

Begin with Prayer

*Searching for answers?
These teens in Ottawa, Canada,
say prayer is the place to start.*



Above: Bridgitte Leger, Jenni Holt, Dawson Lybbert, Dayna Conway, Rebekah Wagoner, and Alexander Richer-Brule, along with other youth from the Ottawa Ontario Stake (left), know that help from Heavenly Father is just a prayer away.

BY JANET THOMAS
Church Magazines

When 15-year-old Jenni tells about having a prayer answered, she starts with an apology. She is sorry to admit that she hadn't been praying regularly for almost a year. Things in her life had not been going well—not at school, not with her friends, not even at church.

One night, Jenni explains, she wanted to watch a movie. She bent down to look at the movies on the lowest bookshelf when she caught sight of a photo of her uncle who had tragically passed away not too long before. Suddenly, the weight of everything she was worried about made her want to cry. "I just knew in that instant that I had to pray," says Jenni. She knelt where she was and prayed.

Jenni describes receiving her answer: "As soon as I was done, I had the answers to my questions. I felt that everything was all right again. Everything is going to be OK. Everything with my uncle is OK. I realized that I love school and my friends. As soon as I finished praying, I knew that I had to go to church because it is for me. It really hit me, and I felt so comfortable and so warm. I know my Heavenly Father loves me and He will help me through things."

For Jenni, this prayer was one she had been wanting to say but somehow couldn't. Now, even thinking about it, she gets that same feeling of comfort over again and the same assurance that her answer was from the Lord.

Jenni Holt is from Ottawa, Canada's beautiful capital city built on the wooded banks of the Ottawa River. She and friends from the Ottawa Ontario Stake talked with Church magazines about how prayer affects their lives.

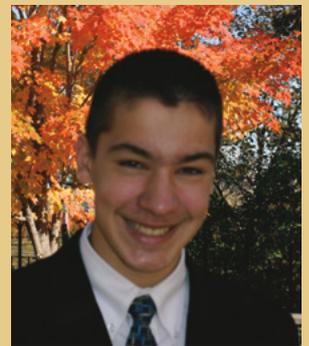
Where Do Answers Come From?

One of the most interesting things the Ottawa teens discussed was how their prayers were answered. First, Susan Brook said, "If you want an answer, you have to listen for it."

Susan said her answers sometimes come by reading the scriptures. She had a good example: "One day, I was just really tired, and I was being mean to everyone. I didn't want to talk. I remember reading in the scriptures, I don't even remember where, and it said, 'Be humble.' It hit me. That's my answer." (See D&C 112:10.)

Ariana Keith listens carefully at church. "I think many of our prayers are answered by speakers at church," she said. "There was a time when I wanted my patriarchal blessing. Then the week before I was scheduled to get it, our stake patriarch actually came to our ward and spoke. I had been praying about it so hard, and hearing him was great."

Mackenzie Loftus said her prayers are often answered through her family. She prayed about a family decision, and "I felt the



Above, from top: Fred King and Ronan Filamont agree that the sacrament prayer is sacred and should be said with reverence. Kyffin de Souza is grateful for family prayers.

Youth in Ottawa pray for comfort during tough times, for help with schoolwork and friends, and for blessings they desire. They know that Heavenly Father answers their prayers. “Sometimes you don’t get the answer you expect,” says Dawson Lybbert, “but you’ll get the answer you need.”



Above: Matt Larson reads a scripture tacked on his wall before he prays, and Nick Moolenbeck says prayer requires effort.

Spirit right away, knowing the decision we were making was the right thing.”

Sometimes the answer literally walks right up to you. When Thomas Francis and his family moved to Ottawa, he needed to make new friends at a new school. He prayed to find good friends. “One day,” said Thomas, “this person in my class comes up to me and says, ‘You want to come and meet my friends?’ Ever since then, we’ve been friends. It helped me a lot.”

Dawson Lybbert had something quite important to say about answers to prayers. He said, “Sometimes you don’t get the answer you expect, but you’ll get the answer you need.” He said sometimes you can’t really see it right away, but you can when you look back.

Someone To Talk To

Several of the teens said how nice it is to have a family that prays together. Kyffin de Souza especially likes knowing that her family prays together each evening. “We have sort of a schedule to take turns. I feel the Spirit, and I know that if I am away from home, they are praying for me to be safe.”

Another teen loves praying with her parents every morning. “I go to their room, and we pray,” she said. “I have a testimony that the Holy Ghost is with me, and if I ever need His help, I will ask Heavenly Father for it.”

