

NATIONAL   
**Day** of **Prayer**  
— FOR YOUTH

2021

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# Scripture

*My people, hear my teaching;  
listen to the words of my mouth.*

*I will open my mouth with a parable;  
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—*

*things we have heard and known,  
things our ancestors have told us.*

*We will not hide them from their descendants;  
we will tell the next generation*

*the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,  
his power, and the wonders he has done.*

*He decreed statutes for Jacob  
and established the law in Israel,*

*which he commanded our ancestors  
to teach their children,*

*so the next generation would know them,  
even the children yet to be born,  
and they in turn would tell their children.*

*Then they would put their trust in God...*

**Psalm 78:1-7 NIV**

# Vision

The National Day of Prayer for Youth is a day chosen for Canadian churches to specifically focus in prayer for our generations in middle school, high school, and post-secondary studies. We recognize their unique challenges, but we believe God is leading them to reach others, and we believe God is calling on our congregations to come together to lift them up in prayer.

The Psalmist reminds us that it is our privilege and responsibility to tell the next generation about the glorious actions of our God. We believe that one of the ways we can do this is by intentionally praying for youth and letting them know that there is a community of faith that is supporting them and caring for them.

Over the last year, while some churches have seen growth and maturity with their youth, others have lost contact with students as our churches have had to make several pivots including the shift to online gatherings. Our youth and young adults have faced even more challenges and pressures with a loss of social connection, changes in learning, and many other things. Some grieve missed milestones. If there is ever a time for churches to step up and step out in faith, prayer, and support, it's now.

We are inviting your church to set aside the day of **Sunday, June 13**, and give particular attention to youth by praying for them, and with them. As your congregation gathers, take time for focused, directed prayer.

Overall, we're inviting our churches to pray for resiliency in our students. We're asking you to boldly pray for our students, that they would continue to grow in Jesus. Also, let's not forget that there is great opportunity to not just pray for youth, but also to pray with youth. Recognize their importance in God's Kingdom. They are not just the future of the church; they are an integral part of our churches now. Seeking their input in this time of prayer is incredibly valuable.

May God bless you and your church as you pray for students in your neighbourhoods, and as you come alongside them. May God remind you of his unforeseen blessings the last few months. May God help you uncover needs for your students, and inspire you to meet those needs as you pray for youth and listen to their hearts!

# How to Pray

## on June 13th

As you think about what a time of prayer can look like, you may choose to set aside a segment in your service time on June 13th, or you could make this the focus of your entire service. Use this resource to help you lead your prayer initiatives.

Below, you will find tips for how to prepare for the National Day of Youth (Hint: It involves asking youth how to pray!). We encourage you to capture this date for your entire congregation to see or hear.

Beyond that, you will find prayer topics for your Sunday Service. Remember, we're inviting your church to pray bold prayers for a resilient generation.

Next, you'll find a way to prayerfully engage your neighbourhood, with a guide to planning a prayer walk, as well as a digital prayer walk. This is a great option for churches and groups that are not currently gathering in-person.

And finally, at the end of this resource you will find regional and global prayer needs. As your church prays for youth, we encourage you to focus prayer locally, nationally, and globally.

# How to Prepare

## for the National Day of Prayer

**Before June 13**, we encourage your church to ask youth, in and outside your congregation, how you can pray for them.

- *Ask students how your church can pray for them. Call them, text them, ask them what matters most.*
- *Have students ask their friends. Maybe you can uncover some needs in your community.*
- *Take note of what students are celebrating.*
- *Take note also of what they are grieving. There has been a lot of loss in this season. What are they missing out on? How can your church stand beside them in grief?*

After asking youth about their prayer needs, **consider creative ways to capture this data** for your entire church to experience on June 13th.

