



# O HEART, VIGILANT |AND| SINCERE

A PRAYER GUIDE WRITTEN FOR TEACHERS, BY TEACHERS  
VOLUME ONE

Above all else, guard your heart,  
for everything you do flows from it.

**PROVERBS 4:23**

EDITED BY TWP FOUNDER  
**MARILYN RHAMES**

***O Heart, Vigilant and Sincere***  
**A Prayer Guide Written For Teachers, By Teachers**  
**Volume One**

***Edited by TWP Founder***  
***Marilyn Rhames***

**First Edition**

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***O Heart, Vigilant and Sincere***  
**A Prayer Guide Written For Teachers, By Teachers: Volume One**

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**PART 1:**

**THE PURPOSE OF  
TEACHERS WHO PRAY  
&  
THIS PRAYER GUIDE**

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Teachers Who Pray, Inc.'s first publication, ***O Heart, Vigilant and Sincere: A Prayer Guide Written for Teachers, by Teachers, Volume One***! Six educators from four states—California, Illinois, Maine, and Minnesota—wrote this book by convening in Chicago one frigid weekend in November 2017 for TWP's first Curriculum Writing Retreat.

I invited each educator/co-author to the retreat, but most did not know each other. God supernaturally synced our spirits and created a bond so strong that we were laughing, crying, confessing, encouraging and praying for and with each other like longtime friends. *Within 48 hours of the retreat, about 70 percent of what you are about to read was written -- and it is high-quality spiritual food for the soul!*

The most unique aspect of ***O Heart, Vigilant and Sincere*** is that it's a spiritual resource *written for teachers, by teachers*. Combined, the co-authors have 99 years of teaching and administrative experience--so we fully understand the highs and lows of education. We've worked in urban, rural, and suburban schools in the Northeast, Northwest, Southwest, and Midwest. We've worked in district, charter, and private schools. We are Black and White, married and single, Republican and Democrat. We range in age from the 20s to the 50s. We are from various Christian denominations. Our different perspectives and backgrounds weaved in a tapestry that added depth to our spiritual understanding.

Most of all, we were unified by two things: ***our deep love for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our concern for the spiritual and social-emotional wellbeing of our fellow educators***. *For only when teachers are whole can we meet the needs of the whole child.*

The title of this prayer guide was inspired by Proverbs 4:23 which says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." As educators, we must vigilantly guard our hearts against lies planted by Satan and the world. We must also continually strive for a pure and sincere heart so that God can use us for His glory. When we are vigilant and sincere, God will show up mightily in us. We will teach better lessons. We will have more love for our students. We will be at peace, even when chaos surrounds us.

Our monthly themes and weekly "Teachable Moments" were written to mimic the natural progression of the school year, acknowledging the common fears and anxieties of certain times of the year and dispelling them with specific promises from God's Word.

We encourage you to use ***O Heart, Vigilant and Sincere*** as the text that centers your TWP chapter prayer meetings at your school. Don't forget to fill in the Praise Report, Prayer Requests, and Prayers Answered sections each week. Record what God has done for those in your prayer group and be amazed!

~ Marilyn Anderson Rhames  
Founder/CEO of Teachers Who Pray, Inc.



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



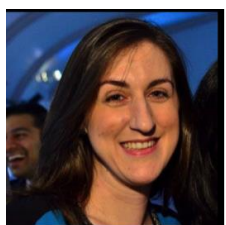
**Felicia Bailey-Carr** is a principal of an elementary school in Stockton, California. With 24 years of teaching and administrative experience, Felicia has taught grades K-11 and has served as a math coach, literacy coach, and assistant principal of a high school. Felicia holds a master's degree and has earned numerous credentials and awards for excellence in education. She is a lifelong learner who believes in the transformational power of knowledge, prayer, and a deep love for God and His Word. Felicia and her husband have two adult children.



**Patricia Heard** has been teaching math and language arts at Mount View Middle School in rural central Maine for more than a decade. During that time she has served on her district's literacy and math committees, as well as helped organize the middle school math after-school program. Firmly believing in the power of prayer, Trish established a TWP chapter on her school campus in 2016. She desires that this prayer guide will encourage other teachers to also start TWP chapters at their schools. Trish and her husband have two precious children, a son-in-law, and a fur baby kitty.



**Heather Kohnen** has been in education for over 20 years. As a primary teacher, reading specialist, and instructional coach, Heather has seen how inspired educators make a difference. Her passion is to bring Christian educators into community to encourage and equip them for the calling that God has placed on their lives. To that end, she travels nationally and internationally, helping teachers advance their practice with future generations in mind. Heather lives in Chanhassen, Minnesota with her husband and three children.



**Claire Miller** has been an urban teacher and school leader since 2009. She has been a verbal behavior therapist for students with autism; a middle and high school humanities teacher; an instructional coach; the founder of a restorative practices teacher training program; and an adjunct professor at Lehigh University's College of Education. Her life verse is "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not lose heart," Galatians 6:9. Claire lives and works in Chicago.



**Janorisè Robinson** has been an urban educator in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Chicago for the past 22 years. She has served as a teacher, instructional coach, and student recruitment administrator for some of the neediest children in these cities. She credits prayer as her "life line" when everything in her personal life and her school was in chaos. Janorisè lives in Oak Park, IL with her husband; they have four children and five grandchildren.



**Marilyn Anderson Rhames** is an education blogger and the Founder/CEO of Teachers Who Pray. She taught in elementary schools in Chicago Public Schools for 14 years and is authoring the book, *The Master Teacher: 12 Spiritual Lessons That Can Transform Schools and Revolutionize Public Education*. An experienced journalist, Marilyn speaks widely on issues of education, race, writing, and faith. Born and raised in Chicago, Marilyn lives there with her husband and three children.

## MARILYN'S STORY

I became a teacher on 9/11. Before that, I was a reporter in New York City. I had been living my dream: I earned a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University and was writing award-winning news stories and beginning to make a name for myself. I also happened to be a Sunday School teacher at a small storefront church in East Harlem. I fell in love with my young students; they were so sweet and adorable in their Sunday best, and I enjoyed teaching them the Bible as I watched them grow up.

Though I was proud of my journalism career, I had secretly fantasized about being a school teacher. I even went on informational interviews to learn about how to change careers. But the drop in pay and the lack of prestige discouraged me from pursuing the matter. When I got pregnant with my first child, however, I once again began mulling over the idea. What if?

On Sept. 10, 2001, my husband and I flew over the World Trade Center, returning to New York from our baby shower in my hometown of Chicago. He had the window seat and told me to look out his window at the Twin Towers. He said repeatedly, "They look so eerie." The towers were glistening in the sunlight. Beautiful. He knew those towers were my favorite place to visit. I was seven months pregnant and irritable.

"They look like the same ole towers to me," I said. Twenty-four hours later, they were gone.

Like most Americans, I learned just how short life is on 9/11. I knew that day that I needed to stop negotiating with God and become a teacher. Despite my pregnancy, I reported on the tragedy, contributing to the media coverage about the worst terrorist attack in American history. Then in April 2002, I quit my job, relocated to Chicago with my husband and newborn child, and began researching which university to get a master's in education.

But this news girl got a rude awakening in public schools. Some of my students weren't as sweet and respectful as my Sunday School kids and some of the school leaders and colleagues didn't even seem to like children. The level of dysfunction in the school system was beyond anything I had "covered" as a reporter. Now I was a part of the system. I found myself frustrated often and I faced a dilemma: either quit or risk getting fired by exposing the corruption (which actually did get me fired once) or turn a blind eye and play it safe.

Well, I decided to fight—but in a different way. **I would pray. I would engage in spiritual warfare for my school. I would ask God to show me what to do, and then I'd do it.**

In 2003, the idea of Teachers Who Pray was born. I gave TWP its name in 2007. I officially incorporated it in 2011. A secular nonprofit gave me seed funding in 2017. As you can see, God took His time forming Teachers Who Pray. Some days it felt like a pipe dream. But through it all, I learned to trust in Jesus!

Thank you so much for joining TWP's spiritual movement to transform schools from the inside out! You, my dear praying teacher, are literally a dream come true!

### **Mission Statement**

Teachers Who Pray is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, Christian organization that provides educators with a community of prayer, spiritual support, professional development, and knowledge of existing religious liberties in schools to uplift them and strengthen their effectiveness.

### **Vision Statement**

Teachers innovating and elevating education in every school through their faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Our Motto**

“Taking Education Advocacy to the Highest Level”

### **Our Three Goals:**

**TEACH** faith-fully

**PRAY** fervently

**LEAD** fearlessly

*For more information about Teachers Who Pray, go to*

*[TeachersWhoPray.org](http://TeachersWhoPray.org)*

## TEN TENETS OF TEACHERS WHO PRAY

1. Prayer is a powerful method of communicating with God, and during times of prayer, God can, and does, communicate with the one praying.
2. The Holy Bible (Old and New Testaments) is the Word of God by which God communicates with us and is the standard by which we should test our plans and actions.
3. Teachers Who Pray is a **non-denominational Christian organization** whose foundational belief is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for the sins of man, rose from the dead on the third day, and now offers eternal life to anyone who submits their life to His authority.
4. We pray to God only in the name of Jesus Christ during Teachers Who Pray meetings.
5. Participation in Teachers Who Pray activities, including prayer times, are open to all faculty/staff regardless of their religious beliefs or denominational affiliations, as long as they agree to be respectful of the TWP Tenets and individual TWP chapter meeting norms.
6. All personal prayer requests and discussions shared during the Teachers Who Pray group meetings are **confidential**. We are building trusting, supportive relationships that can encourage spiritual growth, boost school morale, and change the lives of teachers, staff, students and communities.
7. Teachers Who Pray meetings will **NOT be used for gossip, slander, or any other negative speech** through my words or the words of others.
8. At least half of the time allotted for the TWP meeting should be spent in prayer (not small talk, prayer requests, etc.), so that there is ample time to draw close to God.
9. TWP strongly urges its chapters to hold prayer meetings in school **at least once a week**.
10. **Teachers Who Pray prayer meetings must never be held in the presence of students, especially if I work in a public school.** I understand that teacher-to-teacher prayer in school is absolutely legal. However, I know that the U.S. Supreme Court has determined it generally impermissible for a teacher to pray with students or in the presence of students while working in a public school. Doing so could result in disciplinary actions against me, including termination. ***I will pray with teachers before or after school, or on my duty-free lunch break, in a space that is free of students.***

\_\_\_ **Chapter Leaders:** I profess that Jesus Christ is both my Lord and Savior, and *I agree with and will abide by all ten tenets of Teachers Who Pray.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ **Chapter members:** While I may/may not be a Christian at this time, *I agree to respect and acknowledge all ten tenets of Teachers Who Pray.* I am eager to see what TWP offers in terms of spiritual support, community building, and school transformation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## MODELS FOR RUNNING A TWP CHAPTER MEETING

*O Heart, Vigilant and Sincere* is a 12-month prayer guide designed to be the communal text used to facilitate Teachers Who Pray chapter meetings that occur at schools on a weekly basis. It is our hope that TWP chapters across the world will follow this prayer guide, putting hundreds, if not thousands, of teachers in unity around the same scriptures and prayer focus at the same time. This is simply a guide, and we encourage TWP chapter leaders to start with the guide and then move as the Lord leads. While there is no “one right way” to run a TWP chapter meeting, there are some best practices and good models. Please read these two pages to get ideas on how to run your own TWP chapter. (For additional ideas, go to [TeachersWhoPray.org](http://TeachersWhoPray.org))

### Three Best Practices For Starting a TWP Chapter

1. Notify your principal that you will be hosting TWP meetings before or after school or on your duty-free break. You don't need his/her permission, but it's a courtesy of good faith.
2. Be sure to set norms for your prayer group at the start of the year, and review them regularly until everyone in the group is familiar with them. Some examples could include:
  - “Find hope in all situations”
  - “What is said in prayer group stays in prayer group”
  - “Respect each other's voice/story and limit your airtime”
3. Establish a regular, set time to meet each week, *reserving at least half that time for prayer.*

### Four Models of TWP Chapter Meetings From Our Co-Authors:

#### **Felicia Bailey-Carr in California:**

"Three things really spurred the need for this group in my old school: 1) I stepped into a new vice principal position at the school; 2) I noticed a lot of low morale on staff; and 3) at the same time, one of our best teachers was diagnosed with cancer. In light of this context, we started an informal space to pray and lift each other up."

