

Praxis Session Seven: Prayer in All Languages

Main Ideas: Providing youth practical tools for their prayer life and cultivating an understanding that there are many different types of language that we may use to pray

Take photos of a child making the signs for Lord have mercy.

Supplies needed:

- Video – Lord’s Prayer, Lord Have Mercy. Link may be found at the [UOCofUSA Youtube channel](#)
- Camera or phone with video.



Preparation: Ensure that you are able to show the video provided for Prayer for All – Pray Without Ceasing. Leaders should review the video. If possible, learn the signing prior to this lesson so you may help the youth as they learn.

For Elementary Age Youth: Be prepared to review Sessions 1 & 2 from the traditional sessions.

For Younger Children (4-8) and Teenagers: Leaders should review Sessions 1 & 2 from the traditional sessions.

For Younger Children: Ask the children how many different languages they can use to say, “I Love You”. Here are a few you can teach them:

- Я Люблю Тебе (Ya Lyublyu Tebe) - Ukrainian
- Je T’aime – French
- Te Quiero - Spanish
- Se Agapo – Greek
- Ti Amo – Italian

Ask them if they know of any other way to tell someone that they love them. If they don’t have any ideas give one of them a hug, make a heart with your hands and point to them, etc. If someone says sign language, make sure to reference back to this in the next section.

Next convey to them: There are many, many languages that God has given us to communicate with one another. One of those ways is sign language. Why do we use sign language? That is correct. Some people are not able to hear -so there is a special language so that they may communicate. Today, we are going to learn a little sign language. **Begin by signing I Love You.** Ask them if they know what this means. Next let them know that they will learn how to sign *Lord Have Mercy*. Show them the video. Take time to teach them. This may take a little while.

Next say to the children, “I kick you”. Allow time for laughter. This time say, “I stink you”. Ask them what is wrong.

Explain: Yes, you must be careful when you use languages. You may use the wrong word if you are not careful. It is the same with sign language. You must be careful with how you use your hands and make the signs correctly or you may say something you don’t mean to!

Now apply the sign language to the Praxis Session Six – Prayer Through Music. Have the children sing the Triple Litany using sign language. Ask your priest if the children may sing and sign the triple litany during the Divine Liturgy.

For Elementary Age (8-12) - Begin with the same exercise from the Younger Children asking for I Love You in different languages. Ask the youth if they remember discussing language and communication earlier in the sessions. What do they remember? You may need to prompt them, “Remember when you had a city with a trouble and had to send letters?” You may want to write these down on a white board or graph paper. Points to review:

- God, through the Holy Spirit, gifted Apostles with the ability to speak/be heard in any language. Why was this important?
- Prayer is the language of our Faith
- Prayer is the way we communicate with God
- Jesus gave us the Lord’s Prayer as the way to God.

Ask the youth – What do you do if you cannot hear? How do you communicate? Sign Language. Ask the youth if any of them know how to sign. Do they know anyone who uses sign language? Why is it important for us to know sign language within our faith? By using sign language we are ensuring that EVERYONE may be able to pray with us and without ceasing.

Indicate that they will be learning The Lord’s Prayer and Lord Have Mercy in sign language. Show the video. Take time to break down the prayer and learn the signs properly. Next say to the youth, “I kick you”. Allow time for laughter. This time say, “I stink you”. Ask them what is wrong. Explain: Yes, you must be careful when you use languages. You may use the wrong word if you are not careful. It is the same with sign language. You must be careful with how you use your hands and make the signs correctly or you may say something you don’t mean to!

You may now have the youth sing the prayers with the signs. Ask your priest if the youth may sing and sign the prayers at Divine Liturgy.

For Teenagers: Ask them to have their cell phone with them for the session. Text them the following message. U all R GR8! Ask them to respond. Then send them -



Again, ask them to respond. Ask them how they understood what you were saying both times. Texting and emojis have a type of language. If you know it, you can communicate. As an additional example, you could insert the “I Love You” exercise from the prior groups.

Ask them why language is important. Then ask, What is an important feast within the church where language plays a major role? Pentecost. Ask them to relay the events of Pentecost. Why was this important to the life of the church and for the ministry of the apostles?

If language is important, what is the language of the church? They may begin by saying English, Ukrainian, etc. Ask them, if these are the languages of the church – how do we understand one another? How do we communicate with God? Use this section from the Elementary Age Traditional Session 1.

Prayer is the way we *communicate* with God.

Spoken or written language is just one way we have of *communicating*. What’s the difference between just talking and communicating? Do you always listen to people who are talking to you? Do you always hear what they are really saying?

If communicating were just talking, it would be just about impossible to “pray without ceasing!”

“Communicate” comes from a Latin word that means “common”; that grew into other words meaning “fellowship” and “to do something together.”

Can you think of any other words we use that come from the same base word? [Give some time for answers.](#)

Community or Communion

How are they all related? [They all involve us with other people.](#)

People can talk to themselves, but in order to really communicate four things are needed:

A message

Someone wanting to send the message

A way to send the message

Someone to receive the message

Relate this to the game that they played earlier.

When we pray, we want to send a message to God. As we learn more about prayer, we’ll talk more about what the message might be and ways God has given us, through His Church, to send our message. The most important thing to remember right now is that **GOD IS ALWAYS READY TO RECEIVE OUR MESSAGE.**

We use spoken language to pray but there are other ways we send our messages.

We use our bodies and faces to communicate silently every day, sometimes without thinking about it or realizing we are doing so. We call this “body language.” Sometimes our body language shows the world what we really mean, even if our words say something else! [\(Spend a few minutes having them demonstrate different things/expressions, guessing what they are such as thinking, joy, anger etc.\)](#)

Another way we communicate is through our *attitudes* and *actions*. What if you’ve been asked to do chores at home but you go off with your friends instead? Or you may do the chores, just not as well as you could have, or with lots of pouty body language. What are you communicating? What if you ask someone older to help you with a difficult math problem and they explain it to you while they sigh out loud and roll their eyeballs, how do you feel?

Remember, actions sometimes speak louder than words!

Our body language, our attitudes and our actions are very important ways we communicate. When we use them to communicate love to those around us and to do our best at all times, we show God that we are living as He wants us to and that we are thankful for all He has given us. They help us to “pray without ceasing.”

[Ask them, “How do you communicate if you cannot hear? Why is it important for us to learn prayer in sign language?”](#) Indicate that they will now learn the Lord’s Prayer and Lord Have Mercy in sign language. [Follow the steps from the prior groups.](#)

[If possible, when the youth feel comfortable, film them signing the prayer and submit to the Office of Youth Ministry for inclusion of the Pray Without Ceasing Project. Make sure to obtain permission from the parents for the use of their child’s image.](#)