

BreakThru

From Catechism to *Christ*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

LEARNING EVENT MAKE-UP

INTRODUCTION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

Read through the information below and answer questions (in bold) as you go.

Today we're going to look more closely at something that we say all the time that's written in Scripture: a prayer that Jesus taught his followers. It's known today as The Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is the best-known prayer in Christianity. It comes to us from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, which each tell a story about how and why Jesus taught this prayer.

What are the Gospels? What do you remember about them?

This prayer summarizes all of Jesus' teachings. The Lord's Prayer has been used by Christians continually since the time of Christ. It is our most fundamental prayer.

In the earliest church document we have, called the Didache (DID-a-kay), from about the year 70, new converts to Christianity were told to say the Lord's Prayer three times a day. If the Lord's prayer comes to us directly from Jesus, and has been in continuous use, there should be only one version, right? WRONG! Even Matthew and Luke don't agree on the words. See for yourself:

Matthew 6:9-13 (NRSV)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

Luke 11:2-5 (NRSV)

He said to them, "When you pray, say:
Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial."



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Which of these two versions do you prefer? Why do you prefer one over the other?

Different people will respond differently to the way things are written. The Bible has lots of different authors who were writing to different groups of people. When the authors of Matthew and Luke were writing their gospels, they were writing for very different audiences. They emphasized different things to respond to the background and concerns of the people they were writing for.

Do you think both of the prayer versions above are making essentially the same point? Why or why not?

MANY VOICES, MANY ROOMS

Read aloud with your parents through these other versions of the Lord's Prayer, then answer the questions below.

Matthew 6:9-13 (The Message)

Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what's best—as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving
others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.

Traditional Version

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
And the power and the glory forever and
ever. Amen.

English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1998

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Divine Conspiracy

By Dallas Willard

Dear Father always near us,
May your name be treasured and loved,
May your rule be completed in us—
May your will be done here on earth
In just the way it is done in heaven.
Give us today the things we need today.
And forgive us our sins and impositions
on you
As we are forgiving all who in any way
offend us.
Please don't put us through trials,
But deliver us from everything bad.
Because you are the one in charge,
And you have all the power,
And the glory too is all yours forever
Which is just the way we want it.

What are the differences among these versions? How is each one different?

What do these versions have in common? How are they the same?

What are the points being made in the Lord's Prayer? What are the essential messages in every version?

Which version of the Lord's Prayer is most familiar to you?

Which one is the most different?

Does hearing the Lord's Prayer in a new way help you understand it differently? What stands out to you now?

Which one do you like the best? Why? What is it about this version that appeals to you?

There are a couple of points to make here: First, these different versions of the Lord's Prayer might use different words, or even different languages, but teach the same lessons. Second, we don't all have to express things the same way, or speak the same way, or even pray the same way. How we express our faith can be as individual as the Lord's Prayer we like best.

PRAYER LAB

Spend the next 15 minutes or so experimenting with some different ways to pray the Lord's Prayer to find out what ways work better for you and your parent. Just as there are different words, there are also different techniques for prayer, some of which are more comfortable than others. Listed below are five different options for ways to spend this time. You may do as many as you'd like in 15 minutes, or stick with one the whole time. Once you have finished with your time, make some notes for yourself and then talk through and answer the questions below with your parent.

Using your favorite version of the Lord's Prayer, take a few minutes to experiment with different ways of praying: through visual arts, writing, movement, silence, or sound, or a combination. Make notes on what you did, on whether the experience was overall positive (+) or negative (-), and add any other comments on your experience.

OPTION ONE: VISUAL ARTS Grab some paper and your favorite art supplies, listen to some quiet music, and explore the Lord's Prayer through drawing, painting, or other visual arts.

OPTION TWO: WRITING Grab some paper and a pen and spend some time journaling or writing your prayers using the Lord's Prayer as a foundation.

OPTION THREE: MOVING AROUND Get up and move! Allow your movement to be a prayer.

OPTION FOUR: SILENCE Find a quiet place and spend some time in silence. Perhaps light a candle to help yourself have something on which to focus.

OPTION FIVE: SPEAKING OR SINGING OUT LOUD Pray out loud. Use the Lord's Prayer as a foundation, but expand on its main ideas to build your prayer.

PRAYER LAB DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions with your parent, and jot down your answers in the space below.

What ways of praying did you try?

Did you try any new ways of praying that you never tried before? How did that go?

Did one way of praying work better for you than another? What was it that made one positive and another negative? Or do you know?

What did you learn from doing the Prayer Lab? What did you find out about praying? About yourself?

There are other ways to pray that we weren't able to include here, involving other senses, such as smell or taste. Prayer can be as simple as an image or prayer posted in your locker or something you do while you're brushing your teeth. You can pray indoors or outdoors—it doesn't have to happen at church. The goal here is for you to know that you can explore what way to pray works best for you. Just because one way of praying is unnatural to you doesn't mean prayer in general is unnatural to you. You may simply have been asked to pray in a way that doesn't suit your nature, like asking a left-handed person to write right-handed.