



## Best Practices

### “Conducting a Virtual P.R.A.Y. Program”

The purpose of this document is to share some best practices of conducting a P.R.A.Y. program virtually using Zoom (or your preferred online meeting platform) using tools available from P.R.A.Y. This document was created by church and Scout leaders who have conducted virtual P.R.A.Y. programs and who want to share their key learnings. If you have learnings you would like to add to this document, please send them to Jason Noland ([jasonn@praypub.org](mailto:jasonn@praypub.org)).

- Email parents and students before and after each session.
  - Before - to deliver the material about the next session and provide directions.
  - After – to follow up with verification of completed tasks and/or direction of follow-up activities the student needs to complete.
  - The after email for one session can also serve as the before email to the next.
- Limit class size to 8 students, 10 max.
- Have one parent in the room with the student for students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The parent does not have to be on screen; just in the room to help ensure student stays focused.
  - Consider how you want parents to be engaged. Are they monitoring their kids or participating in discussion to help their child answer questions.
- Have the students talk about their work (don't turn it into a lecture).
- Think about a time limit for the class, especially in K thru 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. (Jesus and Me courses).
- Consider spreading the chapters out over more sessions. (If the class time is limited to 45-60 mins and you have 8 students, you might benefit from taking 2 zoom sessions to cover a chapter.)
- Schedule Discipline, stick to times and location (where your class is delivered online)
- Service Projects (Church & Life courses) – students work on their service projects on their own.
- Resources: P.R.A.Y.'s tools (<https://www.praypub.org/documents-resources>)



## The P.R.A.Y. Program

- Process and steps do not change – you still must connect with the Pastor and ensure each participant has their own booklet
- In many cases, Pastors will be acceptable to the material; it's the final review where specific faith or denominational doctrine should be discussed (if your course is open to different Protestant faiths).
- Treat an online program as a guided daily or weekly devotional – a ministry.
- Utilize technology – you have options
  - Create a private Facebook Group and utilize the Facebook Live feature, up to 8 hours to use per session
  - Facetime, Google Meets (app required), Microsoft Office (Skype)
  - Zoom will allow free accounts for up to 40 minutes
  - Maybe your church or charter partner will have resources you can take advantage of.
  - Engage the Pastor, or designee, especially for the final review session, as a part of “Community Care”
- Most important – Keep parents and families engaged. Parents and guardians will play an important role in delivering the program and ensuring completion.
- Create a registration (Eventbrite or Sign-up Genius) in advance with plenty of time to obtain booklets through Scout Shops, Scoutstuff.org, or PRAY
- Make meeting private so no “bombing” can occur
- Automate mute function, open for questions, or answer when hands are raised.
- Use props or recorded video to help with Zoom fatigue
- Utilize Google Classroom as a repository for documents and assignments
- Utilize resources from P.R.A.Y. and send material ahead
- You might create a pick-up/drive-thru night if the session is local, PRAY can ship in bulk and make personal arrangements for delivery/returns if necessary.
- It can be difficult to identify people. Utilize the renaming feature available in most platforms to include First name and Last initial only.
- Have fun! There are great apps like Quizlet or Kahoot, which allow for development of game show style event where they can log in from home and compete against each other for matching the correct answer to specific lessons. It is immediate recognition, and an opportunity to explain the thought in the question. ( Sample: Public, God and Me: <https://create.kahoot.it/details/pray-pub-god-and-me/d9a3c9ec-b308-4677-b2ef-c1caf908ef68>)
- **Very important to remember safe guidelines for youth participation online**
- Jesus and Me, “new” God and Me Student workbooks are ideal for virtual because of the new self-contained workbooks
- PRAY Virtual Resources: (<https://www.praypub.org/documents-resources?lib-category=virtual-learning>)