

Collective Worship: the Lord's Prayer

Collective worship is the unique heartbeat of a church school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.

These resources, which explore the Lord's Prayer, are offered to be used in your collective worship. You may wish to use them as reflections within your own patterns of worship or create a simple pattern around them, such as:

- Gather with some music playing
- Light a candle
- Say a simple greeting
- Read the Lord's Prayer
- Follow through the reflection, texts, 'explorings' and 'wonderings'
- Conclude with a short prayer, school prayer or the Grace

You may like to add a song at any point during the worship. You could use the specially written Lord's Prayer song available on the ODBE website at odbe.org.uk/the-lords-prayer.php. The reflections should work well as Tutor Group (or similar) reflections.

Adapting the material

You can adapt the material to suit your own context and vision. Note that italic sections are notes for the teacher/leader.

Please do not be tempted to give the stories titles or names (Prodigal Son etc.). This can give the hearers an unhelpful mindset as they listen.

Similarly, please resist having a brief quiz to reinforce the story, if you feel that pupils might need some reinforcement it is suggested you read the story again – all of them are very short and would add less time than a quiz!

Helping pupils to engage with the text

'Wonderings' and 'explorings' are provided to help pupils engage with the text on their own terms. The 'explorings' tend to be about factual or textual things, 'wonderings' are about ideas, feelings or opinions.

The questions are progressive in that the later ones (in each section) are more demanding and more appropriate for older pupils. It is not intended that you use all the questions, choose one or two which you think are most suitable - enough to start off a discussion. There are extension ideas which are aimed at older pupils.

We encourage you to use talk partners or 'buzz-groups' rather than a large group Q&A. These are only suggestions, the pupils might come up with much better ideas or questions of their own.

In these worship reflections we have tended to use the word 'we' rather than saying 'Christians'. This is in keeping with the prayer's own use of 'our', and the fact that these reflections are for use in collective worship where there might not be the same expectation of detachment as found in RE. You may wish to alter this for your school context.

Further resources, including PowerPoint slides to accompany this document, can be found on the website.

odbe.org.uk/the-lords-prayer.php

Reflection 1

Read the Lord's Prayer

**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
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
Now and forever. Amen**

We are going to spend some time reflecting on some words from the beginning of the prayer.

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name

Before we go any further, do we all understand all these words?

Some words bring pictures into our minds. The word heaven is often understood as a perfect place, perhaps like a garden filled with gorgeous trees and gently flowing water. Your view of heaven might be very different, of course; a place of endless sport or music or dancing.

When we hear the word 'hallowed' we might be puzzled as to what it means; it is used to describe something special or separate: when Christians (and other people of faith) use it they are thinking of 'holy' or 'special to God'. In the same way that your name is special to you, so God's name is special to God. Words for God are treated as special in all faiths, and Christianity is no different.

One of the words used in the Bible for God, which is not quite a name, is 'father'. This word can mean all sorts of different things to different people. In the Lord's Prayer it starts the whole thing off, but this is not just any parent but our parent, our father. We are going to take a little time to think about this word and what it might mean in the Lord's Prayer.

To help in our thinking, here is a story that Jesus told:

"There was once a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to him, 'Father, give me my share of the property now.' So the man divided his property between his two sons. ¹³ After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. ¹⁴ He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. ¹⁵ So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. ¹⁶ He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. ¹⁷ At last he came to his senses and said, 'All my father's hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers.'" ²⁰ So he got up and started back to his father.

"He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. ²¹ 'Father,' the son said, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' ²² But the father called to his servants. 'Hurry!' he said. 'Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his

finger and shoes on his feet. ²³ Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.' And so the feasting began.

²⁵ "In the meantime the older son was out in the field. On his way back, when he came close to the house, he heard the music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him, 'What's going on?' ²⁷ 'Your brother has come back home,' the servant answered, 'and your father has killed the prize calf, because he got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ The older brother was so angry that he would not go into the house; so his father came out and begged him to come in. ²⁹ But he spoke back to his father, 'Look, all these years I have worked for you like a slave, and I have never disobeyed your orders. What have you given me? Not even a goat for me to have a feast with my friends! ³⁰ But this son of yours wasted all your property [on prostitutes], and when he comes back home, you kill the prize calf for him!' ³¹ 'My son,' the father answered, 'you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.'"

