

GEMS SUNDAY INFORMATION

January 2010

Dear Pastor,

This letter brings our warmest greetings to you from the ministry of GEMS Girls' Clubs. Whether your church or Christian organization has only recently added GEMS, or you have been partnering with us for 51 years, we thank you for your partnership in sharing the truth and hope of Jesus Christ with the girls and women in your church and community.

Coming soon is something we call GEMS Sunday – a special day set aside in churches and worship services all across North America to honor and celebrate the girls and women who serve in the GEMS ministry. On that Sunday, the annual theme studied in GEMS Clubs throughout the season is highlighted. Each annual theme focuses on a different passage of Scripture around which Bible lessons, service projects, games, devotionals, crafts-with-a-purpose, and a variety of special events and activities are developed. Enclosed is information on this year's annual theme, including suggestions on how to use the information for your church's GEMS Sunday celebration. Often scheduled for the last Sunday in April (April 25), or the first Sunday in May (May 2), GEMS Sunday is a great way to let the congregation know what happens in your club, as well as provide GEMS girls with leadership opportunities in intergenerational worship.

The theme studied this season is titled *Prayer: No Worries*. This study on Philippians 4:6-7 has helped girls become young women of prayer. They have learned how to pray and not worry – to entrust God with all their cares and concerns.

Please use the enclosed materials as a resource to help you gain an understanding of some of the things the girls have studied this year in club. A copy of this mailing has also been sent to your Club Coordinator so that the two of you can meet together to plan for this special service.

May your GEMS Sunday celebration bless you and all those worshipping and experiencing it with you!

Prayer: No Worries

God desires to communicate with all His children. He wants us to listen to Him and to talk to Him – to bring all of our requests, and petitions, and thanksgivings directly to Him. He promises to listen, to hear, and to answer. Additionally, He promises to provide us with His peace – to guard our hearts and minds with peace – if we obey and bring our requests to Him.

Theme Aims

To teach girls that they should not worry, but instead should turn each concern, worry, and care into a prayer to God who hears and responds to their cries.

To teach girls that God tells them in His Word to pray about all things, at all times, in all places. Girls will understand what prayer is and why it is essential for their lives.

To teach girls that to commune with God requires speaking (our talking to God) and listening (God talking to us through His Word and His Spirit).

To have girls practice different forms of prayer and to experience the depth, joy, and power of communicating with God in prayer.

Memory Verse

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

Supplemental Verse

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7

Theme Outline – Prayer: No Worries

- I. *Prayer: No Worries* identifies a life that believers want – constant communication with our Father and freedom from worry and anxiousness.
 - A. It is not always as easy as the three small words in the theme title make it sound.
 - B. James 5:16 tells us why it can be difficult. *The... prayer of a righteous man [woman] avails much.* A righteous man... a righteous woman... a person right with God, living a surrendered and obedient life. Now that is what is hard!
 - C. Establishing and maintaining a rich prayer life that delights and honors God all the time is hard because it requires us to surrender our rights, give everything to God, to totally trust Him and give up what we think is our control of things.
- II. Philippians teaches us the way: 4:6-7 says: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
 - A. Do you worry? Do you get anxious about things? It often seems to depend on our circumstance – what’s going on in our lives or the lives of those we love.
 1. Has anyone ever changed their situation by worrying over it? No one. Worry ALWAYS results in sin. Because worry, fretting, and anxiousness come from our determination to have our own way.
 - a. Jesus’ purpose was never to accomplish His own plans, but to fulfill God’s plans.
 2. All our fretting and worrying is caused by planning without God.
 - a. God’s plans for our lives are higher and better than any we could create.
 - B. Do you have a thankful heart? Do you pray WITH thanksgiving as Paul prescribes?
 1. Don Postema in his book, *Space for God*, says that gratitude is the very heart of the Christian life. A grateful heart acknowledges that a gift has been given – not something that has been earned, but a gift. And it acknowledges that there is a Giver of that gift. A grateful heart must express appreciation for the gift – it absolutely must give thanks! It must thank the Giver!
 - a. Everyone could fill pages of journals with gifts we’ve been given by the Giver of all good things – and we ought to fill our journals – everyday! Starting our mornings and ending our days with thanksgiving to God.
 2. Expressing appreciation completes the exchange of the gift. It lets the love flow back! God gives good gifts out of His great love for us, and through thanksgiving, we offer our love back to Him.
 3. Do you know how many times the Bible mentions the word thanks, or thanksgiving, or thankful? 149 times! Why? Because it is such an important part of our faith walk – of our prayer life.
 - C. Do you know and apply the 3 P’s of prayer?
 1. Do you know the PERSON of prayer or who it is we are praying to?
 - a. The PERSON to whom we pray is God. We pray to God through Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Do you know the PLACE and TIME of prayer?
 - a. The PLACE and TIME of prayer is – *any* and *all* – any place at all times. God wants us to live our lives in constant communication with Him. There is no place nor time that is not “perfect” for talking with HIM.

