

SchoolPrayer

We The Students will fan the flames of revival by reestablishing a culture of consistent prayer in public schools



*SchoolPrayer has met daily in public school since 2022
Their Slogan – “One More For Christ”*

SchoolPrayer, Inc. is a non-denominational Christian movement that will legally reestablish the culture of consistent prayer in public schools.

Prayer in public schools is legal

“Student request started SchoolPrayer”

SchoolPrayer has met daily in the Lemmon Public School since September 2022. SchoolPrayer started because a student expressed their desire to feel the same fullness in faith in school that they feel while in the youth group. Scott Peterson, a teacher recognized that need and sought approval from the school administration to hold daily prayer before his contract time in the morning. SchoolPrayer started with eight students. It has more than doubled in attendance to almost 20% of the entire student body. Those attending are multi-denominational including approximately 40% Catholic and 60% Protestant or Pentecostal.

Powerful Testimonies of SchoolPrayer students

My name is Jaylin, I am in 8th grade. I go to Lemmon High School along with my friends. Every morning me and my friends go to Mr. Petersons room to start our day off the right way. When I walk in there, I know it's going to be a good day. We start off with writing prayer requests on a piece of paper then we put it into what we call our prayer box. Then, at 7:40 Mr. Peterson closes the door and shares an encouraging word from the lord. Lastly, we pray over the box and over ourselves. After I leave the room, I feel an ultimate peace over me, and I know it's from the Lord. Starting my day off with people that love the Lord like I do makes me know that I am not alone. I used to have a lot of anxiety and feeling lonely and depressed in school, but after we started meeting in the morning I have learned that I am not alone. I feel that having an older role model in the school that feels the same way I do about the Lord, and who would be willing to use their own time to teach us the word is very special. I know that we need to bring God back into the schools, he longs to pour his heart into our lives but we are not willing to pour it out to him. In conclusion, I feel more schools should have a person that would pray with the kids; and a person who would even just encourage them to keep going.

Mornings are really hard for me, I just can't find a reason to get up and get ready for school. When Mr. P shared with the youth of my church that he would start a prayer group that met every morning, I was overjoyed. It means a lot to me that one of our teachers would care enough about us to make sure we start our day on the right foot. Prayer has been a solid foundation for me and I have always tried to start my day with prayer, but with this group, I have the ability to do it every day. This group has allowed my days to be so much brighter. My confidence and faith in the Lord are at their peak.

Josiah

The morning prayer we hold at school has been the highlight of many days for me. It is great to start the day praying with others that have the same intentions to glorify God. It also is a way we can have others pray for us and gather together to pray for strength to minister to others in our school.

Cate

Why is starting off your day with prayer so beneficial? It's because you're starting the day off talking to your father. God should be in your life all the time but when your day starts off connected with him you'll genuinely be a calmer person. The day will seem manageable because your focus is on him and nothing else. It has helped me so much with my anxiety and the stresses of school. I've seen such an improvement in my attitude as well. I know God is working on the prayers we place in the prayer box and I have peace knowing they will come to pass in his perfect timing. I highly recommend starting your day off speaking to the Lord. Plus, it could touch someone else in the school who sees what is happening around them.

Shay

Student Testimonies from Scott Peterson's Prayer Group

The Students are real people. Their names have been changed for confidentiality.

Please refer to SchoolPrayer.US for videos of Students testifying to the benefits of daily School Prayer.



Research on why we should fight for prayer in public schools

Reasons to advocate for elected SchoolPrayer and Bible reading are quite numerous and run the gamut from preventing to minimizing crime in school, to helping prevent teen suicide, to improving student relationships and behavior, to improving students' self-worth.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams shocked many people in February 2023 when he said, “When we took prayers out of schools, guns came in schools... Don't tell me about no separation of church and state. State is the body. Church is the heart. You take the heart out of the body, the body dies.”

Researcher George Barna found that, “About three fourths of all people who have consciously, intentionally, and personally chosen to embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior did so before their 18th birthday,” (“The First Year of Launching A High School Ministry: The Launch Box, pg. 13).

First Liberty's Jorge Gomez provided numerous stats on the positive benefits of religion in schools. In an article entitled *Motivating Public Schools to Welcome Religious Expression* (June 2, 2023), Gomez wrote, “Students' religious faith is an asset for schools.

Research shows religion has a positive effect on academic achievement.”

Gomez cited research by Dr. William Jaynes, California State University, Long Beach, where he conducted a meta-analysis of 30 studies involving more than one million students learning what factors best reduced student achievement gap. The study found, “Of all the variables...religious faith had the highest effect.”

In that same article, Gomez reported that Ilana Horwitz, a researcher at the Stanford University Graduate School of Education determined that, “Religious students benefit because the faith community and the school community both build characteristics that help students' develop. Both institutions want students to respect authority, be conscientious, cooperative and kind. Both want students to have a sense of purpose in life.”