From Luke 15: 11-32

Pause for a moment and think about what you have heard.

[Pause]

Does anyone have anything to share about what they thought of the story or what the story said to them?

Explorings

Download the PowerPoint slide from odbe.org.uk/the-lords-prayer.php

- Look at the picture (slide 1) – how is the father welcoming the son?
- Why was the prize calf killed?
- What do you think is meant by 'Give me my share of the property now'?
- Does the story use any symbols or metaphors? What might they represent?

The story lends itself to freeze frame expression. Pupils can play with the attitudes/expressions of the two sons and the father (parent) at the end of the story.

Wonderings

- If you were to be a character in the story which one would you choose to be? Why?
- Did the father do a good thing by giving the son his share?
- Would you have done the same as the father if your son came back?
- How do you think that the older son felt when he heard the celebrations?
- What did the son mean by 'sinned against God and against you'?

Extension: How would pupils re-write or re-tell the story using all female protagonists in the modern world?

Reflection 2

Read the Lord's Prayer

**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
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
Now and forever. Amen**

What do the words '**Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven**' mean?

Do they mean that we are hoping that God's kingdom will come, or that we know that God will make the kingdom come, or that as we go about our lives the kingdom will come because of what we do?

That is a lot to think about. Let's go back a bit then:

Does the Lord's Prayer say that we are to go about hoping that something will happen? Is our job to pray and then leave it to God?

Does the Lord's Prayer say that we are to go about knowing that God will make the kingdom happen, sometime?

Does the Lord's Prayer say that we have to do something as well as say the words?

Let's gather some ideas – how would we describe a kingdom?

Jesus described the kingdom of God in some slightly unusual ways, here are some stories that Jesus told about the kingdom:



'Our suggestion is that the texts overleaf are cut out and read by different pupils. This could be a good opportunity for pupils to share in groups, each looking at a different parable. They could use the 'Explorings' and 'Wonderings' and then feed back to the whole gathering.'



“The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man takes a mustard seed and sows it in his field.
³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up, it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches.”

Matt 13: 31-32



³³ Jesus told them still another parable: “The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A woman takes some yeast and mixes it with a bushel of flour until the whole batch of dough rises.”

Matt 13: 33



⁴⁴ “The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man happens to find a treasure hidden in a field. He covers it up again, and is so happy that he goes and sells everything he has, and then goes back and buys that field.

Matt 13: 44



⁴⁵ “Also, the Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man is looking for fine pearls, ⁴⁶ and when he finds one that is unusually fine, he goes and sells everything he has, and buys that pearl.

Matt 13: 45-46

Explorings

Download the PowerPoint slide from odbe.org.uk/the-lords-prayer.php

- Are these ways of talking about God's kingdom what you expected?
- What sorts of activities do the stories mention? (Look at the pictures)
- Do these stories say the same things, or do they describe the kingdom in different ways?
- What are these ways?
- Why do you think that Jesus uses similes (is like) rather than just saying 'The kingdom of heaven is...'

Wonderings

- If you were to be a character in one of the stories which one would you choose to be? Why?
- In the story of the mustard seed, we find out what happened when the tree grew
What happened after...
 - The dough rose?
 - The field was bought?
 - The pearl was bought?
- In the story of the field Jesus does not say what the treasure is – what would be treasure for you? (Use the picture – what would be in the chest?)
- What might these very short stories be telling us about God's kingdom or about heaven?
- Why do you think that Jesus uses everyday activities in these stories?



These words in the Lord's Prayer do not stand on their own. As we look more deeply over the coming weeks (days or sessions, depending on how you use the material) we find that we do have something to do. Forgiving others is not just hoping that God's kingdom will appear on earth – it is suggesting that we make this happen – by sharing our daily bread and not seeking evil, but more of these in later sessions.