- *Use a visual data mapping app to create a word map of youth prayer needs that can be projected on a screen. (Eg. Wordclouds.com, worditout.com)*
- *Create a prayer board, by using sticky notes for youth to write down specific prayer requests. Invite congregants to take a note home with them, and commit to praying for this need.*
- *During your worship service on June 13th, invite youth from your congregation to share what they see are the needs, celebrations, and losses during this time. This can include a live presentation from your students, a pre-recorded video, or a panel interview with youth.*
- *Set up a map of the world with global and regional youth prayer needs (see global and regional prayer needs below)*

## Topics of Prayer for Sunday Service

Use these topics of prayer and corresponding slides to pray for youth during your worship service on June 13. These prayer topics have been developed using research gathered before and during the pandemic. They point to the realities youth are facing during the pandemic and beyond.

Consider organizing a different person to lead a time of prayer for each of the following topics. These individuals can be youth allies (youth leaders, next gen pastors, mentors, etc.), parents or grandparents of youth, or perhaps even youth themselves.

If your church is exclusively gathering online or using a hybrid model, consider having each prayer leader send in prerecorded video prayers.

## 1. Where there is vulnerability, we pray for resiliency

The pandemic has weighed heavily on our youth. Through the pandemic, youth have expressed concern for the potential of civil unrest, family stresses due to confinement, and maintaining social ties. They have also expressed a decline in their overall mental health. These effects leave them uncertain about the future, and **so we pray:**

- *For stronger social ties, and positive relationships*
- *For families feeling the pressure of confinement*
- *For resiliency, throughout the rest of this pandemic, post Covid-19, and beyond*

## 2. Where there is grief and trauma, we pray for healing and growth

Youth have lost so much in this season from cancelled graduations, proms and trips, to missed opportunities, milestones, celebrations, and family members. Many youth are grieving the loss of loved ones to Covid-19. Others have experienced the trauma of family breakdown. **So we pray, where there is grief and trauma...**

- *For healthy grieving*
- *For recognition of new opportunities in what has been lost*
- *For growth through grief and loss*
- *For forgiveness*
- *For reconciliation in families*
- *For healing through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

## 3. Where there is grief and trauma, we pray for healing and growth

The rates of mental illness, anxiety, and depression among youth and young adults are on the rise. Mental illness has been called 'an epidemic' among young people in Canada. Moreover, Mental health concerns have been accentuated throughout the pandemic. More teens are expressing a sense of despair, hopelessness, and declines in overall mental health. **So, we pray...**

- *For a supernatural hope in the face of despair.*
- *That we would recognize signs of distress in the youth in our care.*
- *For those currently experiencing mental health struggles in our midst.*
- *That we would work to remove stigma around mental health in our own church community.*
- *For stronger support for Youth experiencing mental health issues in Canada, our community, and our church.*

#### **4. Where there is isolation, we pray for loving community**

Pandemic life in many parts of Canada has been incredibly isolating for teens. At different points, schools have gone online, sports and extra curriculars have been cancelled, and student ministry gatherings put on hold. Feelings of Isolation and loneliness are rampant. We also know that youth have fewer relationships with older caring adults (an important marker in resiliency), and often feel unsupported. **So, we pray...**

- *Where there is Isolation, may there be Loving Community.*
- *For more Intergenerational relationships in and outside of our church.*
- *For the youth in our congregation that we have not seen since the beginning of Pandemic.*
- *That the youth in our care would feel known and accepted.*
- *For moments where friends of our youth who face loneliness would find avenues into community (digital or physical).*
- *For opportunities to demonstrate our care and support to youth in our church and community.*

## 5. Where there is threat, we pray for safety

As a vulnerable people group, youth in Canada face unique threats. As youth allies, it is our responsibility to ensure the systems and procedures within our own organization uphold youth safety at all costs. It is also our responsibility to advocate for youth safety at a regional, provincial, and national level. **So, we pray...**