- Incorporate Teachable Moments into the time together
- Invite prayer warriors (veteran teachers, retired teachers)
- Bring the verse of the day into the prayer time (located on [TeachersWhoPray.org](http://TeachersWhoPray.org))
- Sit in a circle and take prayer requests

#### **Janorisè Robinson in Chicago:**

"Shortly after I met Marilyn and Claire (co-authors of this prayer guide), my school received news that we weren't going to renew our charter application--we were going to close. It was difficult for our administration to make the decision, but we were fighting an uphill battle that we couldn't win. The news was devastating to our staff, students, and families, as my school is a 'last chance' school serving the neediest teenagers in Chicago. In that time of despair, I emailed a group of teachers and invited them to pray."

- Write prayer requests on the whiteboard (this allows everyone to see the requests)
- We pray in “popcorn style” (whoever wants to pray)
- I end the prayer time with a brief exhortation for the teachers from the Word of God.

### **Trish Heard in Maine:**

"First I thought about potential challenges that could be addressed in the group. For us, it was that we had one man and four women in the group. Two weeks in a row he was not in our prayer meeting, and that stirred me to pray for him because I did not want to lose him. Through my praying, I was prompted to ask him to meet for prayer in his room. He was so open to the idea and we have met for prayer in his room ever since. The power of this location is evident and his involvement has been great to see! Now we have three men in the group!"

- Chapter leader should arrive before the member-teachers
- Play instrumental music on the laptop to set a mood of reflection
- Bring something to eat for the group
- Open with verse of the day, praise, and sharing time
- Take prayer requests, trying to have at least as many prayer requests as people in the room that day
- Keep a record of who is there, what prayer requests are said, and what praise reports are brought to the group (i.e. use the space in this TWP prayer guide)
- Ask who wants to pray for each prayer request as people feel led
- Model praying before asking others to pray
- Stay cognizant of the time, vocalizing regular time checks so that teachers know you will be respectful of their time (We meet from 7:30-7:55am on Tuesdays)

### **Heather Kohnen in Minnesota:**

"In starting a chapter, it is really important that teachers let administrators know that you are meeting and praying in common faith. While you do not need their permission, it is essential to be respectful of them and ensure they know you are meeting and that you are being lawful in establishing this time of community. Principals are often enthusiastic about this meeting; several have given me creative ideas for how to promote this group to the school staff."

- Create an email list for everyone to make sure all Christians who want to be a part of the TWP meeting are aware of it, even if they are unable to attend
- Start with praise
- Have people take turns with the encouragement (i.e. someone brings a poem one week, someone brings a song another week, etc.)
- As people share prayer requests, the prayer leader sees if it is ok to share this request through the email chain of Christian teachers.
- Close with prayer, letting people know whoever wants to add to the prayer can pray
- Everyone who is present writes their name on a slip of paper and every person present gets the name of a partner to check in with between prayer group times

**PART 2:**  
**THE PRAYER GUIDE**

## AUGUST

### Rested. Set. GO!

REST: Slow Down

SET: Fuel Up

GO: Pace Yourself

Whether you know it or not, you are a runner. You are about to run a ten-month marathon. That's what school teachers do. Every year, multiple times a year, we find ourselves buying a new pair of running shoes when the treads of our old ones wear down. This shoe shopping usually happens at specific times of the year: Summer Break, Christmas Break, and Spring Break.

As our Summer Break begins to wind down, Teachers Who Pray encourages you to make an intentional effort to rest. The school year is close upon us, and we need to make sure we have stored away enough mental and physical energy to complete the task ahead—teaching each and every child in our classroom with the heart and dedication of a marathon runner.

Most running experts agree that having quality rest the week before you run is an essential part of running a long-distance race.

#### **\*Tips to get ready for a long race:**

You need to fuel up - Study the Word of God (Psalm 77:12)

You need to hydrate - Take in the Living Water (John 4:8-11)

You need to get the right amount of rest - Making time for Sabbath (Genesis 2:2)

You need to dress for success - Put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-18)

You need to warm up - Encourage yourself in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:1-6)

You need to keep a steady pace - Take life one day at a time (Matthew 6:34)

Have a mantra - Memorize Bible verses that have special meaning to you (Psalm 119:11)

Breathe - Praise the Lord, for everything that has breath should do so (Psalm 150:6)

Believe - Trust that God has equipped you for the job (Philippians 4:13)

~Marilyn Rhames

#### **August prayer:**

*Lord, let me rest in you always--not just during Summer Break, but during each day of my life. As I take time to relax and prepare mentally for the new school year, help me remember that "the race is not given to the swift nor to the strong but to the one who endureth until the end" (Ecclesiastes 9:11). Grant me grace to endure this school year. In Christ's name, amen.*

\*Ideas derived from <http://blog.mapmyrun.com/10-day-race-preparation-tips/>



**AUGUST**  
*Rested. Set. GO!*

**Week 1: God is a God of renewal.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”</i></b> Romans 12:2 (NKJV)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>Teachers, what a great time of the year to renew your minds! There’s still a bit of Summer Break left, and as you continue your vacation you’re beginning to think more and more about the upcoming school year. You don’t want to make the same mistakes as last year. You have goals, new projects and lesson ideas you want to explore. So now is the time to bask in the sweet Word of God and let it wash away the old and usher in the new—your new mind! It’s time to brush off the tentacles of the world. You know, the ones that tell you that some kids just can’t learn or behave well, or that the community you serve will never be peaceful or empathic. What does God say about you, your students, your school, your community? Let His Word and Holy Spirit give you the thoughts to think, the beliefs to believe. His Word is the only truth. Spend time meditating on the Holy Scriptures so that God can <u>renew your mind</u> and <u>prove to you</u> what is His <u>good</u>, <u>acceptable</u>, and <u>perfect will</u> for <u>you</u> and <u>your new school year</u>!</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**AUGUST**  
*Rested. Set. GO!*

**Week 2: Rest is a spiritual practice.**

<p>Bible Verses of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength...”</i></b> Isaiah 40:31</p> <p><b><i>“Be still, and know that I am God.”</i></b> Psalms 46:10</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>Stillness with purpose takes discipline. Being in communion with God requires that I temper distractions and quiet my heart. The spiritual practice of rest and renewal takes time--be comfortable taking that time, knowing that we do not need to worry about the cares and troubles of this world. God longs to be in close relationship with each and every one of us. If we slow down and surrender to God, He promises to bring us perfect rest and perfect peace. Summer serves as a sacred space, a time set aside for teachers to take a step back, commune with God, and find the personal respite we need in order to begin again. Take the time this week to intentionally silence the voices, the stressors, the events around you and renew your spirit. The stillness you create promises a clarity and calm that will renew your teacher’s mind and teacher’s heart before the race of the new school year begins.</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**AUGUST**  
*Rested. Set. GO!*

**Week 3: Set yourself for spiritual positioning so you can GO!**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD...”</i></b></p> <p>Psalm 121:1-2a</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>On your mark. Get set. ... As a runner “gets set” by stepping into the blocks and raising his or her eyes to the track ahead, so do we as Christian teachers lift our eyes up to the path God sets in front of us. Our path is full of promises, trials, joys, and sorrows. While we may not know what each bend in the race of the school year will bring, we know where our help comes from. We know God is in front of us, behind us, and within us. He is ready, set and able to be the source of life and energy we need to run the race. So let us set our bodies into running position and lift up our eyes to God.</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**AUGUST**  
*Rested. Set. Go!*

**Week 4: GO and run the race with a strong start as a Christian teacher.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“...run [your race] that you may lay hold [of the prize] and make it yours...They do it to win a wreath that will soon wither, but we [do it to receive a crown of eternal blessedness] that cannot wither.”</i></b></p> <p>1 Corinthians 9:24b, 25b (AMP)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>GO! The exhilaration of this time—the first days of school—is a palpable feeling that brings with it the adrenaline and excitement that only a teacher is blessed to know. This is such a special time in the school year, and we must be careful and <i>prayerful</i> to ensure that our start is a purposeful one that honors God and the race He has called us to run. As you set up your classroom to look “just right” for your students, keep your eyes fixed on the power of God to do the inner work on the children’s hearts—an area often too deep for our reach. As you begin calling home to families to introduce yourself, let them know how much you enjoy working with them and their children. You are a miraculous vessel of honor for God in your school, so run the start of this race with the joy of the Lord! Show everyone around you just how wonderful our God is through the love, joy, and peace that you bring to school each day (Matthew 5:16).</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

## SEPTEMBER

### Prayer & Praise: Anchors of a Godly Teaching Practice

I remember thinking, in my first year of teaching, that it was too time consuming to set up all of the foundations of my classroom. From the routines to the procedures to the relationship-building activities, I was anxious to skip past all of these parts and jump right into teaching content. Thank goodness I had an administrator who required me to take one full week just to focus on these foundations! Without the building blocks of a strong classroom culture, I would have struggled to teach content all year and would have inevitably lost time in the midst of confusion, uncertainty, and haphazard classroom structures created with little forethought in an attempt to put out fires.

In a similar way, it is vital to take the time at the start of the year to establish expectations for your Teachers Who Pray chapter. Take the time to build the foundations of your praying practice that will anchor your work as prayerful teachers for the rest of the school year. Be comfortable dwelling in the presence of God and each other, listening intently to ensure a firm grounding that will guide your prayer group for the rest of the school year.