Reflection 3

Read the Lord's Prayer

**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
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
Now and forever. Amen**

Now we are in the middle of the prayer with a very short sentence - **Give us today our daily bread.**

This might seem a rather greedy thing to say in a prayer. We have mentioned that in this prayer we seem to be speaking to God as a parent, I'm sure that most parents would at least want us to say please.

This set me thinking that this is not just a request for food, that it might be something bigger. In the same way that 'your kingdom come' is more than just saying what will happen, these words are also saying something more.

The prayer is rather stating the obvious, the loving parent will give the daily bread but more besides and we are right to expect this to happen, but it is not a free gift – we are expected to play our part in the way that things are shared in the family of 'Our Father (parent)'.

We have two stories today, the first which is a memory from Mother Theresa whom you may have heard of.

Read the story from Mother Theresa:

I will never forget the night an old gentleman came to our house and said that there was a family with eight children and they had not eaten, and could we do something for them. So I took some rice and went there. The mother took the rice from my hands, then she divided it into two and went out. I could see the faces of the children shining with hunger. When she came back I asked her where she had gone. She gave me a very simple answer: "They are hungry also." And "they" were the family next door and she knew that they were hungry. I was not surprised that she gave but I was surprised that she knew ... I hadn't the courage to ask her how long her family hadn't eaten, but I'm sure that it must have been a long time, and yet she knew – in her suffering ... in her terrible bodily suffering she knew that next door they were hungry also.

Source: Mother Theresa 'the joy of living' pp337-338: quoted by Kenneth E Bailey in *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*, p 122: 2008, London, SPCK

Pause for a moment and think about what you have heard.

[Pause]

Does anyone have anything to share about what they thought of the story or what the story said to them?

Explorings

- Think here about who did the asking – did the gentleman ask for himself?
- Who did the receiving? Was there just one person?

Wonderings

- If you were to be a character in the story which one would you choose to be? Why?
- What did you feel when the mother took the rice away? What did you think might happen?
- What do you think happened the day after?

There was more than one person involved in this story. The Lord's Prayer uses a plural word – our daily bread, not my daily bread. So, when we say the words 'Give us today our daily bread' the request might be for everyone to have what they need. Does this make us responsible for other people's food?

Here's a second story – one from Jesus' life:

Jesus looked around and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, so he asked Philip, "Where can we buy enough food to feed all these people?" ⁶ He said this to test Philip; actually he already knew what he would do.)

⁷ Philip answered, "For everyone to have even a little, it would take more than two hundred silver coins[a] to buy enough bread."

⁸ Another one of his disciples, Andrew, who was Simon Peter's brother, said, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five loaves of barley bread and two fish. But they will certainly not be enough for all these people."

¹⁰ "Make the people sit down," Jesus told them. (There was a lot of grass there.) So all the people sat down; there were about five thousand men. ¹¹ Jesus took the bread, gave thanks to God, and distributed it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish, and they all had as much as they wanted. ¹² When they were all full, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces left over; let us not waste a bit." ¹³ So they gathered them all and filled twelve baskets with the pieces left over from the five barley loaves which the people had eaten.

John 6

Pause for a moment and think about what you have heard.

[Pause]

Does anyone have anything to share about what they thought of the story or what the story said to them?

Explorings

- Were you surprised that there was enough for everyone?
- Why do you think that so many people were following Jesus?
- In the story Jesus makes the disciples think about hungry people, is this a good way to think about how we might share food?
- Do you think that bread (food) might be a metaphor in the story? If so, what is it standing for or representing?
- Are there any other metaphors in the story?

Wonderings

- If you were to be a character in the story which one would you choose to be? Why?
- Would you be pleased if Jesus shared your food with others?
- How would you have felt if you had been Philip? (At the beginning of the story and at the end)
- The Lord's Prayer talks about our bread, do you think that this is a metaphor? Again, what might it be standing for or representing?
- How important is sharing food today? (Slide 5)

Extension: There are very few stories which are in all four gospels, this is one of them. Encourage pupils to compare the texts. You could divide the pupils into groups to look at each individual version: Matthew (14:13-22), Mark (6:30-44), Luke (9: 10-17) and John (6:1-14).

