

Pray21

LEADER'S GUIDE

leading pray21

The following pages provide you with practical ideas for implementing the Pray21 campaign most effectively in your faith community. In order to set you up for the greatest success, we offer a variety of scenarios. We encourage you to determine which option or combination of options best meets the needs of your congregation. Above all, we urge you to work hard to keep the campaign simple — like its name.

why 21 days?

They say it takes 21 days to establish a habit. That's one reason we're challenging adults and young people in your church to spend 21 days together, laying a foundation for a 365-day-a-year, til-death-do-we-leave-this-earth commitment to God and his mission.

God says this sold-out lifestyle should be normal for all ages. So we defy the common assumption that keeps anyone under twenty-one on the sidelines. You're starting a three-week venture in which adults and young people must choose to live in the real world. It's God's world. A world where twelve-year-olds can show the way to eternal life, fifteen-year-olds can mobilize a community to right an injustice, eighteen-year-olds can die for their faith, twenty-one-year-olds can infect a church with passion, and forty-year-olds aren't too grown up to learn.

why pray with?

Why not *serve* with, or *love* with, or *study* with, or *grow* with? Well, all of these are part of this venture, but success in any of them is only possible when you're in continual dependence on God. They all require faith.

And prayer is the voice of faith.

If God is going to work powerfully in your church—and in churches across this world — this generation must be covered, undergirded, surrounded, permeated, propelled, and sustained

with prayer. In other words, they must be aware at every moment of our utter need for God.

Let this be your pledge for the next 21 days: *I will put myself fully in God's hands, as I never have before.* Throughout your preparations for the main event, keep Jesus right in front of you, leading and strengthening you. During the 21 days themselves, keep prayer central—talk about the God we pray to, and the incredible dreams he can fulfill when we ask.

Pray in every event, pray creatively, pray meaningfully, pray passionately.

Remind everyone often that prayer is not a magic ritual that somehow manipulates an impersonal universe or hails some distant being. Prayer is conversation. Prayer is to a Person, who truthfully speaks, who genuinely listens, the best Friend ever. That Person happens also to be the Almighty, who creates with a word, who literally tends every detail of existence, who can do anything we ask, and will do everything that serves his plan. And that Person is a Lover, who has amazingly allowed us to break his heart with our sin, who handed over and sacrificed his greatest Treasure for us, who eagerly longs for our companionship, today, tomorrow, forever.

That's why pray with youth for 21 days— That's why Pray21.

for the pray21 coordinator

What amazing plans God has for your faith community! From eternity past, he has wanted your fellowship to become unified in love and truth. He wants you all, as one body, to powerfully influence the community and the world around you.

Pray21 isn't the only path toward this end, but we trust God will use this venture to jumpstart a complacent church or to further fuel the fire in an effective church.

Thank you for accepting a key supervisory role. You're probably a busy person, and we respect your many important priorities in life. Please put Pray21 near the top of your list for the limited time it needs your leadership. We're not talking about just another educational class, or a short-lived emotional experience. This is a chance for your church to break into a new stage of God's kingdom dream. We'll give you guidelines and ideas, so you can lead this endeavor with confidence. We also urge you to gather a team to share the load. At least one partner is recommended.

Now, maybe you're implementing Pray21 in a setting other than a local church. That's fine. It can be adapted to virtually any setting. Maybe you've assembled a coalition of multiple churches in your community. Or you're able only to do Pray21 within one or two ministries within your church (although whole-church support and involvement is best). Your setting might be a parachurch ministry, a school, a neighborhood, a family, a cluster of friends, or something else. We'll

leave it to you to adapt the material and as necessary for your situation. Meanwhile, we'll assume throughout this guide that local churches will be the most common setting.

getting the word out

Hopefully you'll have many weeks of lead time to build your publicity campaign to a peak perfectly. But even with a shorter lead-in, try to help people to see God's potential for changing your church if young people and adults can ignite with passionate commitment. It's best if key church leaders will endorse Pray21 enthusiastically. But if you're not one of those leaders, and they don't respond as you'd hoped, use your available opportunities to publicize the events, while showing respect for your leaders. Think creatively and strategically. Consider direct mail, mass e-mail, automated phone calling, personal phone invitations by a team of callers, printed cards or fliers...maybe even radio or TV ads. (See "Communicating the Commitment" section for ideas that will motivate people to get involved.)

In the weeks leading up to Pray21, besides publicity, here are a few other tasks that you and your team will need to accomplish:

decide how Pray21 will work best for you

The way you carry out Pray21 can be as unique as your church or ministry. It's important in any setting, however, that adults and young people do this together. You can use classes, large or small discussion groups, and 1:1 pairings of young people and adults, as well as individual completion of daily readings and exercises. If at all possible, we urge that you include two key ingredients in your plan:

Open the opportunity to everyone in your congregation, at least for involvement in the class or group settings. (Screen adults more carefully for the 1:1 partnerships.)

Try to arrange 1:1 adult/youth partnerships for as many people as possible, with certain cautionary measures we'll describe below. Small groups have some advantages, and can also be used, but the 1:1 partnerships are typically the connections that lead to greatest growth.

possible scenarios for the campaign

Scenario #1: Meet as a class or large group four times—once to kick off the 21 days, and then in three more meetings at weekly intervals. Best meeting days will be Sundays for many churches, but any day works. Between meetings, all participants, young and old, commit to completing each day's readings and exercises individually. And once or twice each week, 1:1 partnerships meet in person — or by phone — for prayer, mutual accountability, and encouragement.

Scenario #2: Start and end the 21 days with classes or large-group meetings. Between these, schedule small groups of mixed adults and young people that meet once a week, or as often as two or three times a week. As part of these meetings, or between them, 1:1 partnerships meet or talk. On all other days, participants complete readings and exercises individually.

Scenario #3: Arrange 1:1 pairs (an adult and a young person) or groups of no more than six (with at least one adult in each). These pairs or groups meet in person as often as possible to work through some of the 21 daily readings. On other days, participants complete daily readings on their own, followed each day by a quick phone conversation with a partner to touch on highlights for that day and to pray.

Scenario #4: Meet in a class, a large group, or multiple smaller groups for the first 3–5 days in a row, to start the 21 days in constant community. You might even start each of the three weeks this way, followed by a few days on which participants complete daily readings individually. Fill meeting gaps with planned phone conversations within 1:1 partnerships.

Scenario #5: Mix and match any of these ideas, and come up with others that work best for your setting. You can imagine any number of variations on these and other ideas. Large groups or classes can break out for half of the session into 1:1 pairs or small groups. Make between-meeting contacts through blogs, phone texts, or other means. In some events, devote extended time to creatively organized prayer for especially important issues. Use worship — musical or otherwise. And more.

We believe that 1:1 partnerships and small groups are the key to a successful Pray21 campaign.

You will receive the full 15-page Leader's Guide with your order of Pray21 books. Visit pray21.com for more information or to place an order.

- Blessings!

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