One way to build a strong rapport with your fellow chapter members, is to always anchor your time together in praise and prayer. ***Spend at least half of your time block for your Teachers Who Pray chapter meetings in prayer to God.*** This will set the tone for godly meetings in which excessive small talk, complaining or gossip is not allowed to slip in and take root. Praise and prayer will serve as the anchors of your meetings to ensure that the time, which always passes too quickly, won't go adrift in the sea of nothingness.

Human nature is not geared toward prayer or to God. Therefore, the TWP chapter leader and every member will need to make a concerted effort to stay focused and see God--even if everything in your classroom or school building is going berserk. ***Remember, the Lord often changes us before He changes our situation.*** When we make this our mantra, we set our TWP chapter and our teaching practice up for success!

~ Claire Miller

#### **September Prayer:**

*Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, establish your presence in my heart as I seek to do Your will in this school. Use me to change the atmosphere of this building, bringing forth your praise and a kind word in all of my actions and communications. Make this school a place of refuge for those who struggle, and use my Teachers Who Pray chapter to make it so. Amen.*

## SEPTEMBER

### Prayer & Praise: Anchors of a Godly Teaching Practice

#### Week 1: Don't worry about anything.

##### Bible Verse of the Week

***“Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God.”***

Philippians 4:6 (AMP)

##### Teachable Moment

What's on your mind this week? What's worrying you? Do you have a tough or stressful life situation that hinders your ability to be fully present with your students? Are you frustrated or confused by something that is happening in your classroom? Did a colleague or boss say or do something that makes you feel a great deal of stress or pressure? Whatever the situation, it is an act of faith to take that worry to God. That level of faith is supernatural, far surpassing the faith you may think you have within. But that level of faith is there in your spirit. If you have the Holy Spirit of God in you as a Christian teacher, then with that Holy Spirit comes the faith and help you need to let go of your worries. When you let go of your anxieties, you are actively telling our God that you trust Him and know that He is working all things together for your good and for His glory (Romans 8:28).

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## SEPTEMBER

### Prayer & Praise: Anchors of a Godly Teaching Practice

#### Week 2: Pray about everything.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God.”***

Philippians 4:6 (AMP)

#### Teachable Moment

When students come to us with everything from a scraped knee to a bad grade to a tough family situation, we feel a sense of connection to that precious child. Students come to us with every request and care because they trust us and know that we care for them. Likewise, God delights when we come to Him with everything that is on our hearts. He cherishes the time to connect with us and longs for moments of closeness with us. As we come to Him with every prayer request, there is no request too big or too small for our God. This facet of our relationship with God gives us a space and place to draw close to Him, to tell Him how much we trust Him, and to experience all He can and will do in our lives and in our classrooms.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## SEPTEMBER

### Prayer & Praise: Anchors of a Godly Teaching Practice

#### Week 3: Tell God exactly what you need.

##### Bible Verse of the Week

***“Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God.”***

Philippians 4:6 (AMP)

***“In the same way, the Holy Spirit helps us when we are weak. We don’t know what we should pray for. But the Spirit himself prays for us.***

***He prays through groans too deep for words.”***

Romans 8:26 (NIRV)

##### Teachable Moment

Prayers can come in many forms and at any time. Through song, in communion, and in the silence of our quiet place, prayer can manifest and be made known to God. Get specific in your prayers this week. There may be a certain parent you need to call, a meeting that needs to be purposeful, a student who is going through a particularly difficult time—name each of these situations in detail to our God. He listens intently and loves to hear you calling out to Him in faith that He will provide and move in ways that bring Him the most glory. And in the times when the pain feels so deep, the burden seems so heavy, the situation feels so complicated, know that He hears the groaning of your heart and will still, always, hear you. While the answers may not be what we want, the answers will be exactly what we need. Sometimes He doesn’t want to change the situation, He wants to change us.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**



## SEPTEMBER

### Prayer & Praise: Anchors of a Godly Teaching Practice

#### Week 4: Thank Him for all He has done.

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), <u>with thanksgiving</u>, continue to make your wants known to God.”</i></b></p> <p>Philippians 4:6 (AMP)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>Praise His Holy Name this week! Praise Him for all of the promises He has fulfilled, for all of the miracles you have seen in your school because His Holy Spirit resides in teachers like you! Praise Him in advance for all He will do within your students, your school community, and your heart this year! Praise is an anchor of a vibrant prayer life and a strong relationship with God. Grounding in praise continuously is a beautiful and powerful act of worship for Christian teachers, as it focuses our hearts and eyes to see the positive work and victory of Jesus Christ in our schools.</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

## OCTOBER

### Confronting the Realities with God in Mind

*I need Thee, oh, I need Thee;  
Ev'ry hour I need Thee  
Oh, bless me now, my Savior;  
I come to Thee!*

~"[I Need Thee Every Hour](#)" hymn by Annie Sherwood Hawks

October is nationally known as one of the months with the lowest teacher morale. With the school year now in full force, teachers start to feel the immensity of the work ahead of them and the stressors that seem too hard to bear. It can be tempting in this month to sit in negativity, chalking up your emotions as a normal part of the teaching profession that you just need to suffer through. But it does not have to be this way!

God has a different vision for this month of the school year. In the midst of the struggles, He longs for you to go to Him with your heavy heart. He is ready to receive all that you have to bring to Him, and He knows exactly what you need to bring you back to a place of peace and hope. He is there beside you every hour and will be your perfect source of strength once you acknowledge His sovereignty and power.

The key to making it through October with a spring in your step and a song in your heart is to confront all the realities of your school situation with God in mind. Don't pretend that your problems aren't there--indeed, they are alive and well! Instead, acknowledge what's not working right and seek prayer support from fellow believers at church and from your Teachers Who Pray chapter. Like the song "[Just a Little Talk with Jesus](#)" by Rev. Cleavant Derricks says: "Have a little talk with Jesus, tell Him all about your troubles ... He will hear your faintest cry ... He will answer by and by. ... Have a little talk with Jesus makes it right!"

When we spend time in prayer about what and who may be bothering us, it begins to diminish the impact of the *what* and the *who*. Instead, prayer exalts the one to whom we pray: God. It's remarkable how small our problems eventually become to us and how very large and mighty our faith in God grows when we pray. Like we said in August, *the Lord often changes us before He changes our situation*.

~Marilyn Rhames

#### **October prayer:**

*Dear Lord, in the matchless name of Jesus, I worship you in times of both trial and triumph. You are more than enough for me. I trust you to meet all my needs. I praise you, for in all of my trials and tribulations, I am more than a conqueror through Christ who loves me (Romans 8:37). Thanks for Your goodness and mercy toward me. Amen.*

# OCTOBER

## Confronting the Realities with God in Mind

### Week 1: Confront the mental stressors.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“My soul weeps, and trouble weighs me down;  
give me strength so I can stand according to Your word.”***

Psalm 119:28 (Voice)

#### Teachable Moment

The voice of self-doubt can become overwhelming in the mind of a teacher, especially at this time of year. The swirl of emotions may start to feel like a battle that is too tough to keep fighting. As this internal struggle wears on, it may start to feel more and more difficult to be present with your students and give them your best, which only compounds the negativity in your mind. As you wrestle with the internal voice that rehearses untrue messages that bring you down, know this: God’s voice wins. His strength will overcome any doubts, any fears, and any depression. The promise of His voice, be it a whisper or a shout, brings with it the strength to go on and persevere. Turn to God’s Word for encouragement. Turn to prayer and fellowship with Christian believers for help. For weeping may endure for a night, but JOY is coming in the morning (Psalms 30:5b). Hallelujah!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# OCTOBER

## Confronting the Realities with God in Mind

### Week 2: Confront the physical stressors.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.”***

Matthew 6:28 (NIV)

#### Teachable Moment

Exhaustion. Illness. Surgery. So many physical stressors can impact your work as teachers each and every day. We may experience this physical stress personally or we may be supporting a friend or family member who is enduring physical pain. In whatever way your body is stressed, know that God is the ultimate healer. He handles the physical realm of this world in a way that only His strength can heal. At times He may be healing the physical burden itself, while other times He may be healing your heart and spirit as you cope with the “thorn in your flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). Whatever physical ailment(s) you may be carrying this week, know that God’s grace is sufficient for you to thrive in spite of it. Jesus loves you and is with you in your pain.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# OCTOBER

## Confronting the Realities with God in Mind

### Week 3: Confront the relational stressors.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“I have refined you, but not in the way silver is refined.  
Instead, I try you in the furnace of suffering.”***

Isaiah 48:10 (Voice)

#### Teachable Moment

Teaching is such deeply personal and relational work. We interact with others constantly, from parents to administrators to cafeteria staff to students. As we pour into these relationships, we may encounter incredible stress or tension in the midst of the process. Colleagues may not understand our good intentions; students may show anger as we try to show love; or parents may take out their frustrations on us when we had no role in a difficult school decision. Know that, in these moments, God is not seeking to place a stressor on your spirit but rather to refine and purify your heart. Relationships that are refined by the fire of the Holy Spirit are inherently more fruitful and pure. Be encouraged in the truth that, when you are authentically seeking to build Christ-like relationships, trials are not meant to tear you down but to build you up. Pray for the one who is causing your stress, and you will witness the power of God at work in your heart and in that relationship (Luke 6:28).

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# OCTOBER

## Confronting the Realities with God in Mind

### Week 4: Engage in spiritual warfare.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”***

Ephesians 6:12

#### Teachable Moment

Every Christian teacher is placed in a school on purpose. You are on assignment by God. You are a warrior. In any given school day, there are so many things that *don't* happen because you are there. So many moments of tension, so many unfortunate events that are *never allowed to manifest* in your school building because you are prayerfully protecting the school culture, the staff, and the students from an unseen enemy. By lifting up your school in prayer, you are guarding the hearts in the main office and the minds in the classroom. Teachers are sitting squarely at the center of a spiritual battlefield that we cannot physically see. Take courage and don't be afraid. Gird yourself with the whole armor of God and be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10-18). He has so lovingly placed prayer for schools in your heart, making you a bonafide PRAYER WARRIOR!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## NOVEMBER

### The Power of Togetherness

Classroom teachers can get used to working alone. In many schools, individual teachers write their lesson plans for their specific classes and then close their classroom door to do their own “thing.” This can be seen as either incredibly isolating or wonderfully freeing. Regardless of how we may feel about this dynamic, working alone is less than God’s best.

God made us to be social creatures. The old axiom, “Two heads are better than one” is absolutely true. Studies show that students benefit most when their teachers collaborate on lesson plans, observe each other in action, and discuss assessment strategies. There is immense power in *togetherness*.

The Bible is replete with examples of people working together to accomplish God’s divine will on earth. Jesus did not work alone; He selected 12 disciples to follow him closely and He sent them out into the world to spread the Gospel in pairs (Mark 6:7). In the Old Testament, Moses would have surely lost the battle were it not for his assistant Aaron holding Moses’ hands up in the air (Exodus 17:11-12). Are we more anointed than Moses? Are we holier than Jesus Christ? Of course not! Therefore, we should follow their examples and seek to form authentic, loving relationships at school to help us fulfill God’s plan.