- What are the similarities and differences?
- Why do you think that this story is so important that it is in all the gospels?

Reflection 4

Read the Lord's Prayer

**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
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
Now and forever. Amen**

Now we come to think about a longer section of the Lord's Prayer; **Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.** It is really two sections.

The first section is about forgiveness, which is quite a difficult word to explain, would anyone like to have a go?

Rather like the bit about bread where we didn't ask for bread, we were expecting it. Here we are expecting forgiveness, but there is a catch: we have to do something too, we must forgive as well.

This can be difficult for us to do but the prayer is saying that we expect God, our parent, to treat us in the same way that we treat other people. There is a story that Jesus told which might help with this:

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?"

²² "No, not seven times," answered Jesus, "but seventy times seven,[d] ²³ because the Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a king who decided to check on his servants' accounts. ²⁴ He had just begun to do so when one of them was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. ²⁵ The servant did not have enough to pay his debt, so the king ordered him to be sold as a slave, with his wife and his children and all that he had, in order to pay the debt. ²⁶ The servant fell on his knees before the king. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay you everything!' ²⁷ The king felt sorry for him, so he forgave him the debt and let him go.

²⁸ "Then the man went out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him a few dollars. He grabbed him and started choking him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he said. ²⁹ His fellow servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back!' ³⁰ But he refused; instead, he had him thrown into jail until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were very upset and went to the king and told him everything. ³² So he called the servant in. 'You worthless slave!' he said. 'I forgave you the whole amount you owed me, just because you asked me to. ³³ You should have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you.' ³⁴ The king was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount."

³⁵ And Jesus concluded, "That is how my Father in heaven will treat every one of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

From Matthew 18: 21-35

Pause for a moment and think about what you have heard.

[Pause]

Does anyone have anything to share about what they thought of the story or what the story said to them?

Explorings

- Is 'seventy times seven' a real number?
- Does Jesus really mean forgive 'many times' or 'every time'?
- Was the king right to imprison the first servant at the end of the story?
- What sorts of things is Peter talking about when he says that his 'brother' sins against him?
- What do you think that 'sin' is?

Wonderings

- If you were to be a character in the story which one would you choose to be? Why?
- Why was the first servant unfair? Or how (in what way) was the first servant unfair? (compare the number of coins in the pictures, slide 6)
- What do you think happened to the second servant? Did this servant stay in jail?
- Are there other lessons to be learned from this story besides the need to forgive?
- Why did Peter ask this question in the first place?

Extension: You might choose to focus on the second part of the section, 'Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil'. There is no reason why you shouldn't do both with older pupils.

Temptation is a strange word, is anyone willing to have a go at telling us what it means?

The second sentence of our section seems to link temptation and evil together. But this seems a bit harsh. Is it evil to be tempted (in the sense of wanting) to eat a lovely cake (slide 7) that someone in your family has made? It might be wrong to steal a slice, but just to eat what is offered does not seem wrong.

One of the reasons that this is a bit difficult to understand is that the Lord's Prayer wasn't written in English, the oldest versions that exist are in Greek, but it may well be older than even those. The word temptation could also be translated as 'test' or 'trial'. We're probably not going to be "tested" by a cake... (Picture)

So, the prayer is asking for God not to put us into a place that will test us so that we might make a poor choice.

Here's a story about Jesus being tempted:

The same Greek word is used for temptation in this story as in the Lord's Prayer.

... the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil.² After spending forty days and nights without food, Jesus was hungry.³ Then the Devil came to him and said, "If you are God's Son, order these stones to turn into bread."

⁴ But Jesus answered, "The scripture says, 'Human beings cannot live on bread alone, but need every word that God speaks.'"

⁵ Then the Devil took Jesus to Jerusalem, the Holy City, set him on the highest point of the Temple,⁶ and said to him, "If you are God's Son, throw yourself down, for the scripture says,

'God will give orders to his angels about you;
they will hold you up with their hands,
so that not even your feet will be hurt on the stones.'"