3. Do you know the PURPOSE of prayer?
 - a. The PURPOSE of prayer is not to let God know what we're thinking nor what we or others need. He already knows. The purpose of prayer is not to get an answer to our prayer. Rather, the purpose of prayer is to get hold of God.
 - b. When Paul wrote the book of Philippians, his circumstances were not wonderful. He was under house arrest and guarded round the clock. Paul spent a total of seven years in prison for telling others about Jesus. Yet, Paul's message was always filled with hope and joy, and his outlook always confident because of his relationship with Christ.
 1. God had a hold of Paul. From Paul's encounter with God on the Road to Damascus throughout the remainder of his life, we see it.
 2. And when we read Paul's prayers, and see his actions, we know that Paul had a hold of God as well. Paul walked and talked with God through all circumstances.
 - c. Paul's words teach us a fundamental truth about God: No matter what our misfortune or difficulty, our fear or our worry, God is sovereign. HE is in control, and His great desire is to walk WITH us through any and all circumstances.
 4. God is a RELATIONAL God! He doesn't want to be a silent partner! He GAVE UP His most cherished thing, His Son, so He could have a relationship with us – to talk with us, to share life with us. God does not want to be "left alone." We don't "bug Him" when we talk to Him! He wants to be WITH us, just as you are, just as I am – imperfect as each of us is.
 - a. That may be difficult to understand. We know ourselves and how messed up we sometimes are... But God's love changes how He sees us!
 - b. *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 5:8
 - c. *"Your Father knows what you need before you ask him."* Matthew 6:8b
 - d. *"You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."* John 14:14
 - e. *Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.* Psalm 37:4
 5. Think of the last thing you prayed about. Were you devoted to your desire or to God? The reason we ask – the reason God wants us to "present our requests to God" is so that we get to know Him better – so we can get a hold of God.
 6. *Be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.* 1 Peter 4:7
 - a. Clear minded about the fact that we want to become best friends with God and self-controlled in making it a priority – setting aside uninterrupted time everyday to be with Him.
- III. We need to find a way of communicating with Him where we feel like we are connecting – we are "getting hold of God." We are all different so trying different ways of praying or methods of communicating with God can be helpful. We need to find a meaningful "prayer language."
- A. Journaling your prayers
 - B. Praying Scripture
 - C. Prayer Walking
 - D. Praying for Our World
 - E. Life as Prayer or Continual Prayer
 - F. Coloring in Prayer
 - G. Praying the Hand
 - H. Praying the ACTS Prayer
 - I. Praying the Names of God
 - J. Praying Philippians 4:8-9
 - K. Listening for God – Group Prayer
- IV. Why would it be that when we know that God longs to spend time with us – to walk and talk with us – why do we choose NOT to spend time with HIM? We believe in God. We believe in the power of prayer. We long for peace in our lives. We don't like worry. YET, we make the CHOICE to neglect our relationship with God. Why?