Reaching out to our colleagues (whether they are Christians or non-believers) to be thought partners on ways to improve the school is an excellent way to build a school culture of togetherness. This also applies to how we connect with students, their families, and school administrators. This requires a gracious, humble spirit. Our willingness to listen and to learn from others will go a long way in cultivating the trust and respect that leads to togetherness.

As much as we may like to do things alone, or to be able to take all the credit for our success, God is most glorified when we give our time and talents to others and allow them to enrich our lives with theirs.

**What better way to begin your journey toward togetherness than to start a Teachers Who Pray chapter at your school today?**

~ Marilyn Rhames

#### **November prayer:**

*Father, how I love you! Teach me to be more like you by generously sharing my time and talents with others. You gave me skills and expertise not to hoard but to share. As I develop a mindset bent toward togetherness, soften my heart, sweeten my spirit, and take pride away. Fill up my heart with love for You and others. In Jesus name, Amen.*

# NOVEMBER

## The Power of Togetherness

### Week 1: Together with students.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."***

Luke 18:16-17 (NIV)

Our job is so fast paced that teachers must be intentional about fostering a spirit of togetherness with students. For example, a child comes to us in the midst of our work to show us a picture he has drawn, but in our effort to execute the next thing, we tell him, "That's nice," though we barely even take a look at it. The student who sought our attention and approval walks away feeling let down. Fostering togetherness must be a daily, deliberate act. It's powerful when teachers and students form a genuine togetherness through fleeting moments that mean so much. Who knew that such a little act of tenderness could spur an unbreakable bond?! This level of unity is achievable by God's grace, and it affirms and celebrates every student's unique and valuable gifts. In the end, togetherness makes school fun for both kids and adults, and God is glorified.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**



# NOVEMBER

## The Power of Togetherness

### Week 2: Together with families.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. When he was placed outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him and brought him up as her own son.”***

Acts 7:19-21 (NIV)

#### Teachable Moment

In some ways, we are like Pharaoh’s daughter. Parents give us their children--the best they have to offer—in hopes that their little ones will be safe and cared for when they send them off to school. Each family believes that their precious little one is “no ordinary child.” And they are right! While our families are not sending their babies down the Nile River in a basket, they are watching their little ones or teens walk into a school building with no guarantees that their children will be loved, nurtured or protected by the adults who have charge over them. Like Pharaoh’s daughter, we ought to teach our students with the same diligence and care we would if they were our own biological children. Moses and Pharaoh’s daughter are good examples of how approaching our teaching practice this way can yield amazing, God-honoring results for our most vulnerable students—and their entire family and community.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# NOVEMBER

## The Power of Togetherness

### Week 3: Together with colleagues.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another— and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”***

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV)

#### Teachable Moment

We all lead busy lives—from grading endless papers to planning lesson after lesson. But we must make time on a regular basis to encourage each other in the Lord. This gentle encouragement is also a necessary form of spiritual accountability. The teaching profession can be notoriously isolating, but this is not God’s plan. Teachers Who Pray asks educators to meet at least once a week to share encouraging words and to pray for each other and the school community because there’s great power and strength in “spurring one another on toward love and good deeds” and “not giving up meeting together.” So let’s reserve and protect this time of prayer and fellowship with our colleagues of faith. A school with this level of spiritual togetherness will bring down the kingdom of God and indeed change the world! (John 17:23)

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# NOVEMBER

## The Power of Togetherness

### Week 4: Together with administrators.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others. As you deal with one another, you should think and act as Jesus did.”***

Philippians 2:4-5 (NIRV)

#### Teachable Moment

Finding togetherness among people with different backgrounds and perspectives is always a challenge. The first century church experienced this, and teachers today deal with this issue daily in working with students and families. Now, imagine how difficult it can be for administrators who work towards pulling together the unique personalities and talents of the entire teaching staff, all the students, and the greater school community. That’s four times as hard! When can we as teachers put aside our own interests and walk in agreement with them? Though it sometimes might not feel like it, we are all on the same team. Intentionally seek to learn your administrator’s heart, and ask God to adjust your attitude and how you see them. Pray for them daily and support them in the work they are doing as best you can. Showing genuine interest in our leaders’ vision and wellbeing is a positive step towards togetherness.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## DECEMBER

### God with Us

***“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”***

Matthew 1:22-23

The name *Emmanuel* means “God with us,” and was referring to the birth of baby Jesus, the newborn King. As we embark upon another Christmas season, it’s important to remember that God came into the world in the form of Jesus, and that His presence on earth remains in the form of the Holy Spirit. In essence, Christians experience Christmas every day!

While the society emphasizes that Christmas is a time of gift giving and holiday good cheer, the bigger story is *Emmanuel*, that God has indeed brought “joy to the world” by bringing Jesus to form a redeeming relationship with all mankind—no longer just for one select group of people. So no matter if you can or cannot afford to give Christmas gifts this year, we can all celebrate the true meaning of Christmas: *Emmanuel*—God, through Christ, is with us!

God is with us through good and bad times. We may be grieving the death of a parent or close friend. God is with us! We may be dealing with financial uncertainty and the bills are due. God is with us! We may have a health situation that threatens to end our very life on this earth. God is with us! Christ, our Savior, still reigns! God is indeed with us!!

This Christmas, let’s focus on the person of Jesus Christ and what His coming to earth means to our daily lives—and in our lives eternal. When we know that Christ is sovereign and that His love for us is everlasting, we can trust in Him through all the good and the bad, during Christmas and any other time of the year.

Praise God for *Emmanuel*! Praise God for the birth and life of His Son Jesus Christ! Praise God for being with us now and forever! Praise God, praise God, praise God!!!

~ Marilyn Rhames

### **December Prayer:**

*Lord, thank You for being with us! Emmanuel started with the birth of baby Jesus, but You, O God, continue to reside on earth through Your Word and Your Holy Spirit. Help me to lean into to Your presence this month, for You are the ultimate Christmas gift this holiday season. In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.*

# DECEMBER

God with Us

## Week 1: God with us in joy.

Bible Verse of the Week

***“...for this day is holy unto the Lord: neither be ye sorry;  
for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”***

Nehemiah 8:10b

Teachable Moment

Joy shows up in schools in so many special and unexpected ways. A hug from a student, a surprise gift from a colleague, a lesson that goes even better than you planned—what beautiful gifts of joy! How are you sharing the joy of Christ with others in an authentic way? How are you reminding other teachers in your school of this joy? You don't have to preach a sermon about joy; just be joyful. Joy truly moves through classrooms when it is seen, celebrated, and nurtured. Enjoy the process of giving and receiving joyful moments as you begin giving and receiving gifts during this holiday season. Then, just as a child eagerly waits for Christmas morning, eagerly await to see the unexpected overflow of joy that continues to abound in your heart, naturally.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# DECEMBER

## God with Us

### Week 2: God with us in sadness.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“And hope will never fail to satisfy our deepest need because the Holy Spirit that was given to us has flooded our hearts with God’s love.”***

Romans 5:5 (Voice)

#### Teachable Moment

There is a child who is silent this week. There is a student, maybe in the back of the class during the holiday party, who is not smiling like the other children in your room. You may not be able to break through their sadness this week, may not be able to encourage them as you so desperately wish to in the midst of this season of parties, gifts, and family. But God sees this little one. God feels your longing as their teacher, the longing to be near them and with them in this season. God knows their hearts, knows their deep sadness, and has a heart for them. You may be the only teacher seeing them, truly seeing them, this week. Sitting with them, even in silence and sadness, may be the greatest sign of God’s love they receive this holiday.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# DECEMBER

## God with Us

### Week 3: God with us in togetherness.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”***

Matthew 1:23

#### Teachable Moment

God is with us—“us,” as a collective of Christian teachers. God celebrates with us and moves among us to bring glory to Himself and His work. Scholars say that from Adam’s departure from the Garden of Eden to the promise of Abraham was 2000 years; from Abraham to the birth of Jesus was 2000 years; and, of course, from Jesus’ day to now is a little more than 2000 years. Though Jesus has always existed as God before the world began (Ephesians 1:4), God’s desire for togetherness with man has persisted on earth for more than 6,000 years! Glory to God for this gift of community! Let’s lift one another up as Christian educators and take time to reflect on how this group of school-based believers has blessed you and inspired your teaching practice. As Christian teachers, let’s embrace this spirit of connectedness. Praise God for Jesus, who allows us to commune with a holy God, both now and forever!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# DECEMBER

## God with Us

### Week 4: God with us in loneliness.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“Turn to me and have mercy, for I am alone and in deep distress. My problems go from bad to worse. Oh, save me from them all!”***

Psalm 25:16-17 (NLT)

#### Teachable Moment

God hears you. He hears your cries, your distress. God wants you to know that you are not alone. Oh dear Christian teacher, one called by God to do a sacred work: you are His vessel and He will never leave you. God is right next to you, wrapping His arms around you, comforting you. He wants nothing more than to alleviate your loneliness and remind you of how beautiful and priceless you are to Him. You are a gift to Him, a gift that brings Him great joy. Be of good faith and good cheer—God will fulfill all of His promises to you. Trust that truth during this season of Christmas joy.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**



## JANUARY

### New Year, New Hope

I write these words on New Year's Day, having stayed up passed midnight to ring in the New Year. My husband and kids ages 16, 11, and 4 stayed up too. We were all excited to experience the moment when the recorded time in Chicago shifted from 2017 to 2018. We screamed "Happy New Year" and hugged and kissed each other.

We made it! Yeah!!!!

It's now approaching midnight again, and as each day turns into the next, the more removed I get from the excitement and new hope I had when I rang in the New Year. According to [StatisticBrain.com](http://StatisticBrain.com), only 9.2 percent of people surveyed reported achieving their New Year's resolutions. Funny how our enthusiasm for change can wane so quickly!

Yes, it's a New Year, and while we enter it with a new hope, it's vitally important that we decide *how* we are going to hold on to the hope that this year will be different, better. Creating a plan of action will help to ensure that your zeal for doing God's work does not wane with time. A plan, and someone to hold you accountable to following that plan, will help fight against complacency or discouragement.

The God of the New Year is the same God of each and every day that follows. This hope that you may have in January can only carry you through the year if you stay close to God in prayer and reading His holy Word during all the other months. Remind yourself of His promises daily and don't dwell on the regrets of the past. It's a New Year, a new hope!