Contrasting the positive factors of religious education, popular cultural trends have substantial deleterious effects on young people. Some of these trends include:

- Young people have increased feelings of isolation and self hatred. 42% of high school students felt persistently sad or hopeless, 23% drink alcohol, and 16% use marijuana (Dr. Daniel Amen, physician & psychiatrist, “How to Raise Mentally Strong Kids,” Fox & Friends Weekend, May 20, 2023).
- High school students persistently sad or hopeless: 57% females, 29% males. These feelings of hopelessness have increased by 60% over 10 years (Center for Disease Control, 2021).
- US female teenagers who have attempted suicide: 13%; considered suicide 30% (Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2021, CDC).
- Between 2007 and 2017, teen suicide rate spiked by nearly 56%— the rate climbing from 6.8 deaths per 100,000 people to 10.6 (<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/teen-suicide-rate-spikes-56-in-9-years#The-bottom-line>).
- Suicides in young people, age 10 to 24, increased 47% from 2000 to 2021 (<https://www.statista.com/chart/30206/suicide-homicide-ratesus-10-24/>).
- For every completed suicide by a young person, it is estimated that there are 100 to 200 attempted suicides (<https://www.sccenter.org/programs-and-services/for-teens/teen-suicide-facts/>).
- Among persons aged 14 to 18 years, overdose deaths increased 94% from 2019 to 2020 and 20% from 2020 to 2021 (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7150a2.htm>).
- There have been 783 shootings with deaths or injuries at elementary and secondary schools since 2000. From 2020–21, there were 93 school shootings with casualties, including 43 school shootings with deaths and 50 school shootings with injuries only. (<https://usafacts.org/articles/thelatest-government-data-on-school-shootings/>).
- Young people are spending more time on social media and less time in person-to-person interactions. When asked to respond to the statement, “I believe online experiences are meaningful replacements for in-person experiences”: 50% of Gen Z and Millennials agreed. That number dropped to 19% for Gen X, Boomers and Matures.
- Another poll found that patriotism and religion are among declining values. In 1998, 70% identified patriotism as very important, compared to 38% in 2023. 62% said religion was very important declining to 39% in 2023.
- Sexually transmitted diseases are common, especially among young people. There were 26 million new sexually transmitted infections in 2018 in the United States. About half of the infections were in people between the ages of 15 and 24. Findings in a report by the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

Prayer meetings in public schools are legal

The legal basis for prayer in public school is derived from the 2023 US Department of Education guidance on prayer, the Equal Access Act of 1984, and a lawsuit-Wigg v. Sioux Falls School Dist 49-5. One can refer to SchoolPrayer.US for links to these laws.

Your school administration and school district policies will determine the specifics of what SchoolPrayer is permitted to do in your school. SchoolPrayer advocates maintaining a positive relationship with school administrators and respecting the administration’s responsibility to protect our students.

SchoolPrayer must be voluntary. SchoolPrayer meetings only take 15 minutes. The request to the school administration would be to allow a 15 minute time slot most likely before school or at lunchtime. This time must be during the free time of both the students and teachers. SchoolPrayer prefers daily prayer, however 2 to 3 times per week still has the potential to change school culture and greatly benefit students.

Community Group

The most favorable option is to define SchoolPrayer as a Community Group (like Boy Scouts, 4H etc.). As a Community Group, the Leader (Teacher or Non-school Person) can participate in the meeting including praying as well as leading the meeting and determining the content. A teacher cannot prepare content during their contract time. The request to the School Administration for a SchoolPrayer Community Group will most likely be positively received if both the leader and some students meet with the administration.

- A Community Group will most likely not be allowed to use the school media/announcement system. However, a Community Group can promote their events by word of mouth.
- Refer to SchoolPrayer.US to learn how to start a community group.

School Clubs

The other option for SchoolPrayer is to form a school club. The club would need to be student led. The Teacher/Advisor would be limited on input during the SchoolPrayer meeting and could not lead prayer or lead the discussion. However, the Teacher/Advisor can guide the discussion during the meeting and can be involved in preparing meeting content. The Teacher/Advisor cannot prepare content during their contract time. Also, Teachers and Non-School Persons can help organize the school club’s formation off school property (i.e. church).

The School Media/Announcement system can be used to promote club meetings. Promoting prayer club meetings is very important because it has the potential to change the School’s Culture.

- Non-School Persons cannot regularly attend school club prayer meetings.
- Refer to SchoolPrayer.US to learn more on how to organize a School Club.

If your School does not allow Community Groups or Extra-Curricular School Clubs

If your School does not allow any extra-curricular clubs or community groups, we suggest you go to your school board and respectfully propose changes.



SchoolPrayer

SchoolPrayer

Please answer your call

WE THE STUDENTS WILL:

- Ask our friends
- Ask a teacher
- Ask a trusted adult

To help start SchoolPrayer

WE THE TEACHERS WILL:

- Ask students
- Network with pastors, youth leaders and devoted Christians
- Reference SchoolPrayer.US to help start SchoolPrayer

SchoolPrayer.US provides suggestions for content if needed

Register your SchoolPrayer group on
SchoolPrayer.US to receive
a printable SchoolPrayer certificate that can be
posted where you meet.

SchoolPrayer meetings only takes 15 minutes.

Please answer your call

WE THE PASTORS, YOUTH LEADERS, DEVOTED CHRISTIANS WILL:

- Ask students
- Network with teachers and the Christian community
- Reference SchoolPrayer.US to help start SchoolPrayer

WE THE CHAMPIONS (TEACHERS, PASTORS, YOUTH LEADERS, DEVOTED CHRISTIANS) WILL:

- Help start SchoolPrayer
- Document our commitment to SchoolPrayer by registering to be a SchoolPrayer Champion on SchoolPrayer.US – then SchoolPrayer can communicate with you and keep you updated.

If you wish to support SchoolPrayer financially, we
would be honored to partner with you.

Please send your tax deductible donations to:

SchoolPrayer, Inc.

P.O. Box 418, Lemmon, SD. 57638
or donate online at SchoolPrayer.US



SchoolPrayer

Register your SchoolPrayer group on SchoolPrayer.US to receive a printable SchoolPrayer certificate that can be posted where you meet.

SchoolPrayer will maintain a National Registry.
The registry will be used to document the growth of the SchoolPrayer movement.

SchoolPrayer.US

Questions: email SchoolPrayer@Leadingsd.com

Materials in this book are a production of SchoolPrayer Inc., not official school materials of this district.