- *For covering over youth physical well-being here in our community, and across Canada.*
- *For covering over their digital lives - safety, in Jesus' name.*
- *For covering over their mental health - speak against suicide and suicide ideation.*
- *For covering over schools - middle schools, high schools, CEGEP, university and college campuses*
- *For covering over female, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ youth, as we know they are more frequent victims of acts of violence.*
- *Specifically, pray for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and the trafficking industry in Canada.*

## 6. Where there are spiritual 'nones' we pray For resilient discipleship

Over the past decade, there has been a rise in the spiritual 'nones' demographic among youth and young adults. Many youth have simply not been passed on a faith. But research shows that youth of 2021 are interested in spirituality. For many without a grounding faith, however, their spirituality is a web of different ideologies, worldviews, and practices. **So, we pray...**

- *for a revival of faith in Jesus among the next generation.*
- *For Jesus to make himself known to this generation.*
- *For a rise in creative evangelism, both in the physical and digital landscape.*
- *For the youth within our congregation, and the wider Church, to be a light through word and deed to their own generation.*

## 7. Where there is vulnerability, we pray for resiliency

We know churches are in decline across Canada, and that Covid-19 has accelerated this trend. Increasingly, youth ministry practitioners are wondering, who is coming back, and whether they will ever come back. It becomes paramount that our churches recognize youth are not simply the 'future' of our churches, but a vital part of our churches now. And **so we pray...**

- *For maturity to reach the next generation, even at the expense of my own preference.*
- *For courage to let youth lead in my church*
- *For wisdom to engage the cultural moment*
- *For resources to give the next generation our intentional focus through budget, staffing, and programming, now.*
- *For engagement beyond the walls of the building, into the neighbourhood, and the digital world*
- *For compassion for young people, for authentic love, to set tables of belonging.*

## 8. Where there has been opportunity and blessing in this time, we give thanks to God.

Finally, we know that with all the loss in this time, there has also been a measure of new opportunity and blessing. For that, we give thanks to God! Spend time naming where you have seen God at work in the lives of your Youth throughout the pandemic, and give him gratitude!

# Prayer Walk

## In your Neighbourhood

The Covid-19 landscape across Canada differs from province to province. While some provinces are experiencing a relative sense of normalcy, others are experiencing ongoing lockdowns and restrictions. We recognize that many churches will not have the opportunity to gather in person for the National Day of Prayer for Youth this June. So, we invite your church to take to the streets, through a Prayer Walk over Youth Places. The intention of this prayer walk is to cover Canadian youth in prayer, by physically visiting their places and spaces.

Follow these steps to prepare for your church's Prayer Walk:

### 1. Plan the logistics for your Church's Prayer Walk

A prayer walk will look different for every church, in every context, particularly considering your local Covid-19 guidelines. Consider the following, as you plan your Church's Prayer Walk:

- **Who** will walk? Will your entire congregation walk together, or will you encourage people to walk in small groups, or as individual families? Be sure to specifically invite youth from your congregation to join.
- **When** will your church walk? Will it be after your in-person or online Sunday Service? On a specific day of the week? At groups' own discretion?
- **Where** will your church walk? Will you walk through the neighborhood your church building lives in, or will you pick a different location? Will you invite smaller groups to pray through their own neighborhoods?

### 2. Promote your Prayer Walk

Let your church know that you're planning a Prayer Walk through social media, your email list, or Sunday announcements. Specifically communicate the details outlined in step 1.

Download our social media kit to assist with promotion in your context.