~Marilyn Rhames

#### January prayer:

*Father God, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank You for the blessing of being able to see another year! What a mighty God we serve! Thank You for Your grace and mercy in our lives over the past year. We pray for Your continued grace and mercy in this new year. We ask for Your forgiveness for the sins we committed last year. We ask for the fulfillment of the hope that we now carry in our hearts for the new year. Grant us health, provision, and new insight into your plan for our lives. We thank and praise you. Amen.*

**JANUARY**  
New Year, New Hope

**Week 1: Reflect on the lessons of the past.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>As teachers we have the gift of two new year’s celebrations: the new school year and the new calendar year. The first day of school encompasses feelings of hope, anticipation of what could be, and a renewed spirit after a summer off to regroup. So how do we regain those same feelings in this “New Year”? We can begin by thinking of the lessons we have learned from our current students. What have they taught us about ourselves? What have those in our care shown us about God? What accomplishment can we celebrate? Without reflecting on the past, we can’t move forward with purpose. Sometimes, however, we find ourselves <i>dwelling</i> in the past; don’t do that! We need to let go of certain things, like the hurt we felt by those around us or the disappointments from expectations that weren’t met. When we are in Christ, we are part of a <u>new covenant</u>, given a <u>new perspective</u>, and we are being <u>renewed daily</u>. With this promise at hand, let us become learners from the past and face each new year--and each new day--with hope, anticipation, and faith for better days ahead.</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**JANUARY**  
New Year, New Hope

**Week 2: Radiate a new hope in the present.**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“Those who trust in, lean on, and confidently hope in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides and stands forever.”***

Psalm 125:1 (AMP)

Teachable Moment

As teachers, we live in a world of constant change. There is always a new and better way of doing things. The term “best practice” is constantly evolving, along with educational standards and the measures used to determine our instructional success. Honestly, it can be hard to catch our breaths! Fortunately, we have a God who is unchanging. What is the secret to consistent hope and joy in our ever changing lives and profession? Trusting God. He can’t be shaken by economic or political changes. Through leaning on Him, we can have a radiant hope that is grounded in truth, even in the midst of the whirlwind. This eternal hope will not only impact us but our families, friends, and everyone we meet. Trust in the Lord and be renewed with the hope of His glory, a radiant light that can brighten any darkened path.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

**JANUARY**  
New Year, New Hope

**Week 3: Prepare for the challenges of the future.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.”</i></b></p> <p>Jeremiah 29:11 (AMP)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>Teaching is beautifully messy work. We would be naive to think that we could even make it through one day without some type of challenge. God is not surprised by the challenges we face today or those that will be a part of our future. As Christians we are not promised a life of “rainbows and unicorns”; on the contrary, the Bible is replete with warnings of pain, suffering, and hardships for those who follow Christ—and promises that God will reward us handsomely for our troubles (Matthew 5:10-12). We are so blessed to have a God who loves us and walks alongside us throughout this journey. He encourages us to keep moving forward. He knows we can accomplish the tasks He has for us. He will give us what we need, when we need it. God’s mission for us will be fulfilled as we put our trust in Him. Remember, we already have the victory through Jesus! Put all your hopes and dreams in His hands and move into the future with great expectations.</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**JANUARY**  
New Year, New Hope

**Week 4: Rejoice in the Lord always!**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”</i></b> Philippians 4:4 (NIV)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>Paul wrote this verse while in a dark and dismal prison cell. His circumstances were not ideal, to say the least. You will notice that rejoicing in the Lord always is not a suggestion, but a command. Through the Holy Spirit, we can find an eternal perspective that does not rely on our circumstances but rests in the hope we have in our all-knowing and loving Heavenly Father. Rejoicing in the Lord in the midst of hardship forces the devil to flee. It wards off fear and renews hope. It allows us to rise above our circumstances and see the needs of others instead of dwelling on ourselves. Take some time each day to reflect on the goodness of God as evidenced by what He is doing in your heart and what is happening in your classroom. Rejoice in the Lord, and experience the abundant life you are meant to live, in spite of your circumstances (2 Corinthians 9:8).</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

## FEBRUARY

### Jesus, Lover of My Soul

***“...And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”***

Ephesians 3:17b-19 (NIV)

The word “love” is probably the most overused and misused word in the English language. We so casually say things like, “I love hamburgers!” or “I love this pen!” or “I love these socks!” Wow. Do we really *love* them? When the Bible talks about “love,” the subject is almost always a *who*, not a *what*. Biblical love mostly involves relationships with humans. Let’s review the four biblical meanings of love\*:

- **Eros** (Pronounced: AIR-ohs) is the Greek word for sensual or romantic love. Even though the term is not found in the Old Testament, *Song of Solomon* vividly portrays the passion of erotic love.
- **Storge** (Pronounced: STOR-jay) is a Greek word describing family love. Examples in scripture include **Noah** and his wife, the love of **Jacob** for his sons, and the strong love **Martha and Mary** had for their brother **Lazarus**.
- **Philia** (Pronounced: FILL-ee-uh) is a Greek term describing the bond seen in deep friendships. Philia is the most general type of love in scripture, also encompassing love, care, respect, and compassion for people in need.
- **Agape** (Pronounced: Uh-GAH-pay) is the highest of the four types of love in the Bible. This term defines God's immeasurable, incomparable love for humankind. It is the divine love that comes from God. Agape love is perfect, unconditional, sacrificial, and pure. **Jesus Christ** demonstrated this kind of divine love to his Father and to all humanity in the way he lived and died.

Agape is the best love of all. And as Ephesians 3:17b-19 describes, God’s love for us is wider, longer, higher and deeper than the richest human love experience. Jesus, Lover of my soul!

\*<https://www.thoughtco.com/types-of-love-in-the-bible-700177>

### **February Prayer:**

*Lord, thank You for the loving relationships I have in my life—my family, friends, and neighbors. Jesus, thank You most of all for being my true Valentine. Your agape loves me unconditionally, far surpassing any other love known to man. I’m so grateful and happy to be Your child! Help me to love You with all my heart, mind, soul and strength like it says in Mark 12:30. Then I will have 'agaped' you right back! Let it be done. In Christ’s name, amen.*

**FEBRUARY**  
Jesus, Lover of My Soul

**Week 1: Love defined.**

Bible Verses of The Week

***“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.***

***Love never fails.”***

I Corinthians 13:4-8a (NIV)

***“God is love; he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”***

I John 4:16b (ESV)

Teachable Moment

God is inexhaustible in his attributes, but perhaps the most succinct way to capture His essence is through the lens of love. God is love. Therefore, love is powerful, potent, and unstoppable. It's not just an emotion; it is an action. It's patient; it's kind; it's not boastful or selfish; it speaks the truth in a joyful way; it's full of hope; and it never gives up. When we show love to our colleagues, students and families, then we are showing them the light of God. When we love, we put God on full display. Some people wrongly think that the U.S. Supreme Court “took God out of public schools.” That's only possible if teachers cease to love. *God is love.* And as long as Christian teachers are working, loving, and privately praying in public schools, then God will always be there!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## FEBRUARY

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

### Week 2: Unconditional love.

Bible Verse of the Week

***“But God demonstrates His own love toward us,  
in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”***

Romans 5:8 (NASB)

Teachable Moment

Often times we teachers get frustrated with our students for disobeying us over and over again, even after we've had a long talk with them about their behavior. We desire for the kids to “straighten up” or “get their act together,” and when they don't, we sometimes dismiss them and feel like they will never change. Well, that's not God's approach. Jesus Christ died for us while we were dirty, sinful, and messed up; He looked past our flaws and saw our needs, dying on the cross to usher in a path of redemption for our lost souls. In that, He modeled unconditional love. The love He showed to us when we were at our worst is what compelled us to turn from our sinful ways and trust Him. God's love is *agape*—unconditional. We did not and cannot earn it. What would happen if we had *agape* love for our students? Only God can supernaturally place *agape* in our hearts. If we can unconditionally love the most hard-to-love child, parent, or colleague, we will usher in the hope that they too will find their way to God.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**



## FEBRUARY

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

### Week 3: Sacrificial love.

#### Bible Verses of the Week

***“This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.”***

John 4:10 (NLT)

***“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”***

John 15:13 (NASB)

#### Teachable Moment

The teaching profession is synonymous with sacrifice. We work long hours, not just at school, but also during our evenings and weekends. We volunteer to chair committees and run activities, many times at the expense of our own bank accounts and time with family. As honorable as those sacrifices are in the sight of God, we must remember that it takes a back seat to our obligation to be obedient to God (I Samuel 15:22). In the phrase “sacrificial love,” the word love is the focal, grounding term—and “sacrificial” is merely the modifier. Too often we are focused on our “sacrifice,” but we are doing the giving without a heart of “love.” In other words, Jesus’ sacrifice of dying on the cross for our sins was purely driven by love, and our sacrifices for our students, families, and colleagues must also be driven by our love for them. Otherwise, we will give and give, and whine and whine. God loves a cheerful giver (II Corinthians 9:7).

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## FEBRUARY

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

### Week 4: Tough love.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***"My child, don't make light of the LORD's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."***

Hebrews 12:5-6 (NLT)

#### Teachable Moment

As loving as God is, make no mistake about it, God is also tough! He means what He says, and even though He forgives us when we sin, there are often consequences that we must bear. So is it in a teacher-student relationship. Loving your students does not mean that you allow them to walk all over you without any kind of accountability or punishment. That's not biblical love! When you are delivering consequences to a student who has not met your expressed expectations (i.e. cheating on a test or behaving disrespectfully), you are disciplining them out of love—*tough love*. The Bible is replete with examples of God punishing His children for their disobedience, but then, like a loving Father, He restores them back into relationship with Him. It sometimes hurts the giver of punishment as much or more than it hurts the one being punished, but it must be done. The key is to make the discipline *restorative*, so the child knows he can come back into relationship with you and others. The student who is disciplined properly just might say "thank you" later.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## MARCH

### Run the Race with Endurance

“There’s a Way Before Us and a Race to Run”

~ A hymn\*

There’s a way before us and a race to run—

Christ our way, Christ our way!

Turn away from everything distracting us—

Run the race, run the race!

From the altar through the Holy Place,

Through the veil into our God,

To the law of life within the ark;

’Tis the goal, our great reward.

There’s a cloud of witnesses surrounding us,

Urging us, forward come!

There is Abel, Enoch, Jacob, Abraham,

Moses, David, Solomon.

John the Baptist greater than them all,

Even he bids forward come!

These all died in faith, receiving not

Promises that were to come.

The Old Testament believers give the call,

“Forward come, forward come!”

For complete perfection they depend on us

Going on! Going on!

We are at the consummation now

of our God’s economy;

Better things we are experiencing.

Praise the Lord—reality!

E’en the least of us is greater than their great.

We’re not small, we’re not small!

They are waiting, watching, and expecting us.

“Forward come!” hear their call!

They have run the race and for their sakes

We’ll obey the law of life.

Till the day we’ll all be joined in one

To express God’s glorious Christ.

