

What's Bothering You?

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Teenagers often don't talk much to their families. They're separating, and they want their privacy. You can remain connected, however, and invite your teenagers to open up slowly through this type of prayer.

For
Teen Family

Season
Fall

Needed

Bible, a piece of paper, a pen, a daily newspaper or a weekly newsmagazine (such as Newsweek or Time) or a news source on the Internet, such as Google News at: news.google.com or Yahoo! News at: <http://news.yahoo.com/>

Prepare in Advance

- Mark your Bible to Matthew 6:26 and James 5:13-14 (or see the text below)
- Get a piece of paper
- Get a pen
- Get a news sources as suggested above

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

God, help us to be in touch with what's bothering us and come to you in prayer. Amen.

2. Ask someone to read aloud Matthew 6:26 from your Bible.

"Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

Ask another family member to read aloud James 5:13-14.

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

3. As a family, talk about these questions:
 - What does this scripture passage say about our worries?
 - What does this scripture passage say about prayer?
 - Why is it important to talk about and pray over what we're concerned with?

4. As a family, scan the news source you have selected. Have each family member find one news story that concerns him or her.
5. Ask for a volunteer to pray later on. (Most likely it will be an adult at first. The goal is to get teenagers to open up slowly.) Give that person a piece of paper and a pen.
6. Have family members take turns talking about the news story that concerns them. Have the volunteer jot notes about what each person says. Then have that person create a prayer that combines all the news concerns of family members.
7. Periodically repeat this type of prayer to get family members more interested in current events. Over time, become more spontaneous and ask family members, "What's bothering you?" The adults can lead by naming something that's more personal, such as a friend who has recently been diagnosed with cancer or a parent who lost a job. At first, teenagers may continue to say current events but over time, they'll often open up about what's bothering them. At first, they may say something like, "There's somebody at my school who is going through rehab." Teenagers will be vague at first, and they'll watch closely to how you respond. Don't probe for details. Instead, thank your teenager and pray about the request. The safer you make the prayers, the more teenagers may open up over time.

