

#### PRAYING WITH NATURE

- 1) All of us feel a difference when we're surrounded by nature. It lifts us up, it gives us an experience of peacefulness. Describe a place in nature when you have felt this way.
- 2) Everything in nature tells us something about God our Creator. What does flowing water tell us about God's love? What does a rainbow say to us about God? What about other things in nature—trees, animals, mountains? What about a city park?
- 3) Nature is a way that shows us God is always present in the world around us, reaching out to us. Think of something in nature that always reminds you of God. How does that help you talk to and connect with God?
- 4) When we go into a Church, we often find many objects of nature that have been placed there to help us pray. Maybe we notice the living plants and flowers in the sanctuary. Maybe we hear the water in a baptismal font. Perhaps we can see the sun shining through the stain-glassed windows. Even at Mass when we prepare the gifts we will ask God to consecrate, we refer to the wine as "the fruit of the vine". The next time you are in a church, identify what natural elements are present there. Consider what they tell you about God and the community that placed them there.