\*Sheet music and the played melody found at: <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/1207>

## MARCH

### Run the Race with Endurance

#### Week 1: Be in the “know.”

##### Bible Verse of the Week

***“There we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”***

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)

##### Teachable Moment

Teaching is a vocation that has the potential to connect so many believers around the world. So many inspiring Christian teachers have done and continue to do the work you strive to do today. In a race that can often feel isolating, know that there are countless brothers and sisters in Christ in every corner of our world who are in this work alongside you and can serve to inspire you. You run beside others in classrooms teaching each day, and you run behind retired teachers who have finished the race in the classroom and those who served students generations ago and died in the faith. This “cloud of witnesses” is a dear blessing, a well of strength in this race you now run. Teachers Who Pray seeks to hone a mighty network of Christian educators, so when it feels like you can’t possibly take another step in your education journey, you can reach out through TWP grab a cup of refreshing water from a fellow believing teacher who refuses to let you fall. We are cheering you on from an authentic place of knowing. So be in the know, finding your resilience and strength through our stories.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

# MARCH

## Run the Race with Endurance

### Week 2: Throw off the weights.

#### Bible Verse of the Week

***“He will not allow your foot to slip—he who watches over you will not slumber;”***  
Psalm 121:3 (NIV)

#### Teachable Moment

It is easier said than done to truly let go of the weights and cares of this world in our daily work of teaching. At times it may even seem impossible or uncaring: who will worry about my students’ reading growth, if I don’t? Who will make sure all of the IEP meetings run smoothly, if I don’t? Who will care for my relative in their time of need, if I don’t? While you cannot let go of these tasks as a teacher, the “slip” of worry around these tasks can paralyze you in fear and slow down your forward movement in the race. The Lord sees this struggle and will ensure that you don’t “slip” into worry. God wants you to run your race, with all of its demands, in a spirit of purposefulness and faith—not fear and worry. God intentionally looks out for you and your concerns so that you can drop the worries of the work and continue to run with the passion and conviction that brings Him glory.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## MARCH

### Run the Race with Endurance

#### Week 3: The ultimate role model.

##### Bible Verse of the Week

***“He told them, ‘My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.’ He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, ‘My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.’”***

Matthew 26:38-39 (NLT)

##### Teachable Moment

In his humanity, Christ did not want to run the race the Father had set for Him. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he calls outright to God to take the task of dying on the cross away from Him. But the fact that Christ got off His knees and accepted His race shows us that supernatural faith wins, despite moments of human weakness. It is true that Christ’s humanness did not want to finish His race, but it is also true that His divine Spirit transcended his human anguish. Christ finished the race because His life was not about Him. Christ finished the race with a depth of patience and servitude that honored God in the midst of His struggle. Christ finished the race with discipline and commitment. Christ finished the race because He knew, in faith, that there was great joy waiting at the finish line. He knew that living sinlessly, dying unjustly, and resurrecting to life with all power would create a path for mankind to once again commune with God. Christ is the ultimate role model for staying the course to victory!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## MARCH

### Run the Race with Endurance

#### Week 4: Be a champion.

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”</i></b> Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>We are the champions! When we started our race in Christ, we were promised the victory. Lean into that incredible reality as a Christian teacher. Every race has a finish line, and you are guaranteed the victory by our God if you don't give up. The resurrection of Christ has already won the race for you and has claimed a place for you in the winner's circle. Run forward knowing that you will hear the cheering of glory and receive a crown to lay at His feet (Revelations 4:10-11; James 1:12). In the end, the race of this school year is not yours to run for personal victory or gain; it is God's victory and for His glory. Imagine the joy of walking into your classroom everyday with full confidence, knowing that the victory is already won. That's what champions do!</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

## APRIL

### A Matter of Time

***“For everything that happens in life—there is a season,  
a right time for everything under heaven.”***

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (Voice)

Waiting. It’s probably more frustrating than receiving a clear, firm “no” from God. At least with a “no” you can cry about it for a time and then begin the healing process toward closure. But waiting? Well, you just have to wait. Maybe it’ll be a “yes” and you’ll get what you want, or maybe it’ll be a “no” and you’ll just have to learn to accept it. Either way, you’re uncertain about the future and you’ll have to wait and see.

The key to waiting well is to realize that God knows best and to constantly affirm his good intentions in your mind and heart. That becomes hard when we get stuck rooting for what we want and leave little to no room for God to be sovereign in the situation. Yielding our will to God’s is certainly a spiritual discipline! So have faith—not just in what you want but in God’s best judgment.

So now it’s April, and we teachers are often in a controlled panic about this time. How can we cover all of the remaining material and get our kids where they need to be in the short six to ten weeks of school that’s left? Yikes! Where did the time go?!

And some of us start looking for the next career move around this time, too. Should we change schools? Should we apply for a new grade level position or an open administrative role in the school? What kind of summer employment can we secure? These decisions can begin to distract us from our daily work of teaching kids.

As the April showers come down and the tulips begin to blossom, rest assured that like the rain and vegetation, God also has our present/future times in his hands (Psalms 31:15a). Let’s trust God to lead and guide us as we navigate how to best finish off the school year and pursue the next personal and professional adventure.

When it’s a matter of time, God always knows best!

~Marilyn Rhames

#### **April Prayer:**

*Precious Lord, thank you for seasons of change. For without change, it’s impossible for me to grow. Help me to wait faithfully on You and be patient when the change I seek takes longer than I would have hoped. You are sovereign. You know what’s best for me. I know You will do what’s best. Thank You for loving me as I wait. In Jesus’ name, amen.*



**APRIL**  
A Matter of Time

**Week 1: Time is of the essence.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“Whatever you do, work at it wholeheartedly as though you were doing it for the Lord and not merely for people.”</i></b></p> <p>Colossians 3:23</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>Time management is a phrase that produces an emotional response in teachers. We struggle with feelings of guilt and wrestle with tension between our work and personal lives. Can we really manage time? Let’s face it, time moves on no matter what we do. We can’t make it slow down, go faster, or stop. At the beginning of the school year, we look ahead and think that we have all the time we need to accomplish great things with our students. In the spring, we see that time is of the essence and we are running out of this valuable resource. We ask ourselves if we have done enough. We wonder if we have impacted our students in a way that will make a difference. Instead of worrying about what we did or did not do, we can find comfort if we know that all of our work was done as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:17, 23). We have no choice but to offer our best work if we are dedicating our work to Christ. It may not be perfect, but even with our best efforts, it’s God who makes our work effective (1 Corinthians 3:6).</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**APRIL**  
A Matter of Time

**Week 2: Make the most of your time.**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“All the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.”***

Psalm 139:16 (NIVUK)

***“Be still, and know that I am God...”***

Psalm 46:10a

Teachable Moment

If God had His way with your schedule, what would your day look like? What would be included? What would be omitted? God has an ordained plan for each day of your life that He wants to reveal to you. Unfortunately, we often get caught up in the “busyness” and challenges of the day and often miss that quiet whisper of God telling us to slow down or shift our plans. In order to hear from the Lord, we need to create space in our day to listen for His voice. We need to be still so that we can experience His presence in the midst of the countless decisions we make about our time each day. If we truly want to make the most of our time, then we need to give time with God top priority in our schedules.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

**APRIL**  
A Matter of Time

**Week 3: God redeems the time.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”</i></b> I Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>A teacher sits at his/her desk at the end of the day. It was one of those days that didn't go according to plan. Nothing seemed to go right. We often write these days off as a loss, but God, through His grace and mercy, can redeem them. There is no such thing as a lost day if we take time to see it through the lens of thankfulness. Instead of focusing on what went wrong, reflect on what went right. It may be a small celebration or a triumphant victory. Start a gratitude journal to record these nuggets from the Lord; it will serve as an encouragement to you and a praise to God. Never leave school defeated; instead, be inspired by how God is working in and through you. Before you know it, you'll see your students' growth exceeding your expectations—and theirs. That's how God redeems the time!</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**APRIL**  
A Matter of Time

**Week 4: Celebrate this time.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.”</i></b> Psalm 118:24 (NKJV)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p><b><i>Yesterday is history, Tomorrow is a mystery, Today is a gift of God, which is why we call it the present. ~ Bill Keane</i></b></p> <p>So often we dwell on the past and worry about the future. Each day has promise and opportunity that is made up of moments. Remember to take some time to be present in the here and now. Everything that happens today is important, so enjoy the journey of the next 24 hours and know that God has a role for you to play in His master plan. Maybe this day holds some challenges and trials. Don't let them rob you of the joy and delight that is now. Even if today is a tough day, praise God for being alive! Rejoice and be glad in God's gift of today and cherish each moment He has given you.</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

## MAY

### You Are Seen and Appreciated

#### **\*The Invisible Teacher: How the Secret Lives of Teachers Can Impact Students**

When you enter a school, it's easy to notice the brightly colored bulletin boards and the roar of chatter spilling out of the cafeteria. But what do think about when you see a teacher? Professionalism? Intellect? Role model?

Victim?

Ms. Jones, the second-grade teacher, is making copies, and it's easy to miss the bruise on the inside of her right arm from the beating her husband gave her last night. ([One in 4 women](#) have been victims of domestic violence.)

Mr. Smith is struggling to carry a box of supplies up to the science lab; he's weaker than usual because he's consumed more drinks in the past two months than he has in the previous 20 years. (About [10 million men](#) in America are alcoholics.)

Coach C. is the P.E. teacher and looks like a fitness magazine model, but two weeks after she found out she was pregnant, she also found out she has a malignant lump in her chest. (Some [231,000 women](#) are diagnosed with breast cancer each year.)

Teachers—the people behind the title, that is—are often the most invisible players at school. Sure, they have a right to their private life, but I believe teachers would more willingly divulge important details about their social-emotional wellbeing and seek support if it weren't so risky to do so. No one wants their private struggles to be used as a strike against them professionally.

So on this first day of Teacher Appreciation Week, I say to my fellow teachers, "I see you." I extend my deepest gratitude to teachers, not just for the amazing things we do for kids, but for the inspiring people we *are*.

#### **TEACHERS ARE HUMAN, TOO**

As the founder and president of [Teachers Who Pray](#) (and an educator for the past 14 years), I have made it my life's mission to acknowledge the humanity of teachers while proclaiming the divinity of the work. I want the world to know that educators are just as

human as anyone else, and that our love for children and our state teaching license does not immunize us from having messy lives from time to time. Yet, God's grace can cause us to overcome any trial of life and be our ever-present helper in the classroom (Psalm 46:1).

Why is this important? Because if teachers stay in the profession long enough, there will come a time when our personal struggles collide with the professional stresses that come with having a class of 20-40 little souls to care for.

### *THE ISOLATION CLASSROOM TEACHERS FEEL IS A VERY REAL PROBLEM.*

The isolation that many classroom teachers feel is a very real problem. Add to that, health crises and addiction, bereavement and depression, bankruptcy and divorce can make it impossible for a teacher to focus on making sure his or her instruction is well prepared and executed. Suffering in silence can compromise the education of our students—or worse.

On April 10, special education teacher [Karen Smith](#) was teaching when her estranged husband entered her San Bernardino, CA classroom with a gun, killing her, an 8-year-old student, and then himself. (A 9-year-old was also wounded.)

