

Finding God in Prayer

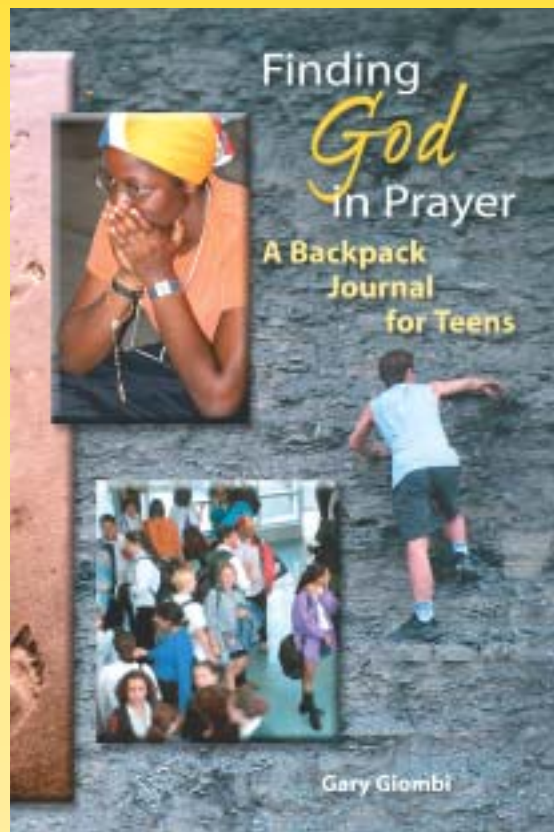
A Backpack Journal for Teens

What teen doesn't love a quest – finding a new adventure just ahead? This compelling new book guides high school teens on a spiritual quest that could change the way they related to God for the rest of their lives.

This inviting introduction to a lifelong journey in prayer helps teens to:

- Explore prayer forms, including Scripture, meditation, the Lord's Prayer, the labyrinth, the Jesus prayer, the *Kyrie eleison*, *Lectio Divina*, and prayers of sorrow, praise and Thanksgiving.
- Apply practical suggestions for living out the Beatitudes, practicing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, avoiding the seven capital sins.

Finding God in Prayer is the perfect companion for Confirmation preparation programs, mission or service experiences, retreats, group or personal use.



In this Product Preview you'll find these sample pages . . .

- Introduction: The Journey of Prayer (page 3)
- How to Use This Book (page 4)
- Expressing Sorrow, Asking for Forgiveness (page 20)
- Forgiving and Not Judging (page 21)

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The Journey of Prayer

You are now beginning a guidebook for an important journey, the journey of prayer. What do you need to bring along with you? Bring along relaxation. Although your journey requires hard work, it also requires time to relax. Let your body relax so that you have the energy you need for the long miles ahead. Let your mind relax by putting away your preconceptions and prejudices. Bring along several important attitudes: openness to try any path and see where it leads, endurance to exert yourself climbing mountains, and courage to see the truth wherever you may find it.

What is the destination of your journey, the center of your labyrinth? Don't just say "God." Begin by saying that it is a journey to your best and truest self. It is a voyage to the depths of your soul, and it is there that you will find God.

Journaling and Prayer

A good way to reflect on your life and your relationship with God is to keep a prayer journal. A journal contains your reflections and feelings about what has been occurring on your life-journey. It can be a collection of "letters to God" about your life.

Keeping a journal can be a form of prayer. Not only can you write about how you find God in your life, but also as you are writing, you will experience the continuing presence of God. The writing itself will become a prayer. When you use your journal to record your prayers, you will find that they pray themselves again as you write or reread them.

Write.



Pray.



Do.



How to Use This Book

You do not have to do the prayers and activities in this book in the order they are given, although it would be better to do so. You can also skip any that do not seem meaningful to you, although you may profit from an experience to which you were not at first attracted.



You will notice that the prayers and activities are marked with stepping stones. There are more than 200. On the inside of the front cover of the book is a labyrinth like the one above, but with 144 stepping stones leading to its center, a number representing total fulfillment in the Scriptures. After you complete any prayer or exercise, check off the stone(s). Then go to the labyrinth and check off or fill in the same number of stones. Begin at the bottom of the labyrinth and move toward the center. By the time you reach the center, you will have found something valuable there. You will have gotten to know yourself and God better. Then walk and pray your way back along the same path.

Take five to ten minutes for each prayer or activity. Unless instructed otherwise, go to a quiet place to pray. Write this prayer journal in such a way that it will be understandable to you and still have something to say to you ten years after you have completed it. Be sure to keep it in a safe and special place where people will not get at it. You might even consider putting a "pen name" into the book in case someone else should find and read it.


Along with a variety of prayers, this book suggests activities for you to try, including some in which you will search on the Internet. You will not be given any URLs, but your favorite search engine will help you. The book also gives you an opportunity to think about and put into practice the Beatitudes and the works of mercy. You will learn about the seven capital sins, which are called "capital" because they can lead to other sins. You will be encouraged to avoid the capital sins as orientations that can mess up your life.


Expressing Sorrow, Asking for Forgiveness


Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.


Psalm 51:1


In your relationship with God, just as in any other relationship, there are times to express sorrow and ask for forgiveness. A relationship that lacks these expressions will not grow.

 **Write.** Describe some of the suffering you have caused others and some that you yourself have experienced.

 **Pray. Kyrie Eleison**
Repeating the prayer *Kyrie Eleison* (Greek for “Lord, have mercy”), in rhythm with your breathing is a wonderful prayer, both to ask forgiveness for wrongs you have done and also to ask for help for people who are suffering. Mentally pray *Key ree ay*, or “Lord,” as you inhale; *ay lay ee sone*, or “have mercy,” as you exhale. If you remember one and like it, use the melody of a hymn or a response from Mass for these words.


 **Do.** If you no longer pray to God before bed, try returning to that practice. As part of this prayer, remember the good things of the day and thank God. Remember the times you fell short of the mark and ask God’s forgiveness.

 **Do.** Experience receiving forgiveness. Go to someone you have hurt and ask for forgiveness. Or go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Or, during the first part of the Mass—the Penitential Rite—ask God for forgiveness.

 **Write.** A one-sentence prayer that sums up your experience doing this page.

Forgiving and Not Judging

Jesus told us not to judge others (Luke 6:37), and to forgive them seventy-seven times—always (Matthew 18:22).

 **Write.** Describe a time when:

• You were judged wrongly


• You judged wrongly

• You were forgiven

• You forgave

 **Pray. Prayer of Sorrow and Recommitment**

O God, I am sorry with all my heart for all my sins, for all the times I have hurt other people, myself, and You. I am sorry for these sins because of the pain they have caused others, and the pain they have caused me in my life and will cause me in my death. I am sorry that they have hurt You, my God, who is present in all people, especially the suffering. I will really try not to do these hurtful things again, to commit these unloving sins again. Please help me.

 **Write.** Describe how your prayers and activities went and what you learned from them. Then write a one-sentence prayer that sums up your experience doing this page.