

The *Our Father* as a Prayer of Moral Guidance

Use this complete prayer service with Chapter 2, Section 4 of *Your Life in Christ*. You may also choose to use only individual parts of the prayer service.

Needs:

- copies as needed or projection
- a prayer journal or sheets of blank notebook paper
- pens

Prayer Introduction

Leader: One way Jesus gave to pray for moral guidance is by using *his own words* in the *Our Father*. In this prayer Jesus first tells you who to pray to (the Father), and with whom you pray (our community). With Christ and the whole Church, you are asking God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for these intentions.

Secondly, Jesus teaches “not only... to ask for things, but in what order we should ask for them” (CCC, 2763). Starting with God’s will, Jesus shows you how to rightly order your petitions. In the moral life, the *Our Father* gives you guidance on how to turn toward God’s will, to look to him as the source of your bodily and spiritual sustenance, and how to justly and mercifully treat others.

Scripture Reading

Leader: (Have students stand and begin with the Sign of the Cross.)

Reader 1: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (Mt 6: 5-15).

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In

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praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“This is how you are to pray:
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;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and do not subject us to the final test,
but deliver us from the evil one.

If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Meditation

(Have the students sit down and get situated, freeing themselves from distractions.)

Leader: Today we reflect on each of the phrases from the Lord’s Prayer to shine a light on a right relationship with God and each other. As I introduce a section of the prayer, I will say it first and then have you repeat it together. Then, I will ask a few reflective questions and give you some time to ask Jesus what he has to say to you personally about this part of the prayer. You can write your thoughts down in your prayer journal.

(Begin with the Sign of the Cross.) Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name (class repeats).

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- Do you think of God as a Father? Why or why not? (Allow for a short quiet moment)
- How do you usually address God?

Leader: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven (class repeats).

- What do you do to help bring about God's kingdom? How do you have hope in heaven?
- How do you allow room in your life to seek God's will? Even if it seems contrary to your will?

Leader: Give us this day our daily bread (class repeats).

- How does God sustain you and feed you spiritually?
- How do you ask God to provide for you like a Father for a child?

Leader: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us (class repeats).

- What sins do I need God to forgive in his mercy?
- Who do I need to show mercy to in forgiveness?

Leader: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (class repeats).

- How do you ask God to help you avoid temptations? What temptations do you need his help?
- Where do you see evil in the world? How can you rely on God in the face of evil?

Closing Prayer

Leader: Lord, thank you for giving us the Our Father to show us how to pray. We ask you for the grace to live out what we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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