Given that Smith was separated from her husband Cedric Anderson after just four months of marriage, it stands to reason that he was abusive toward her prior to the murder-suicide. Did she ever imagine that he would actually harm her at school?

Because there is such a stigma attached to teachers having personal lives that are less than perfect, I can fully understand why Smith did not notify the administrators to keep her husband out of the school building. I'm not blaming her; I just wonder how we can create a school culture where teachers feel comfortable asking colleagues for help coping with aspects of their secret lives, especially when they are in mortal danger.

When I think of the role Teachers Who Pray could play in the lives of teachers, I also think about [Jillian Jacobson](#), another California teacher, who in 2015 hanged herself inside her classroom during school. Her body was discovered by one of her students.

By all accounts, Jacobson was a bubbly, happy-go-lucky teacher. She had even taught a weeklong unit on depression, revealing to students without much emotion that the illness had driven her own father to suicide. But she was obviously masking her own severe depression. Could a support group like Teachers Who Pray have helped her?

## THE POWER of PRAYER

Each school-based chapter is encouraged to pray before or after school or on a duty-free lunch break, actions that are permissible under the law as long as students are excluded. These times of prayer and spiritual conversations are held in confidential trust. Over time, the participating teachers emerge with a deeper sense of community, job satisfaction and self-efficacy that might not otherwise exist.

## TEACHERS ARE HUMAN

For too long, teachers have been treated like widgets, a means to an end. Education reform, in all its good intentions, created unsustainable expectations whereby teachers put in 12-hour days to maximize student outcomes, yet their workload only seems to grow. What gets lost in our efforts to improve schools is the realization that teachers are human, subject to the same human failings that any other person is subject to. While we are analyzing student data and aligning our academic assessments to rigorous standards, who is teaching teachers the vital practice of self-care?

I have witnessed the power of small group prayer to transform teachers' personal lives, renew their joy in the work, and set them on a path to transform their schools.

You don't have to be a person of faith to know that teachers are under tremendous stress—just watch the news. Every time I read about a teacher taking his own life, sexually abusing students or doing something ridiculously reckless, I wonder how the teaching profession could better police itself and prevent those things from happening.

This post may be the most unconventional way to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, but giving teachers a safe outlet to be human is a profoundly loving thing to do (albeit unusual). Never underestimate the immense value in nurturing a teacher's heart, soul and spirit.

For Teachers Who Pray, that's precisely where true school reform starts.

*\*This blog post was written by Marilyn Rhames and was originally published in [Education Post](#).*

**MAY**

You Are Seen and Appreciated

**Week 1: You are not invisible.**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“When the woman realized that she couldn’t remain hidden, she knelt trembling before him. In front of all the people, she blurted out her story - why she touched him and how at that same moment she was healed. Jesus said, ‘Daughter, you took a risk trusting me, and now you’re healed and whole. Live well, live blessed!’”***

Luke 8:47-48 (Message)

Teachable Moment

Every day. Every day you walk through the doors of the school and into your classroom. You walk in with your dreams and your disillusionment, your joys and your heartaches. You hug your students at the door; you see your colleagues in a meeting; you connect with parents after school. You walk past people in your school each day and wonder if anyone sees you. The real you. The you that is hurting; the you that is processing; the you that is trying--with everything in your soul, trying. You may be wishing for someone at school to truly see you, or you may be desperately trying to hide your true self from others because you actually feel too broken to teach. But you cannot hide from God. No one is invisible to Him. God saw you before you were born; God saw the path of your life; God sees you now in this moment. And God sees all of you—your beauty and your pain. Let Him meet you exactly where you are. He put His light in you and He wants to help you let it shine! (Matthew 5:14-16)

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**



**MAY**  
You Are Seen and Appreciated

**Week 2: You are invaluable.**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“...Insomuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren,  
ye have done it unto me.”***

Matthew 25:40

Teachable Moment

Think of each and every child in your classroom: what piece of God’s heart sits there as the children take their seats? Seeing children as pieces of God’s heart is such a powerful and humbling vision. The call to teach is a sacred calling, and this sacredness flows from the connection our gift has to children. God cherishes His children, and in caring for them, we care for Him. As we ground our classrooms in the priceless value of His children, let us also be reminded of our own eternal value. We have been blessed with the vocation to teach God’s children, and this is an invitation to partner with God in a miraculous way! How dearly God must love us to entrust us with His precious children! As you support each student in their specific areas of need, be reminded that you are not just serving “the least of these”—you are ministering to God Himself.

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

**MAY**  
You Are Seen and Appreciated

**Week 3: You can be invigorated.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>“My grace is enough to cover and sustain you. My power is made perfect in weakness.”</i></b> 2 Corinthians 12:9 (Voice)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>I just need more coffee ... I just need more sleep ... I just need one more day off ... then I will be invigorated! So often we teachers think that there is something we can do to sustain ourselves in our work. In the midst of so many tasks and expectations, we may start to feel like we would be more energized if we could just eliminate a few items off our list ... if we could just add one more hour to the day. God’s answer to our stress can be counterintuitive: He calls us to humble ourselves in our weakness so that His power can take over in a situation. God calls us to embrace His grace and rest in Him as the principle way to be sustained. Working harder is not always the answer. Challenge yourself to acknowledge your weakness, and then lean into God’s power—not yours. Watch His amazing grace “flip the script” on your productivity.</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**MAY**

You Are Seen and Appreciated

**Week 4: You are God’s investment.**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace [Who imparts all blessing and favor], Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you.”***

I Peter 5:10 (AMP)

Teachable Moment

God is so deeply invested in you, dear and cherished teacher! God’s profound dedication to you and your students will push your classroom to be what it ought to be before this year is over. You have worked so hard and strived so diligently to walk in step with the Lord this year. God knows the effort and excellence you have poured into your classroom, and He will certainly honor your efforts. As a Christian teacher strengthened and grounded by the awesome power of the Holy Spirit, you can rest assured that God has a deep investment in you. You are the vessel that ushers the promises of God into that classroom. Even on the days when lessons go awry and you cannot see God’s promises manifesting in your classroom, He will ensure a return on investment—and it will be exponential and undeniable. You are that investment!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## JUNE

### The Fruit of the Spirit

***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.***

***Against such things there is no law.”***

Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

When I imagine what the ideal Teachers Who Pray teacher looks like, acts like, and thinks like, I find myself in Gal. 5:22-23 every time. What an amazing, magnetic teacher that is!

These nine fruit of the Spirit are attributes of the Holy Spirit, and they show up consistently in people who have a close relationship with the Lord. These qualities do not come by happenstance; they are as much spiritual disciplines as they are graces. In other words, the fruit of the Spirit are supernaturally endowed to us by the Holy Spirit—yes!—but they spring forth from quality time spent in the Master’s presence and from a vigilant, disciplined lifestyle that guards against worldly thinking and behavior (Proverbs 4:23).

God gives us the supernatural power to be patient, kind and good, faithful, gentle and in control of ourselves, yet these graces are simply by-products of our connection with Jesus. The more time we spend with Him, the more we become like Him.

This is what Teachers Who Pray is all about: helping teachers become more skilled and excellent in the classroom by inspiring them to crave for God and His fruit of the Spirit.

It always fascinates me that people actually believe that in 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court took God and prayer out of the public schools. Think about it: *God is the creator of the universe... who has the power to remove His presence from anywhere?*

As long as there are teachers and school staff who are truly in love with Jesus and who walk into their classrooms embodying the fruit of the Spirit, then God is literally an employee of the public school district! And against such things, there is no law! (Galatians 5:23b)

**Author’s Note:** In writing this month’s devotional, I researched the landmark Engel v. Vitale court decision which infamously ‘took prayer out of public school.’ The decision came down on June 25, 1962. Exactly 30 years later—on June 25, 1992—I gave my life to the Lord and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now I am the founder of Teachers Who Pray, an organization devoted to teacher prayer in schools. God has an amazing sense of humor!

~ Marilyn Rhames

#### **June Prayer:**

*Almighty God—Creator of the universe. You are amazing! I long to praise You and pray to You in school and out of school. Let the Fruit of the Spirit, all nine, reside in me each and every day. Teach me to be more like You, Jesus. Amen.*

**JUNE**  
The Fruit of the Spirit

**Week 1: Upward aspects of the fruit of the Spirit.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“But the fruit of the Spirit is <u>love, joy, peace</u>, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”</i></b></p> <p>Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>As a child, I grew up singing a song in church that goes like this: “This joy I have, the world didn’t give it to me—the world didn’t give it, and the world can’t take it away!” The truth of this message is found in the first three qualities of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy and peace. When a teacher possesses these qualities, the most difficult school in which to work cannot take the love, joy and peace away.</p> <p>Love is not an emotion; it’s a deep commitment that seeks the wellbeing of our students, families and colleagues unconditionally. Joy exceeds mere happiness; it’s an ever-present exuberance that results from having an intimate relationship with God, even when things around us are less than perfect. Peace is not just being calm; it’s the lack of fear and worry that frees us from oppressive thoughts, despite difficult circumstances.</p> <p>We can possess true love, joy, and peace if we are wholly connected upward to God.</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**JUNE**  
The Fruit of the Spirit

**Week 2: Outward effects of the fruit of the Spirit.**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”***  
Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

Teachable Moment

There’s a song that goes, “Love isn’t love until you give it away.” That giving away of love looks like patience, kindness, and goodness—the second set of the fruit of the Spirit. The classroom is the perfect setting in which to put these outward traits on full display.

Patience shows restraint in the face of opposition; it’s being slow to anger when a student is openly defying you. Kindness offers a tenderness, a sweetness; it’s eager to extend a helping hand to a parent who cannot afford to pay her child’s field trip fee. Goodness demonstrates an aggressive generosity and selflessness that shocks the receiver, like hosting a makeshift prom in the hospital room of a seriously ill high school senior.

It sounds paradoxical, but patience, kindness and goodness are impossible to possess without giving them away!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

**JUNE**  
The Fruit of the Spirit

**Week 3: Inward aspects of the fruit of the Spirit**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”***

Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

Teachable Moment

Some things about you others will never know. The final set of the fruit of the Spirit consists of attributes that are internal and privately held. While it may seem to others that you are full of faith, gentleness (humility), and self-control, only you and God know the truth. Often our outward expressions don't accurately reflect what's going on in our hearts.

The stresses of the classroom can also reveal areas of weakness that we might not have known existed within us. Faithfulness is being full of trust for God's perfect plan—and also us being trustworthy and loyal to others. Gentleness is being humble, calm, and non-threatening when we may have cause not to be. This is not a posture of weakness or passivity, but of inner-strength and moral authority (Proverbs 16:32). Finally, self-control is having reign over our emotions, actions, and desires so that we are in harmony with the will of God.

