



Working on Worship (14)



Using the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer – what is it?

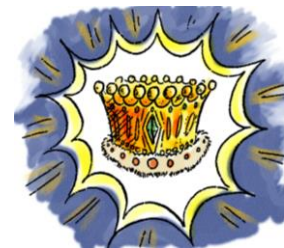
The Lord's Prayer, or the Our Father, is the prayer Jesus gave his disciples in response to their request to teach them to pray. It is the most famous of Christian prayers and recited by many Christians in their individual prayers on a daily basis and the majority of church services, including services in the Anglican Church (Church of England).



For some Christians it is seen as a model prayer which gives an outline of subjects for prayer, for others it is the repeating of the words said by Jesus which remains most important. The prayer itself is not long and is usually recited in a traditional or more modern version; it may also be sung.

Should pupils learn the Lord's Prayer by heart?

As some of the most famous words in the world, it is natural that this prayer should form part of both Religious Education and Collective Worship for pupils in British schools. Children of all faiths and worldviews will meet the words in church weddings and funerals, in civic services and a variety of other places as they grow up. There is a case for all children knowing the words, even if not using it as a prayer.



In Church of England Schools, the Lord's Prayer should be incorporated more or less regularly in Collective Worship as part of the Anglican flavour of worship required. The Lord's Prayer is included in all Anglican (Church of England) services.



The traditional version would have been said daily in Church Schools when they were first founded and all children would know it by heart. Where children say the prayer regularly in school, they will eventually know the words by heart themselves as well.

Choosing the right version

Several different English versions of the Lord's Prayer are commonly used. You could ask the local church which version they use but most churches use both! You could do the same or favour one. In church the Lord's Prayer is prefaced by liturgical words:



- As our Saviour has taught us, so we pray ... (modern version)
- Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us ... (traditional version)
- Jesus taught us to call God our Father, so in faith and trust we pray ... (either)

A chosen version could be displayed in school e.g. a very large version in the hall renewed annually when the prayer is re-introduced. Sometimes a local parish church has a really old copy painted on the wall behind the altar. Children may also be given or make their own versions e.g. on bookmarks, laminated and maybe decorated.

<p>Our Father which art in heaven Hallowed be thy name Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven</p> <p>Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us</p> <p>And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil</p> <p>For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen</p>	<p>Our Father in heaven Hallowed be your name Your kingdom come Your will be done on earth as in heaven</p> <p>Give us to day our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us</p> <p>Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil</p> <p>For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen</p>
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Singing, signing, saying the Lord's Prayer

Learning to say the Lord's Prayer together can be complemented by learning different sung versions of the prayer; many are available in school song books, on websites and those sung on CD. It is also useful to learn to sign the Lord's Prayer in BSL (see CD) or devise simple actions for each line. Once learnt, children can 'say' the prayer just in actions with no words; this can be particularly powerful.

Use of different languages

The Lord's Prayer is *the* prayer of the Christian family and as that family is a world-wide one, the prayer is said in thousands of languages. The Lord's Prayer CD (see below) contains around 16 different languages spoken out loud and 2 sung Lord's Prayers in Swahili but you will find hundreds of written versions at the Church of the Pater Noster in Jerusalem.



Ask parents if they can contribute different language versions for children to hear. In some churches this is a prayer everyone says in their own language at the same time!

In one school, each new language arriving in school prompted a new version of the Lord's Prayer to go on display around a world map and was a matter of much rejoicing. For many families this was a real acknowledgement of the value of their heart language, whether they were Christian or not.

Introducing the Lord's Prayer CD

Schools should find time annually to talk about the Lord's prayer in Collective Worship or to hold an RE Day on it.

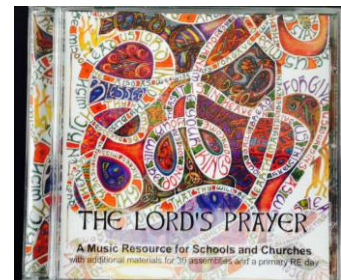
The pictures on this sheet come from **The Lord's Prayer CD (A Music Resource for schools and churches)**.



On this CD, 250 primary school children present a professional recording of 13 songs, including 10 sung versions of the Lord's Prayer, in Ipswich, Suffolk and in Kagera, Tanzania. Profits support a school in Tanzania.

The CD includes support materials for learning about the Lord's Prayer:

- 30 assemblies
- RE Theme day from Year R to Year 6
- sign language
- interactive prayer stations
- a Reflective Story
- spoken recordings in different languages



The cover artwork was provided by Mary Fleeson, of Lindisfarne Scriptorium, and the complete picture is accessible on the CD. Andrew Gray's expressive cartoons, seen on this sheet, form part of the Reflective Story.

Some of the assemblies introduce the prayer as a whole, others introduce individual songs or look at different lines in the prayer. Older pupils, as part of the school family, could be invited each year to select assemblies to introduce the Christian family prayer to its younger members.

The CD costs just £15 plus p and p from www.cofesuffolk.org

Other useful resources:

- 'The Lord's Prayer Unplugged' (Lucy Moore)
<https://www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/9780857462299/>
- Guildford Diocese – Lord's Prayer resources and interactive stations
<https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/education/christian-distinctiveness/collective-worship/prayer-materials>

Here is a page of information from the Lord's Prayer CD to give a flavour of the information available:

Background Notes for Teachers

The Lord's Prayer can be found as part of a story in the Bible in **Matthew 6: 9-15** and in **Luke 11:1-4**.



Story Summary

The disciples were used to Jesus regularly taking time to pray especially early in the morning. One day his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray too. Jesus gave them the words which have come down to Christians over the years as the 'Our Father' or the 'Lord's Prayer'. It is like a model for praying, teaching them to offer God honour and praise, to pray for forgiveness, to ask for their daily needs, and request guidance and protection in living God's way.

Key Concepts

- God as King
- God's character
- Forgiveness
- Challenge
- Discipleship
- Obedience

Teachers' Notes

- The Lord's Prayer is found twice in the Bible. In Matthew, it is in the prayer section in the Sermon on the Mount. In Luke, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray as John the Baptist taught his followers.
- It is called the Lord's Prayer because Jesus taught the words to the disciples. Catholics usually call it the 'Our Father'.
- 'Our Father' indicates a loving, personal God. God is a model father, to be emulated, not the poor representation many sadly know. The Ten Commandments say parents are to be honoured (Exodus 20:12).
- The 'Kingdom of God' grows now when people obey God as the true king but will also come in completeness in the future.
- 'Deliver us from evil' can refer to bad things or to the 'evil one' (Satan).
- 'Yours is the kingdom...' - this is called the 'doxology'. It is not part of the original prayer in most manuscripts, but it was added, and used, early on.
- Amen is a Hebrew Word meaning 'I agree' and is used to end prayers in Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions.
- The Lord's Prayer is the most repeated prayer in Christian tradition.