

The following lessons (of which there are three) can be presented over three week's time. It would be very difficult to present denials & affirmations, prayer, and meditation in one lesson.

“Pulling Weeds, Planting Flowers”

Fourth Unity Principle: Through prayer and meditation, we align our heart-mind With God. **Denials and affirmations** are the tools we use.

Intention: This part of the lesson places focus on denials and affirmations.
Resources, “The Quest” by Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, “Teens on the Quest” Association of Unity

PreSession: To start the teens thinking what are their negative beliefs and thoughts, Have displayed on blackboard negative judgmental words: “I am always late” “I am not attractive” “I am just not good with math”. “I just can’t stop smoking” “I am scared of heights” “I just can’t seem to stop hanging around with the wrong group”. Have the statements aligned on the left side of the board as later you will have positive on the right side.

Bible Verse: Matthew 5:37 “Let what you say be simply “yes” or “no.” Jesus was simplifying Things when he said yes and no. If it’s true, say yes. If it’s not, say no. Release and Affirm. Deny its power and affirm truth. Make it simple. Keep it simple.

Affirmations: I let go of that which is no longer useful to me. I am willing to release any negative Beliefs or emotions. I let go and let God be God in me. (Please have everyone say the affirmation sometime during the lesson).

Unity Statement of Being

**God is All, both visible and invisible
One presence, one mind, one power is All
This One that is All,
Is perfect Life, perfect Love and perfect Substance**

**I am an individualized expression of God
I am ever one with this
Perfect Life, perfect Love and perfect Substance**

Daily Word

Opening Prayer: Sweet Spirit, we let go of any concerns, fears, worries and regrets that we may have brought here with us today—releasing them into your loving hands. As we let go, we Affirm your loving guiding presence within us and within all things and all situations. And we know that all is well. Amen

Introduction:

Release/Denial

In order to keep a garden beautiful you nurture the soil, plant seeds and pull weeds. It is the same thing with our consciousness. Studying spiritual principle nurtures the soil of our minds. Release/denials pull weeds. Affirmations plant seeds. As we get rid of wrong thinking, beliefs and actions we build up God consciousness.

We have been given the power of elimination. Without elimination, we would have no way to rid our bodies of toxins. When we release toxins from our bodies we strengthen those life-sustaining forces that keep us whole and healthy. The faculty of elimination applies not only to our physical bodies. Our free will allows us the luxury of eliminating or releasing anything in our live which is not sustaining and nurturing us. You can release any belief not consistent with what you are. If a thought or feeling or an action does not validate the divinity in you get right to work denying it space in your life. Refuse to accept it. You are not denying the appearing of a situation, you’re denying its ultimate power over you.

As an example, there is a man who chain-smokes cigarettes and he wants to quit. He would not attempt to release the habit by saying "I don't smoke" because he cannot deny his excessive use of tobacco; it's an obvious fact. He probably can't even deny his craving for cigarettes, he couldn't honestly say "I don't crave cigarettes" because he really does. What he can deny is the thought that he is a slave to cigarettes. He can deny his being completely controlled by them. A good statement of release for him might be, "I don't need cigarettes" By doing that much, he has taken a big step toward releasing the addiction. He has not denied the fact that he smokes or that he craves it, but he has denied the necessity of smoking. He has opened up his mind to accepting that smoking is not an inevitable part of his life unless he allows it to be.

As his awareness expands, he soon sees that he's been given power over all things, not only cigarettes and that nothing can control him unless he lets it. Again, nothing can control him unless he lets it.

Although it is always the thoughts and feelings behind the release statement which change your consciousness, the actual words can be a great motivator. For instance, a woman who constantly overeats may try to convince her intellect, "I don't like chocolate," but that's ridiculous. Of course she likes chocolate and she knows that. She would have a difficult time convincing herself otherwise. It would be more effective for her to say, "I don't have to have chocolate," or "chocolate is not in charge". Her intellect can agree with those words and so she will more easily accept them into her consciousness.

How about someone that with a poor self-image? When thoughts of unworthiness gang up, what can be said if "I am not like that" or "I refuse to think of myself that way" or simple "Not true!".

Remember you do not deny something out of existence, you deny your inaccurate beliefs about it.

GroupActivity

Depending on the size of the chapter, break up into small groups of four with a sponsor in each group to assist. Paper and pencils and have everyone write down what they would like to release, what negative thoughts, beliefs, fears they may have.