### 3. Plan your Prayer Walk 'Map'

Remember, the intention of the Prayer Walk for Youth Places is to cover youth in prayer by physically visiting their places and spaces. As you prepare your 'map,' think of all the places and spaces that youth are engaging with in your neighborhood. Include youth from your congregation in this process – they know the spaces and places that are meaningful to their peers. Consider these places as you build your own map:

- **Schools** (*high schools and middle schools in your neighborhood*)
- **Universities and Colleges** (*in your city (a big need among older teens, and young adults is clarity around calling and vocation. Pray for students, as they discern where God is calling them)*)
- **Playgrounds and Skateparks** (*we typically think of playgrounds as children's spaces, but many teens congregate at playgrounds over lunch hour or after school. Pray that in these 'hang out spaces' youth can hear and share about Jesus*)
- **Places where youth are involved in extra curriculars** (*rinks, dance studios, baseball diamonds, soccer fields*)
- **Places where teens are working** (*fast food, malls, convenient store, pray for meaningful positive employment*)
- **Coffee shops and restaurants** (*where teens and young adults hang out*)
- **Libraries and Community Centers**
- **Specific homes of teens** (*in your neighborhood (pray for their families, pray for their discipleship, pray you can be a light to their family)*)
- **Camps** (*pray for your camp leaders, pray that camp ministry will impact your region for the kingdom, ask God how you can partner with Camp ministry this year*)
- **Youth Centers, Group Homes and Shelters, Social Services Centers** (*Pray for at-risk youth. Pray for their physical and mental well-being. Pray for provision*)

#### 4. Reflect on the needs of youth in each of these places.

In each of these places, Youth will have different corresponding needs. Together with your walking group, determine the potential needs contained within each of these places. Ask teens in your congregation to provide insight into this. Use the list of prayer topics in this resource to fully unpack the needs of youth in these places.

#### 5. Walk, Pray, Look, Listen.

You've done the groundwork, now it's time to set out on your Prayer Walk! With your walking group, follow your map, and pray for the needs of youth determined for each location. As you move through each location, ask God for eyes to see, and ears to hear what He has for your group. At the end of your walk, discuss any impressions on your heart, or actions items out of your time together.

# Prayer Walk

## In your *Digital* Neighbourhood

We recognize that our youth spend an increasing amount of time in the digital realm, and we believe that we can pray for them in these spaces as well. The intention of this prayer resource is to pray over the digital spaces of our youth.

#### Identify an interactive space, a social space, or a content space:

- An example of an interactive space is a game (such as Among Us). Take some time to play a game and pray for other players as they come in and out of your part of the game.
- Explore a social space (such as Instagram) and check out what's trending. Pray over your students and the topics that are trending in their social spaces.
- Visit a content space (such as YouTube) and pray for the content creator as they receive responses from critics and fans.

# Regional Prayer

## For Youth

### Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada

- Pray for youth whose friendships have been affected by changes in school structures, athletic scheduling, and other changes caused by shifting restrictions
- Pray for the well-being of families, as they face extra demands on time, and greater financial uncertainty. Pray for safety in homes, and pray against family violence.
- Pray for the families of rotational workers who have been affected by isolation requirements while home
- Pray for families who have been separated by the closure of the Atlantic Bubble.
- Pray for university students who are discouraged by a full academic year of virtual learning
- Pray for high school students who are discerning God's invitation on their lives.
- Pray for middle school students navigating the pressures of online peer relationships and cyber bullying.
- Pray for new and increased ways of connecting with students, and expanding the reach of our ministries. Pray for a greater number of students to hear the Good News of Jesus.

### Canadian Baptist of Ontario and Quebec

- Pray for grace to be extended between the regions of “hot spots” and those with relatively low impact from COVID.
- Pray for the shift of graduates (whether from middle school, high school or post-secondary) to their next chapter.
- Pray for the racial and ideological tensions between groups of people.
- Pray for new insights in ministering/outreaching in the digital realm.
- Pray for the impact the last two years of modified academic studies and their long-term implications.
- Pray for the impact in their “adulthood” development (in career/employment, housing, health, etc.).

## Union d'Églises Baptistes Francophones du Canada

- Pray for safety, protection and wise operation of Summer day camps, as many are reopening this Summer
- Pray for the youth without plans or activities this Summer that they may find something meaningful to do this Summer
- Pray for continued peace, healing and constructive conversation in the midst of various racial tensions and the project of Bill 21 on religious symbols
- Pray for the many CEGEP students who will have spent nearly half of their program through online school by the end of this health crisis
- Majority of churches in Quebec rely on volunteer youth staff. Pray for their availability and endurance during these trying times.

