

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Prayer is important in a Christian's life. Look at the 2nd Commandment in your Catechism on pages 11 and 12. In the explanation of the Commandment we're told to call upon God, to pray, praise, and give thanks.



So, how should we pray? Is there a right way? A wrong way? Do we have to pray in big, formal church words or just with regular words? Out loud? Silently? Only at church or anywhere?

READ LUKE 11:1-4 AND MATTHEW 6:9-13

In both Matthew and Luke Jesus teaches His disciples to pray. "When you pray, say..." and giving them what we now call The Lord's Prayer, the prayer the Lord gave us. There are other places in the Gospels where Jesus prays, but this is the only time he gives us the words to use. That makes it an important prayer; one we should use often.

Why do you think the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them how to pray?

PRAYER...

...is a conversation with God in words or thoughts. {speaking and listening to}

...must be rooted in a desire to be obedient to God: recognizing he commands us to pray to him and knowing that we need his help to know his will and the strength to trust and follow him.

...is a gift that God has given us, a way to bring him our needs, our hopes, our hurts, our joys, we can bring anything and everything to God in prayer.

...is answered by God according to his perfect will and in his own time. We trust in God to answer with what is best for us and his kingdom.

REFLECT

How do you do at praying regularly?

When you pray, what kinds of things do you pray about?

Why is it important to God that His people pray to him?

WRITE

Write the Lord's Prayer in your own words. Look through the prayer, what concepts or topics does Jesus pray for?

RESPOND

What changes do you want to make to the way you pray? (E.g. how often you pray, your attitude about prayer.)

"Whenever a godly Christian prays: Dear Father, let Thy will be done, God speaks from on high and says: Yes, dear child, it shall be so, in spite of the devil and all the world." Martin Luther, Large Catechism III 32)

What are some places (school, car, sports, band) that you never pray? Pick one and pray there this week.

THE INTRODUCTION: OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN

Imagine meeting an important person for the first time. A politician or celebrity who everyone knows about. Someone who can make important decisions, who can say a word and people jump to do whatever they've said. And imagine, that on meeting this person, they say to you, "Call me by my first name." How would you feel?

READ

The introduction to the Lord's Prayer and its meaning on page 19 of your catechism and 1 John 3:1 in your Bible.

These six words not only introduce the Lord's prayer, they introduce us to the one to whom we pray. These words tie two important characteristics of God together:

Our Father	Who Art In Heaven
He is near	and far away
Comprehensible	Beyond our understanding
He is like us	and completely unlike us
Immanent	Transcendent

In this introduction Jesus tells us that God is not only *His* father, He is *our* Father, too.

REFLECT

Why would the Almighty God invite us to call him something as ordinary as Father?

What does being invited to call God "Father" say about the relationship He wants to have with you?

WRITE

How would you describe to someone else this nearness and farness of our heavenly Father?

What kinds of things come with being someone's child? (Think about similar characteristics and interests, about legal rights, about the potential of an inheritance, etc.)

What comes with being a child of God? Romans 8:14-18

Write this introduction in your own words.

RESPOND

Does your life—your attitude and actions—show that fact that you are a child of your heavenly Father? What kind of changes might God be inviting you to make?