Her friend Ruth Decady said, “It’s really important that when we say our prayers, we know that Heavenly Father is listening. There is someone there for you.”

Katie Cameron loves how prayer makes her feel. “When I talk to the Lord, it feels like someone is actually wanting to talk to me. I know I can tell Him anything.”

Prayers Given for Others

The young men—especially those of priest age like Ronan Filamont, Fred King, and Dawson and Davin Lybbert—spoke about the significance and sacred duty of giving the sacrament prayers for the members of their wards and branches.

Dawson said, “Praying over the sacrament makes you think more clearly about its significance. I have this priesthood authority, and I feel that I can’t abuse it.”

Fred remembers saying the sacrament

prayer when he was first ordained a priest: “It was hard at first, and I kept making mistakes. Once I had to start over again and again. But the Spirit whispered to me that it didn’t matter how many times I had to try; I would eventually get it right. It was a nice feeling.”

Prayer Takes Preparation

Several of the teens talked about the important things they have to do to prepare to pray. Matt Larson has a scripture reference tacked to the wall of his bedroom, Doctrine and Covenants 78:19: “He who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more.” It reminds him to be grateful for the things the Lord has given to him. He knows gratitude needs to be part of his prayers.

Nick Moolenbeck said, “Prayer doesn’t work if I just ask without giving serious thought and putting my heart and soul into it.”

The Miraculous Power of Prayer

Sierra Lybbert has a great story about prayer. When she was two, a horse stepped on her hand. Her thumb was severed, and several fingers split open. Her parents rushed her from one hospital to another to find a surgeon willing to take on the seemingly impossible repair. She said, “One doctor told my parents that the surgeon didn’t have a prayer of being successful. My mom told him that the surgeon didn’t have one prayer with him—he had many. My mother had called the temple to add my name to the prayer roll.”

Now, at 13, Sierra has a functioning hand. Her thumb works just fine, and she raised it for a few other girls from her ward to see. They had never really heard the story. All they could see on Sierra’s hand was a thin, hardly noticeable scar encircling the base of her thumb. The result seemed truly amazing.

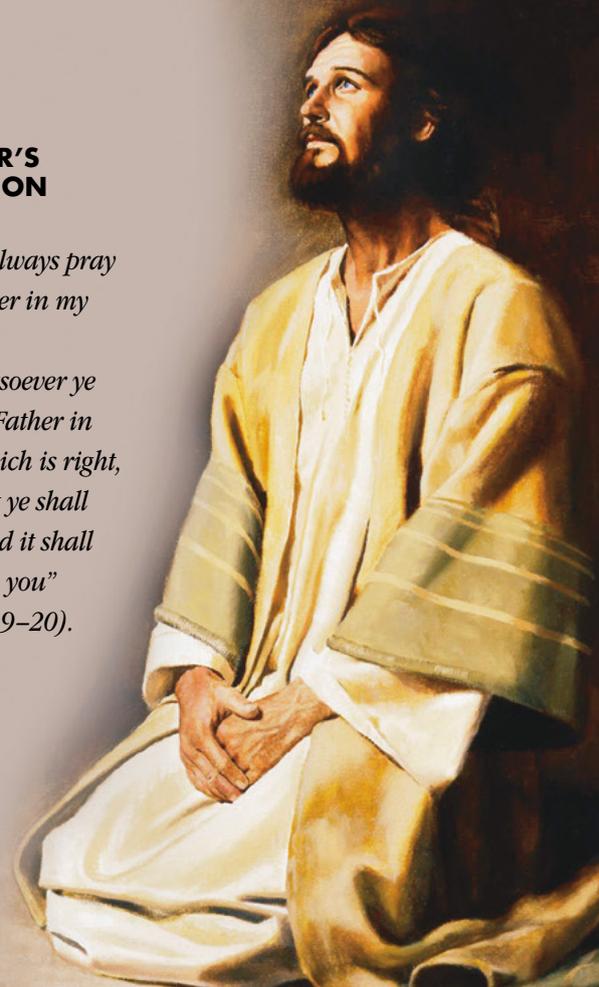
Sierra said, “It makes me feel happy to know what prayer can do for me. It is a wonderful thing in my life.”

Everyone seemed to agree with Kale Loftus when he said, “Prayer is a great habit to acquire.” ■

THE SAVIOR’S TEACHING ON PRAYER

“Ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

“And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you”
(3 Nephi 18:19–20).



Katie Cameron, Carolyn Albers, and Sierra Lybbert love the feeling they get when they pray.