## Canadian Baptists of Western Canada

- Give thanks for the resiliency of youth and their ability to adjust to ever changing restrictions
- Pray for our graduates who are struggling to discern what's next
- Pray for youth groups which, for the most part, haven't met in person for a calendar year
- Pray for youth who have developed unhealthy habits during the pandemic
- Pray that youth who have been separated from extended family (especially new immigrants)
- Give thanks for youth who have made decisions to follow health guidelines even when it's hard

# Global Prayer

## For Youth **From CBM and their Global Partners**

### Africa

- Recovery of global economy. COVID-19 has made many youth lose their job and business.
- Recovery of hope for the future. With COVID-19, there is an increased sense of hopelessness and depression that has resulted in high levels of crime in both cities and villages.
- Justice and restoration for the young men and women who face gender-based violence-
- School closures due to COVID-19 have resulted in increased vulnerability of young girls (they are not as protected as they were in school). There is a big number of young girls who have conceived out of marriage.
- Having facilities and infrastructure to do schooling online, during the pandemic.
- Having access to the church again.

### Latin America (Dominican Republic, Cuba, El Salvador and Guatemala and Bolivia)

- Ministry of young Baptists in local churches - Pray for the spiritual health of the Baptist Youth Ministries and strengthening their leadership.
- Studies – youth have been deeply affected by school closures, some for up to an entire year. Students struggle with connection to online learning where it is offered, kids have been put out to work (many as young as 10) to help their families facing economic challenges and lack energy and encouragement from parents to continue their studies.
- Emotional health – Youth are lonely, lack opportunities for play, study, meaningful work, and also often live in an unhealthy home environment.
- Youth employment – for entrepreneurship opportunities that can help youth provide for their families, and allow time for continuing studies. Youth need mentors and support for their creative ideas.
- For our church partner leaders and CBM national and Canadian staff, and for the Canadian church that financially supports all that we do together

## Thailand, Myanmar

- For the situation in Myanmar: For governmental stability, for security, for economic stability, for the safety of youth, children, and their families.
- For the students in Thailand Bethel Theological Institute, due to pandemic and political instability in Myanmar, at least 50% of the current students are stuck in Myanmar and not able to return to Thailand to study. Pray for their perseverance to study on-line, protect them, keep them safe, pray that the border will be open again very soon.
- For the Chinese students in Germany that were served by CBMf in Germany. Pray for those who have already accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour, guide them, and lead them, may their faith grow continuously and be a good witness when they return home in China.
- For those seekers, may they find peace and love in Christ as they are away from home and feel lonely during this pandemic.

## Philippines

- For students in the Philippines (both in grade school and in college/university) who have not attended 'in-person' classes for over 1-year now. For students living in rural areas this has been especially difficult since their access to reliable internet is not good and causes challenges in attending their virtual classes and completing their assignments.
- For young adults who recently completed their studies but are struggling to find work. There is an extremely high rate of unemployment among young adults, which causes financial hardship within families and discouragement.
- For the mental health of youth and young adults in the Philippines. Over the past few years, the rate of anxiety, depression, and suicide have escalated drastically among this age group. The pandemic has made things even worse because the future seems so hopeless and bleak as more and more people struggle with physical health issues, unemployment, food insecurity, and conflict.
- For youth and young adults who are struggling with addictions. With the pandemic raging in the Philippines and positive cases on the rise, one addiction that is on the rise is online gaming. Many youth have turned to video games to overcome their boredom. Unfortunately, for many, this has led to an unhealthy addiction to online gaming, which gets in the way of educational responsibilities, job opportunities, and even in their spiritual formation.