Meditating on God's Word will produce a more faithful, gentle, and in control you!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

**JUNE**  
The Fruit of the Spirit

**Week 4: Walking in God’s spiritual orchard.**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><i>“For this reason make every effort to supplement your faith with moral character, your moral character with knowledge, your knowledge with self-control, your self-control with endurance, your endurance with godliness, your godliness with brotherly kindness, and your brotherly kindness with love. For if you possess these qualities and if they continue to increase among you, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in attaining a full knowledge of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah.”</i></p> <p>2 Peter 1:5-8 (ISV)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>When we teach students, we scaffold their way to mastery. This is true for our walk in Christ, as well. Now that we’re at the end of the school year, reflect on how much your students have grown academically and in their knowledge of themselves. Take some time to reflect on your own spiritual growth. What have you learned about your walk in the Lord? Where have you stopped to pluck the apple of faith or the pear of patience? There’s a great deal of spiritual fruit that you have produced and watched grow in others. You are not running anymore; the race is over—at least for this school year. Look back, and then look forward. Graduation. Promotion to the next grade. Did you earn a new teaching credential or get an award? There’s so much to be proud of, so enjoy the fruit of your labor. Congratulations!</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>



## JULY

### Fun in the Sun

*“And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets”*  
Zechariah 8:5 (NASB)

Ahhhh. July is finally here and by now the academic year has ended for just about every school in America. Sure, some institutions offer summer school or day camp, but the majority of teachers and students are on their blessed Summer Break!

Seeing kids playing in the streets is a quintessential sign of fun in the sun. In Zechariah, God was telling the children of Israel how He was going to restore Jerusalem to them and bring back the city’s vibrant luster. He used the imagery of children frolicking in the streets as a sure sign that the city would be safe, secure, and blessed.

Unfortunately, many of our students go on Summer Break and have to stay indoors the entire time because street violence makes it too risky for them to go outside and play. Then there are times when kids who live in “safe” communities get kidnapped, molested, or murdered while enjoying a fun day at the park.

As we celebrate our much-needed Summer Break, let’s not go on vacation from praying for our students. Summer Break is not fun for every child, especially children who have to stay indoors, unsupervised, until mommy gets home from work; or that kid who used to get breakfast and lunch every day at school, but now may go hungry until dinnertime.

As much as we may want to “leave school at school,” we have a spiritual obligation to pray for the kids who we know may not have the greatest Summer Break experience. We must pray that they will have an encounter with God and have *fun in the Sun*.

~ Marilyn Rhames

#### **July Prayer:**

*Lord, thank you for Summer Break! Hallelujah!! We pray that all of our students, teachers, and school staff have a blessed, safe Summer Break. Let no hurt, harm or danger come to any of us. We pray that you will shine your light and love on each child, so that they will learn about You and draw closer to You this summer. We pray that each of us returns to school in the fall with a renewed excitement for what is to come. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

**JULY**  
Fun in the Son

**Week 1: Have some fun!**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.”</i></b></p> <p>Job 8:21 (NLT)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>When people talk about the life of a teacher, the word “fun” rarely comes up. Well, it’s time to change that perception—especially when talking about teachers in the month of July! If you had a rough school year, and even if you didn’t, now is the perfect time to laugh, dance, and be joyful. School is out and you are “off the clock.” Unwind, put up your feet, and enjoy your lemonade in the shade. Do something you’ve always wanted to do. Paint on a canvas. Ride on a motorcycle. Go roller skating—outside! Let the goodness of the Lord and His faithfulness throughout the school year, spring up shouts of joy from your belly! You earned your vacation, so go have some fun!</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**JULY**  
Fun in the Sun

**Week 2: Show hospitality and have fun with friends!**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“My lord,’ he said, ‘if it pleases you, stop here for a while. Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. And since you’ve honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey.’ ‘All right,’ they said. ‘Do as you have said.’”***

Genesis 18:3-5 (NLT)

Teachable Moment

When three strangers came passing through Abraham’s town, Abraham went out of his way to be hospitable. He gave them water, a meal, and urged them to relax with him at his home. He had no idea the men were angels sent to give him a message from the Lord! What would happen if we used our Summer Break to show an extra bit of hospitality to our friends and neighbors? What if we invited a lonely friend over for dinner, or bought a struggling single mom some groceries? What if we turned off our TVs, phones, tablets and laptops for 23 hours a day for a whole week in exchange for conversations with friends (real friends, not the digital kind). Abraham took time to be hospitable to strangers, and they blessed him with a life-changing Word from the Lord!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

**JULY**  
Fun in the Son

**Week 3: It's fun to spend quality time with Jesus!**

<p>Bible Verse of the Week</p> <p><b><i>“He makes me lie down in [fresh, tender] green pastures; He leads me beside the still and quiet waters. He refreshes and restores my soul;”</i></b></p> <p>Psalm 23:2-3a (AMP)</p>		
<p>Teachable Moment</p> <p>I wonder what it would feel like to take a long walk with Jesus. I imagine He would take my hand and say like the Lord did in Isaiah 41:13: “For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.” If Jesus spoke those words to me, I would probably faint! While we won't physically walk with Jesus until we get to Heaven, we can walk with Him in the Spirit. July is the perfect time for teachers to draw close to God. We're on Summer Break, so we can sleep in a little bit and then go to our favorite spot in the house to pray. We can read the Bible with a cup of coffee or tea. We can dwell in His presence and be still. Savor this opportunity to slow down and enjoy Jesus. When you make that sweet connection with the Lord, it's actually super fun!</p>		
<p><b>Praise Reports:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayer Requests:</b></p>	<p><b>Prayers Answered:</b></p>

**JULY**  
Fun in the Son

**Week 4: Sleeping is fun!!**

Bible Verse of the Week

***“Your mind will be clear, free from fear;  
when you lie down to rest, you will be refreshed by sweet sleep.”***  
Proverbs 3:24 (Voice)

Teachable Moment

Sleep is a school teacher’s best friend, but we don’t get enough of it. And those who do manage to get a reasonable amount sleep, often report that they lie down thinking about work and wake up thinking about it. Lesson planning. Classroom management. Grading papers. Parent Conferences. Observations. Evaluations. The stressors only worsen for teachers who come home from work and have to figure out what to cook dinner or help their own kids manage hours of homework. It’s enough to keep even the most experienced educator up at night!

Now that it’s July and you’re on Summer Break or on a lighter duty at school, you can breathe a little easier and sleep much better. Don’t feel guilty about catching up on some Z’s—you deserve it. The Lord wants you to clear your mind and get some sweet, refreshing sleep!

**Praise Reports:**

**Prayer Requests:**

**Prayers Answered:**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

### Spiritual Resources:

- [Teachers Who Pray](#): Equips teachers to ground their work in prayer and spiritual practices.
- [Streetslights](#): The world's first urban, audio, multi-media Bible and curriculum with word-for-word Scripture over original hip-hop beats. Download the app for free and share with your kids!
- [Daily Audio Bible](#): Hear a "meal-sized" portion of the Bible each day until you've heard the entire Bible in one year; participate in a virtual class and a community of prayer.
- [Christian Educators Association International \(CEAI\)](#): A nonprofit membership association that aims to encourage, equip and empower educators with Biblical principles.
- [Q Place](#): An organization that mobilizes Christians to facilitate group discussions with spiritual seekers so they can find God as revealed in the Bible.
- [The Alpha Course](#): An opportunity to explore the meaning of life in a relaxed, friendly setting, usually meeting once per week for 10 weeks.
- [Harvest Prayer Ministries](#): Teaching prayer in a way that will change your life.
- [Crown Financial Ministries](#): An interdenominational ministry dedicated to equipping people around the world to learn, apply, and teach Biblical financial principles.
- [BibleGateway.com](#): Read the Bible online in various versions and in multiple languages.
- [Gateways to Better Education](#): Addressing the confusion in schools regarding the separation of church and state.
- [Prayershop.org](#): The world's largest prayer-only webstore. It sells more than 500 resources exclusively about prayer.

### Professional Resources:

- [Education Week](#): America's most respected source for education news and insight.
- [Donors Choose](#): An online charity connecting donors to classrooms in need.
- [The Master Teacher](#): the largest online database of professional development conferences and workshops for educators and teachers from Early Learning to Grade 12.
- National Teachers Associations for various subjects:
  - [National Science Teachers Association](#)
  - [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics \(Mathematics 101\)](#)
  - [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
  - [National Council for the Social Studies](#)

### Legal Resources:

- [Newseum Institute](#): a nonpartisan national initiative focused on educating the public about the religious liberty principles of the First Amendment.
- [Christian Law Association](#): Offers free legal defense/counsel to churches and Christians.
- [Alliance Defense Fund](#): A legal group defending the right to hear/speak the Gospel

- [Christian Legal Society](#): For help finding a Christian attorney to support issues of faith
- [American Center for Law and Justice](#): Taking action to defend liberty, specializing in First Amendment Rights and students rights in public schools.

### **School-Church Partnership Resources:**

- [All Our Children](#): A national network of faith congregations that partners with public schools.
- [The Expectations Project](#): Trains congregations on how to advocate for better education
- [National Church Adopt-a-School Initiative](#): Teaches churches how to “adopt” their local public school(s).
- [Moms in Prayer International](#): Mothers around the world come together to pray before God for their children, their children’s teachers and schools in more than 140 countries.
- [Child Evangelism Fellowship](#): Offers the *Good News Club* and *5-Day Club* that teaches children in public and private schools around the world the Word of God during after school programming.

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# O HEART, VIGILANT AND SINCERE

## *Excerpts from this teacher prayer guide:*

**SEPTEMBER, WEEK 2: Pray about everything. (Philippians 4:6):** "When students come to us with everything from a scraped knee to a bad grade to a tough family situation, we feel a sense of connection to that precious child. Likewise, God delights when we come to Him with everything that is on our hearts. He cherishes the time to connect with us and longs for moments of closeness with us."

**OCTOBER, WEEK 4: Engage in spiritual warfare. (Ephesians 6:12):** "In any given school day, there are so many things that don't happen because you are there. So many moments of tension, so many unfortunate events that are never allowed to manifest in your school building because you are prayerfully protecting the school culture, the staff, and the students from an unseen enemy. By lifting up your school in prayer, you are guarding the hearts in the main office and the minds in the classroom. Teachers are sitting squarely at the center of a spiritual battlefield that we cannot physically see. Take courage and don't be afraid."

**FEBRUARY, WEEK 1: Love defined. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; 1 John 4:16b):** "Some people wrongly think that the U.S. Supreme Court 'took God out of public schools.' That's only possible if teachers cease to love. *God is love*. And as long as Christian teachers are working, loving, and privately praying in public schools, then God will always be there!"



This unique, wonderfully anointed 12-month Teachers Who Pray prayer guide was written for teachers, by teachers. The six co-authors together have 99 years of education experience in urban, rural and suburban schools across America. They paired their professional expertise with their deep, rich love for God's Word to create this spiritual resource for educators. It's a book like none other!

**USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE TO ANCHOR YOUR TWP CHAPTER AT SCHOOL OR AS YOUR PERSONAL BOOK OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE WEEK.**



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