Sample: **Release:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Affirmation:

1. _____
2. _____
4. _____

If anyone is having trouble coming up with affirmations, ask if they would like some assistance from the group.

You could have examples on the board such as:

Statements of Release:

This, too, shall pass
I do not need this in my life
I release this from my life
I do not accept this
I won't
Out!
Never!
Stop!
No!

Statements of Affirmations:

Everything is all right
God is my source
God is my health
God is my help
I can do it
I am strong
God is taking care of it
I trust God
It's all right

Yarn Circle

Have everyone stand in a circle. 1st person starts, while holding the yarn they state:

- their name
- what is the best thing that happened to you this week
- what is your favorite subject in school

Holding on to the yarn with one hand and the ball of yarn in the other, they toss the ball to a person across the circle from them. That person repeats the answers to the above questions. When they are finished, They also hold on to the yarn with one hand and then toss the ball to a person across from them.

The ball of yarn should come back to the 1st person when everyone has participated.

Ask the teens to observe the design that has been created. As you move hands up and down it can change The look of the web. To create this design it took the input of each person. So it shows the importance of Each person and their contribution to the whole. Ask one person to drop the yarn and notice what happens to the design, then ask another, and another. As each person leaves it changes the foundation. Again showing how each persons input is important.

Sponsor: ask everyone to stay in the circle and have a seat. Then say: **“There is a Bible passage that reads: “When I was a child, I spoke like a child—when I became an adult I put an end to childish ways.” As children we have old ways and old beliefs and as we get older those old ways and beliefs change. As an example, I was afraid of the dark but now I feel safe. I used to fight with my sister but now we get along.”**

Discussion questions:

1. **What childish ways, old thoughts, feelings, beliefs or even things have you released in order to grow and mature.**
2. **What do you think the difference is between being “childish” and “childlike”?**
3. **What “childish ways” do you think you still cling to? What ways or beliefs are you not willing to give up?**
4. **What aspects of “being a child” do you want to keep as you grow older?**

Sponsor presents following: (feel free to read following)

Statements of release/no and affirmation/yes, are two of the most powerful tools you can use. These statements must be based on a truth. As an example, an x-ray may clearly show a medical problem. You can't deny that there is a shadow on the x-ray. What you can do is release it by denying that it belongs in your body. You can deny that it has power to affect the wholeness that God wants for you. Release is to let go of what you believe to be wrong and from that you rebuild your thoughts and beliefs. If you change your beliefs you change your life. Can you plant a flower on top of a weed and expect it to grow. It is about releasing your negative thoughts and beliefs and affirming positive. Statements of release and affirmation don't do any good if they are filed away in your mind. You have to hear yourself say them either silently or out loud. It's hearing words connected to strong feelings that makes an impact.

Pass out paper and pens and say: Take a look at the part of your life that is in the most turmoil. It could be negative self-talk, a bad habit, a situation, a person that has a negative influence on you. Analyze your thoughts and your feelings about what is going on. Write this down on your paper.

(give them some time to write) Pass out cards that have examples of release and affirmation. Then ask them to write down a suitable release statement that they can use, they can create their own or use examples. (give time for them to write) Then ask them to write down a suitable affirmation for their situation. Then ask if they would like to share.

Have everyone repeat the following affirmation together:

I deny that any problems have no power over me (group repeats)

I let go of that which is no longer useful to me (group repeats)

I am willing to release any negative beliefs or emotions (group repeats)

I let go and let God be God in me (group repeats)

Closing prayer: In Unity we talk about putting “feet on our prayers” which is another way of saying that it is up to us to take action toward what we desire for ourselves and others. The same is true of denials and affirmations. Let us be mindful of doing action towards making each of our affirmations a reality. With God all things are possible!! And for this we say thank you God – Amen

Handout (enough for eight – run copies for more)

Statements of Release

This too shall pass
I do not need this in my life
I release this from my life
I do not accept this
I will not let this control me
This is not the truth of me
God
I say no to this !!
I say NO to negative talk
I let go & release
I surrender this to God

Statements of Affirmations:

Everything is all right
God is my source
God is my health
God is my help
God is my strength
All things are possible with God
I say yes to my good!
I say yes to positive words
The best is yet to be
I am healthy, wealthy & wise

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“Talking With God”

Fourth Unity Principle - Through *prayer* and meditation, we align our heart-mind With God. Denials and affirmations are the tools we use.

