PRAYER

Program Target: To help youth realize the importance and power of prayer in their personal lives.

What to do:
10 minutes: Open the program by reading or telling a good "answered prayer" story. If you have trouble finding one, check "Resources" below for some ideas. Having someone from your church tell an exciting answered prayer story of their own is a good option also.

10-15 minutes: After the story, allow about 10-15 minutes of discussion around the following questions:

1. Have you ever had a story of answered prayer?
2. Have you ever been frustrated by an *unanswered* prayer?
3. Why do you think some prayers are answered and others are not?

15 minutes: Outline the ACTS acronym on a flip-chart or blackboard/whiteboard at the front of the room, explaining that this is a simple pattern for prayer that helps us remember all the essential elements of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Take some time to explain each part to the group.

10 minutes: Either break into small groups or, if your group is already small, do this together. Brainstorm a list of people and situations your youth group would like to pray for and about.

10 minutes: Break into small groups (if you're not already in small groups) and give time for prayer. It may be a good idea to choose the groups yourself making sure that there are some spiritually mature youth in each group who won't mind praying aloud in a group. Encourage the groups to include all parts of the ACTS prayer and pray for the names on your group prayer list.

Preparation Time:
This program requires enough preparation time for you to choose a story about prayer or find someone to tell one.

Bible Text:
"Since prayer is at the bottom of all this, what I want mostly is for men to pray--not shaking angry fists at enemies but raising holy hands to God." (1 Timothy 2:8, The Message paraphrase)
Song Service:
"Whisper a Prayer"
"Jesus on the Mainline" (call Him up and tell Him what you want)

Vesper or Closing Thought:
"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity; and in the hush and silence of the soul, that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need, will speak to our hearts....We can no more live the

Christian life without prayer than we can live the physical life without food. To grow in grace, we must ask and receive the bread of heaven. The strength gained by prayer gives a preparation for duty and fills the heart with peace.To every sincere, earnest prayer an answer will come. The answer to your prayer may not come just as you desire, or at the time you look for it; but it will come, and in the way and at the time that will be for your best good. The prayers you offer in loneliness, in weariness and trial, God answers, not always according to your expectations, but always for your good." (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, January 29, 1902).

Resources:
Some good books about answered prayer (available from Adventist Book Centers) include:
Because You Prayed, by Ruthie Jacobson and Penny Estes Wheeler
The Difference is Prayer, by Ruthie Jacobson
Incredible Answers to Prayer and *The Incredible Power of Prayer* by Roger Morneau