

Outline for Prayer Team Training Event

By Dr. Dick Hardel

The suggested time frame for this training would be one Saturday morning, Sunday afternoon, or two short evening times. The facilitator will need writing paper for each person and a pen or pencil. Also have large sheets of newsprint, markers, and masking tape. It might be helpful to have the participants be seated around a table. Have nametags available with their names already on them for each participant. Refreshments would be a good sign of hospitality and welcoming.

Every pastor or lay spiritual leader has favorite prayer resources that she or he has used. Certainly those resources could be used instead of the ones suggested in this outline.

- I. Welcome the people to be trained for the important ministry of the congregation. In the opening prayer thank God for each one of them, for the leaders of the congregation, for the students and families in the confirmation journey.
- II. Give a piece of writing paper and a pen or pencil to each participant. Ask them to be seated at a table. Instruct them to work individually at this point and write down their definition of prayer. Give them 5-7 minutes to do this.
- III. After the 5-7 minutes invite them to join another person (you might need a group of three also) and to share their definitions and give explanations. Suggest that they expand their definition of prayer.
- IV. Next, invite the dyads to join another dyad and make a small group of four. Ask them to share their definitions. However, the dyad partners are to share what their partner had given as a definition. After all have shared, ask them to join another group of four to make a small group of eight.
- V. In the small group of eight instruct the participants to check what they had written in common and work together for an expanded definition of prayer. Instruct the group to choose a scribe who will write the expanded definition of prayer on the newsprint, which has been taped to the wall (remember to have a blank piece of newsprint under each sheet to be written upon so that it does not mark the wall). After all the expanded definitions have been written, invite each scribe to read their group's definition of prayer.
- VI. In the groups of 8 (or whatever size the group) have the participants share some of the resources they use for prayer.
- VII. Introduce the prayer team volunteers to some of the resources on prayer and spiritual disciplines that will be used by the students and their families during this time. Suggest that they, too, might want to use these resources: *Taking Faith Home*, available for a congregation at www.milestonesministry.org; *Heart Ignite*; the prayer cubes (meals & bedtime) available at www.faithwellmt.com; *Lord if Prayers* (by Herb Brokering), and others that you have found most helpful.

For \$43.00 a congregation can purchase unlimited printings of *Heart Ignite* by Lyle Griner and Diane Monroe. *Heart Ignite* has 179 different, creative ways to pray. Go online to <https://peerministry.org/?product=heart-ignite>

- VIII. The pastor should write at least four different prayers for each student and family in the confirmation growth ministry. Give that list of prayers to each of the prayer team volunteers. Explain that the prayers written by the pastor are to get them started with the hope they will write and share their own prayers for the student and family.
- IX. Divide the participants into the teams of three or two and assign each team to a student/family. It is wonderful to have three different generations in each prayer team, if possible. Give them 8 minutes to choose the prayer team leader and develop a time and place that they will meet together for prayer. (It can also be done with Skype, FaceTime, GoToMeeting, or on the phone). The pastor should have this information so that she/he can check often with the prayer team leaders and support them.
- X. Close with the story of how Luther suggested that we pray the catechism. The story is recorded in a small treatise, *A Simple Way to Pray, for a Good Friend*, Luther wrote for his friend and barber, Peter Beskendorf. Peter had asked Luther for some practical guidance on how to compose oneself for prayer. You will have to look online for this. The story is also in an out-of-print book, *Minister's Prayer Book*, edited by John W. Doberstein (Muhlenberg Press: Philadelphia. Pages 437-460).
- XI. Ask one of the participants to close with prayer.