Intention: Prayer is a connection you establish between you and God.

Resources, “The Quest” by Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, “Teens on the Quest” Association of Unity

PreSession: Create a sacred space for today’s session. Have music playing, have objects from nature such as leaves, flowers, stones, shells, have pictures of teachers and masters such as Jesus and Buddha, fabric to drape table. Invite the group to silently work together in creating their sacred space.

Points to Ponder: For a visual, you may want to list following on board:

- Times of prayer provide you with sustenance and renewed strength
- The reason for praying is more important than the method
- Your whole life is a prayer and life-prayers are always answered
- Having your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions all “in sync” is your strongest prayer
- Prayer is talking to God
- The highest use of prayer is the announcing of your intention to open yourself to God’s will
- Prayer is a way to express your thanks for past, present, and future blessings
- Prayer is not to change God. It is to change you.
- Prayer puts you in the God-mode.

Opening: Invite the group to join together in a circle, perhaps by gently ringing a bell. Flow with the sacredness of the space that has been created, inviting the group to again be silent and present with each other in this space for a few moments, soaking in the holiness and love. You may want to sing, “Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place” inviting the group to join you.

Bible Verse: “But you, when you pray, enter into your inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray to the Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret shall recompense you.” **Matthew 6:5,6**
Jesus is reminding the people that prayer is not a matter of outer form; it is a matter of consciousness. Man is a thinking being and the mind is the connecting link between God and man. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is.”

Affirmation: “My life is my prayer” “The Creator and I are one” “I choose to know God and transform my life”
(Please have everyone say the affirmation together sometime during the lesson)

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Daily Word

Opening Prayer: “Mother and Father God, we call forth in prayer your all-pervading presence of love and light. We ask, and as we ask we give thanks that your power and presence are here and demonstrated to us through the in-dwelling Christ. We rest knowing that we are held in loving and all-embracing arms, where our every need is supplied and where we shall ever rest secure from all the fears of the world. We come as little children, trusting in the presence of your love, knowing that only love can hold us together in peace and harmony and prosperity. Every fear falls away as we bask in the sunshine of your love”.

Introduction
Of Theme:

You may want to have the “Points to Ponder” read by one of the teens.

The purpose of prayer is not to give God a shopping list of things we want done for us. The purpose of prayer is to help us know God and to allow God’s will to work in and through us. Our whole life is a prayer. Every thought, emotion and act is a message to God as to what we are claiming. Jesus taught that if we ask we receive that true prayer is always answered. But the problem arises when we try to use our will to force God-ordained universal laws to work. We start thinking that our words alone are enough to change things, that our prayers alone are enough to “make us deserving.” But as you’ll see, it doesn’t work that way.

Read following story:

A man we know was orphaned at an early age, had almost no education, and has never attended a religious service. We doubt he has ever uttered what most people would call a “formal” prayer. Yet this man lives a life of joy and thanksgiving. He loves and blesses all of the plants in the nursery he owns. He projects that same feeling of love to all of his customers, to his friends, and to his family. You only have to be in his presence a few moments before you pick up his enthusiasm and appreciation for the wonder of life. You feel good just being around him. He is happy in his work, has many loyal friends, and no one can ever recall a time when he was not in good health. It is quite obvious how the general tenor of his life is a constant prayer which is continuously being answered. Another man, he routinely and dedicatedly spent fifteen minutes each morning and each evening in “formal prayer”. He prayed with great passion for the healing of his lungs. For thirty minutes out of every twenty-four hours, he fervently affirmed healthy lungs, asking God to restore his diseased tissues to wholeness. But the other twenty-three and a half hours—what of them? They, unfortunately, were a different story. The man continued his lifelong habit of smoking. Against his physician’s warnings and contrary to his own common sense, he smoked until the day before he died, leaving this earthly plan a bitter man who cursed God for not answering his prayers.

Yet perhaps his prayers really were answered because his “life-prayer” was the message he sent twenty-three and a half hours of every day. If this sounds harsh, just remember the idea of our entire lives being a prayer. What was the overall message of that man’s life? That was his true prayer. What is the overall message of your Life? We each have to ask that question of ourselves, for the answer shows us what our true prayer is. If your thoughts, feelings and actions are in agreement with your formal prayers, you have great power at your fingertips. God’s desire for us is total good. The very nature of God is wholeness, abundance and love. As part of God’s creation, we are inheritors of all that.