- A. Answer: a lack of obedience and full surrender. As Christ followers we must replace what we want to do, with what God wants us to do.
- B. Christ NEVER spoke of His right to Himself – to do what He wanted to do. He came to do the will of His Father.
 - 1. *“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.”*
John 6:38
 - 2. How did Jesus know His Father’s will? He was in daily communication with Him – they talked everyday – short and sweet conversations and long extended conversations – Jesus withdrew from the crowds – got away from it all – so He could meet with His Father and talk... uninterrupted, quiet or lively conversations – “talk time.”
 - 3. *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*
Mark 1:35
- C. But for Jesus to do that, He had to make choices. Hard choices – just like yours and mine. Was He tired some days? You bet! But He got up anyway. Did He have a lot to do – a lot on His plate? YES! But He met with God anyway – that was most important. Were there things that were heavy on His mind? Yes! All the more reason to not let anything get in the way of His “talk time”... of His listening time with His Father.
- D. Jesus traded in His rights for what He knew was best – what God wanted Him to do.
- E. As Christ followers, we must do likewise. The song *I Surrender All* helps us understand this truth.
- F. *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*
Mark 1:35
- G. *“Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”*
Luke 22:46
- H. *“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”*
Matthew 6:28-30
- I. *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*
Matthew 11:28
- J. The decisions we make reveal what we have chosen – His way or our way. An amazing prayer life is possible.
- K. Living with no worries is possible, but it begins at the foot of the cross. It begins with surrender and then it is a daily workout – daily disciplining of ourselves to choose His way.

Theme Logo

God’s child, His daughter, is releasing her worries and presenting her requests to her Heavenly Father in prayer.



Theme Song

Hear My Cry, O Lord by an unknown composer. ©2008 by Unity Music Ministries. Available from the GEMS Service Center at www.gemsgc.org or 616 241 5616 ext 3032.

Alternative songs might include: *Hear from Heaven* by Kevin Boese and recorded on *Today* CD by Hillsongs; *You Are Holy* by Imboden/Rhoton and recorded on *Not Be Shaken* CD by Colleen and Grace; *All Who Are Thirsty* by Brown/Robertson and recorded on *Worship Together 3.0* CD.

GEMS Sunday

GEMS Sunday is scheduled for April 25 or May 2, 2009. (These are suggested dates only. Please feel free to schedule any other more acceptable date.)

Bulletin Cover, Litany, and Children's Bulletin

Full color, theme-related GEMS Girls' Clubs bulletin covers are packaged in quantities of 100 and available in two sizes, 8 ½ x 11, and 8 ½ x 14 for a nominal cost (*smaller sample enclosed w/pastor's letter*). Bulletin covers can be ordered from the GEMS Service Center. Also enclosed in this packet are reproducible copies of our *Prayer: No Worries* litany and a Children's Bulletin.

Possible Object Lessons and Other Message Enhancements


1. Ask girls and counselors to briefly share their experiences utilizing and/or learning about different types of prayer – praying in color, journaling, praying Scripture, praying walking, praying for our world, etc.
2. Utilize different girls to pray specifically for: their country and its leaders, their church family, someone who is ill, thanking God for creation, thanking God for a previous answer to prayer, etc.
3. Show either or both of the following video clips as a part of your message: *The Stool* and *Coffee with Jesus* available from www.sermonspice.com
4. Incorporate one of the great skits on prayer offered in *GEMS Theme Resource Book* found on pages 58-63 (*your Club Coordinator will likely have this resource*).
5. Identify someone or some situation within your congregation that is in need of earnest prayer. Issue a challenge to the congregation to join the girls in praying for the next 40 days or throughout the summer (identify a timeline) for that person or that situation. Get everyone committed to the joint prayer project. At the conclusion of the timeline, be sure to report on how the Lord answered your prayers.
6. Find out if there is a family of one of your GEMS girls that has been praying together for a specific need and has received a lavish answer from God to their prayer. Ask that family to share their story of God's faithfulness with the congregation.
7. Allow girls to participate fully in various elements of leading the worship service – reading Scripture, singing the theme song with (or without) creative movements, serving as greeters, offering prayer.

It is our hope that the information provided in this letter will be of help to you as you plan and prepare for service on GEMS Sunday. Copies of most of the enclosed materials are likewise available online at our website www.gemsgc.org – using the *Pastors' Corner* link. Please visit the website for any additional information you need.

Also, please watch for and ask your Club Coordinator for progress reports regarding the many GEMS Clubs that have been started in Zambia, Africa, and the Esther School that we are building there for orphaned and under resourced children. We will be taking work teams to help construct the school beginning in the summer of 2010.

Thank you again for the support that you give to the ministry of GEMS Girls' Clubs. Our work would not be possible without partners in Kingdom work like you. May God's richest blessings be on your work throughout this coming year.

Serving Him Together,



Jan Boone
Executive Director