



4th grade

LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer is found twice in the New Testament (Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4). The prayer starts with a personal address to God ("Our Father, who art in heaven ...") followed by six petitions or requests. The first three are all similar in theme: we pray for God's name to be hallowed (honored and respected), for God's kingdom to come on earth, and for God's divine will to be done just as it is in heaven. These are ultimately prayers for the world around us.

The second half of the prayer focuses on our personal needs. It is important to note that the needs Jesus addresses are all simple in nature: for our daily bread, for the grace to be forgiven just as we forgive others, and for God to rescue and lead us away from evil.

In most Christian worship services, we add the phrase "for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever." This phrase was not part of Jesus' original prayer, but was added by the early church as a way of recognizing God's authority and power.

Prayer helps us build a closer relationship with God.

Jesus' prayer is astonishing in both its depth and simplicity (note that the whole prayer is less than 60 words!). However, if Jesus' words seem a little formal for your children, start with these simple phrases that capture the heart of most prayer:

"Thank You." Meister Eckhart once said if the only prayer

we learn to pray is "thanks," it is enough. Help your children learn to daily thank God for your blessings.

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"I'm sorry." We all have a tendency to hide our mistakes, or to give excuses and cast blame somewhere else. One of the best things we can teach our children is to move quickly to honesty, trusting that God will forgive them (John 1:9).

"Help." Just as Jesus prayed for daily bread, we can ask God to supply our basic needs. Make sure, though, that your "help" prayers aren't all self-focused; one of the best ways to develop a soft heart in our children is to encourage them to ask God's help for others.

Children (and adults) often have lots of questions

about prayer. How do I know if I'm doing it right? How do I know if prayer works? Does prayer actually change anything? As you practice leading your child in prayer, it's OK not to have all the answers. Sometimes we do things without understanding how they work. But you'll probably find, as you develop a habit of prayer in your family, that the biggest change you'll notice is in yourself.

Prayer helps us build a closer relationship with God, and over time we develop the freedom to share our hearts with God just the way we would with a close friend. Remember, even Jesus needed to find time to pull away from the rush of life and spend time alone with God in prayer. If we want to follow in Jesus' footsteps and share God's love with others, then we need to find the time to pray as He prayed, and to develop the same confidence and trust in God.