Let’s look at another example, say a person is praying to God for strength to stop drinking, regularly attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, keeping in touch with the AA sponsor, applying the Twelve Steps of the AA program to life, staying away from old “haunts” filled with people and patters which had been destructive, expecting things to work out in a positive way, and lovingly helping others to stay sober, now that’s a prayer!! The wishes of your heart are reflected in every aspect of your life, your thoughts and actions agree with your words, making for a power “life-prayer”.

Activity

Stretton Smith, in the 4-Ts Prosperity Program, describes a fool-proof way to construct a prayer which he calls Three-Column Prayer. In this system, every prayer is composed of three sections:

An Aspect of God: What specific quality of God are you calling forth? It will vary depending on the purpose of the prayer. For example:

- The healing power of God.....
- The presence of God.....
- The prospering power of God.....
- The eternal love of God.....

Where? Very often this is simply “in me”. For example:

- The healing power of God in me.....
- The eternal love of God in my heart.....
- If we are praying with someone else, it may be within you.....
- If our prayer concern is more universal, it may be the peace of God in all the world.....

What? This is the activity of God. For example:

- The healing power of God in my dissolves every sense of sickness
- The eternal love of God in my heart blesses all the world
- The peace of God in all the world expresses now.

With this simple system it is easy to instantly create a prayer for every need, every feeling. Have each person create a simple Three-Column Prayer that describes how they're feeling in an affirmative way. If someone is tired, for example, their affirmative prayer might be: “The loving presence of God in me keeps me alive, awake, alert and enthusiastic.”

Invite teens to think about some of the recent events in their lives that have been “challenging” and to list words or phrases that describe the feelings and responses to those challenging situations. For example:

- Frustration
- Tired
- Stressed-out
- Can't do it anymore

Then invite them to develop Three-Column Prayers that would help in similar situations in the future. For example: “The unlimited power of God in me provides all the energy I need to finish my term paper”.

When everyone has finished, share the prayers.

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, we know that your presence and power that is within each one of us fills us with strength and love. Your will for us is absolute good and we align ourselves with your consciousness. We are open and receptive to your Truth and we move forward in this day and each day to do that which is ours to do. We align our thoughts, words and actions to be your demonstration of Truth. We give thanks for these blessings. Together we say Amen.

Connecting with your Inner Power

Fourth Unity Principle - Through prayer and *meditation*, we align our heart-mind with God.
Denials and affirmations are the tools we use.

Intention: Meditation (silence) is listening to God.

Resources, “The Quest” by Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, “Teens on the Quest” Association of Unity

PreSession: You may want to keep the sacred space you created for prayer. Rather than play background music, you may want to keep the room silent. In fact, you may want to set up a greeting table outside of your main room at which you will greet group members and invite them to enter into the room reverently and quietly, even as they walk to the sacred space prepared. Invite them to walk to the sacred space mindful of their walking, their steps and breathing. Assure them that there is no wrong way to “do” the silence. Invite them to find a comfortable place and position to be in the silence. Warn them that their minds may be very busy with thoughts, and to be comfortable with that. Suggest that they can release their thoughts and come back to a centered place by focusing on their breathing.

Points to Ponder: For a visual, list following on board:

- In the silence, we meet God
- The silence (meditation) is listening to God
- In the silence, we move beyond the intellect into the realm of spiritual knowing
- In the silence, we connect with the power of the indwelling Christ.

Bible Verse: “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:6

Jesus delivers this advice in the Sermon on the Mount, calling those who pray in public hypocrites. Their motivation or intent is to impress others with their religious activity, rather than to commune with God. When we “go into our room and shut the door,” we are entering into the silence, into the secret place of the Most High within us—the place where God lives “in secret,” because this is where he reveals himself only to us.