⁷ Jesus answered, "But the scripture also says, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸ Then the Devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in all their greatness. ⁹ "All this I will give you," the devil said, "if you kneel down and worship me."

¹⁰ Then Jesus answered, "Go away, Satan! The scripture says, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him!'"

From Luke 4

Pause for a moment and think about what you have heard.

[Pause]

Does anyone have anything to share about what they thought of the story or what the story said to them?

Explorings

- Luke uses the same word here for temptation as he does in the Lord's Prayer. Do you think that he might be trying to link the two together? (Note that our New Testament is translated from, mostly, ancient Greek manuscripts so discussing individual words can be a challenge. Here it is the same Greek word)
- What is the scripture that the story mentions?
- Do you think this story is saying that there really is a person called the devil?

Wonderings

- Why did Jesus keep mentioning scripture?
- Are three temptations just events from Jesus' life, or are they also meant to teach us something? What might they be trying to teach us?

Extension: It is quite common for people to say that scripture in this story is the Bible, but this is impossible since the Bible as we have it now didn't exist at the time.

Is it right for some Christians to understand scripture in this story as including the New Testament?

Reflection 5

Read the Lord's Prayer

**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
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
Now and forever. Amen**

Now we are at the end of the Lord's Prayer, **'For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever'**.

Kingdoms or nations reflect the character of the ruler in some way or another. We live in a kingdom. If we look back in history there are all sorts of kings and queens who have ruled both well and not so well.

Do you know of any queens or kings and what they were like?



It is good to have at least one example. Be prepared to offer an example of your own if one is not forthcoming – Henry VIII tends to get a bad press at this point!

When human leaders become too interested in power and glory things tend to go wrong. Rulers who have had great power have often used it in the wrong way.

Do you know of any examples?

Jesus offers us a story that helps us to think of God as an unusual sort of king:

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes as King and all the angels with him, he will sit on his royal throne, ³² and the people of all the nations will be gathered before him. Then he will divide them into two groups, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the righteous people at his right and the others at his left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to the people on his right, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father! Come and possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you ever since the creation of the world. ³⁵ I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, ³⁶ naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ The righteous will then answer him, 'When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? ³⁸ When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our homes, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' ⁴⁰ The King will reply, 'I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these followers of mine, you did it for me!'

Matthew 25

Pause for a moment and think about what you have heard.

[Pause]

Does anyone have anything to share about what they thought of the story or what the story said to them?

Explorings

- What do you think a kingdom is?
- Does a kingdom have to have a king? (We live in the United Kingdom – do we have a king?)
- What sort of king is the Son of Man according to this story?
- Do we ever see the Queen hungry, or in prison?

Wonderings

Who would you rather share with (*PowerPoint slide 8*);

- A hungry or thirsty person?
- A prisoner?
- A clothes-less person?
- A lost person (stranger)?
- A poorly person
- Are there other sorts of people that you would rather share with?
- Is it only Christians that do good things? (*It may be appropriate to draw in ideas from other faiths here*)
- Does this story tell us what God is like?
- What does this story say about how God relates and cares about the hungry, lost, imprisoned, or oppressed?
- The story is not only about God but also about us. How does it make us feel about ourselves?

The story seems to be saying the kingdom is not a place but the way in which people behave. Here is a prayer by Teresa of Avila:

'Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.'

End this final worship by saying (or singing) the Lord's Prayer and saying Teresa's prayer.

- What do you make of these words?
- What do we think bless means?
- What are the implications of what Teresa wrote for us?

What are the practical ways in which we can:

- Show compassion?
- Do good?
- Bless all the world?

Extension: Usually this story is understood as a metaphor where the hungry or the stranger represent the king. But what if it isn't a metaphor?

'I was hungry ...' does this mean that when (if) we do these things we are actually meeting God?

Explore the ways in which students could express the compassion described in the story and in St Teresa's prayer. This could be led by pupils themselves.

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