Affirmation: “In the Silence I meet God moving beyond the intellect into the realm of spiritual knowing and connect with the power of the indwelling Christ.” (Please have everyone say the affirmation together sometime during the lesson)

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Daily Word

Introduction of Theme

What we are calling “the silence” is also meditation. Spending some time each day in the silence you will find your peace and strength, experience your spirituality, feel your oneness with the one God, sense the comfort and healing and guidance which God offers you. However, all of this is impossible if you are too busy, too anxiety-ridden, too stressed, too noisy to listen. God is forever ready to communicate with you. All the guidance and inspiration and divine ideas that you could ever possibly want or need are there for you. They are ready to transfer from universal God-Mind to your own sub-conscious mind so that you can draw upon them as you need, but you have to be in a receptive mood, quiet and still. You already know that prayer is talking to God. Meditation is just the opposite—it is listening to God. There is nothing mysterious about the process, anyone can do it. Your quiet times become an open door through which you walk into a broader light, a larger sense of yourself and your world.

Activity:

Discuss with the teens their experience when they first entered into the room. Questions:

- What was this experience like for you?
- What do you know about the silence?
- What did you notice about your thoughts? In other words, was it quiet in your head?
- Why do you think that it is hard for most of us to be silent for very long?

My Secret Place

Read the Bible Verse Matthew 6:6 where Jesus tells his disciples, “.....pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” After reading the passage, invite teens to think about a special, secret place that they remember from childhood, or even a place now that “nobody else knows about.” Invite them to close their eyes for a few moments and imagine themselves there. Suggest that they use all of their senses to really feel as if they are now in that secret place where it always feels special and safe.

After they have imagined their secret place for a few moments, invite them to open their eyes and journal about it for five minutes. Assure them that they will not be asked to share, unless they feel moved to do so. Afterwards, invite the group to discuss:

- What does it feel like to be in your secret place?
- How is your secret place like the “secret place of the Most High” within you?

Activity

Mandala Drawing Meditation

Materials: White drawing paper; thin-tipped colored markers.

Explanation: Invite group to enter into the next 20 to 30 minutes in relaxed silence, as they prepare to experience a silent “drawing meditation.” Each will be invited to create their own personal mandala, That is intended to help them find their sacred center and to offer them a sense of wholeness.

Explain that the word “mandala” means “circle” in Sanskrit. The mandala is ancient and universal, Appearing in the art, architecture, and dance of cultures everywhere. It is a “magic circle” and often contains sacred symbols or images.

Invite teens to imagine themselves in the center of the blank white page in front of them. Then invite them to close their eyes and to picture themselves located there, looking out at the world from their place at the center of the page. “Think about all the qualities you possess. Meditate upon them. Picture them in your mind’s eye. What colors, shapes, textures, or images come to mind when you think about your qualities?” (pause) “After you have let these random thoughts and images pass through your mind for a few moments, you may open your eyes.

“Now look again at the blank piece of paper in front of you. Focusing on the center point, say, “THIS IS MY CENTER,” Then draw an image or symbol in that central area which represents your unique inner core. Let images, colors, shapes, and lines unfold—radiating outward from your center design—expressing your special qualities and “beingness.” Assure the group that they will not be asked to share their mandalas unless they are moved to do so.

Meditation: This will be an opportunity to lead the group in a meditation and then enter into the silence.

Invite the group to become relaxed and still. Take in a few deep breaths.....as you breath in say the words "God is" and as you breath out "I Am".....Breath in – God is..... Breathing out – I Am.....Breath in – God is.....Breathing out – I am..... Let yourself continue to relax in your chair.....letting go of any thoughts that come, whatever they may be.....When a thought comes, observe that it is a thought, and then allow it to glide by.....just as you would watch a cloud floating across the sky and out of view..... Be kind with yourself.....be gentle with your passing thoughts..... simply allow the busy chatter of your mind to come to a place of rest..... As you rest in the peace of the loving presence of the Christ within, allow the surface of your being to become crystal still.....like a peaceful lake in the middle of a green Mountain valley.....you are quietly reflecting the beauty that is around you..... Wait now in this beauty..... in this peace..... in this presence..... I still my body.....I still my mind.....I relax completely.....I surrender my spirit Soul and body to you, God.....Fill me with your Presence.....as I sit And listen.....in the silence.....in the silence.....

(allow time in the silence before bringing the group gently back to the room)

Closing

Prayer:

“ I would like to invite each person to silently look at each person around the circle Hold each of your friends in your heart and anyone else that is not with the group today. Spirit Of Truth that abides within us, we open our hearts to your presence. We surrender our worries And concerns to you and feel them melt away as we enter the Knowing of your love. We are Made new in Christ and hold gratitude in our minds and heart. Thank you God - Amen