

Adult Class: On Earth As It Is In Heaven - A Bible Study of the Lord's Prayer	
Topic*	Week 1: Our Father in Heaven hallowed by your name
Focus Objective	In the first week, students should have a high-level understanding of what the Lord's prayer is, and a more in-depth understanding of the first line of the prayer.
Helpful Context	Matthew 6, prayer is couched in the context of the Sermon on the Mount and this "new way of living" in the world that Jesus' proclaims.
Key Texts*	<p>Matthew 6:9  "Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."</p> <p>(Matt 1:18-25, 2:13-23; Luke 2:21-24, 2:39-51) Exodus 4:21, Gen 1:27, John 17, Isa. 66:13, 1 John 3:1, Romans 8:15-17, Matthew 19:13-15; Ezekiel 36:22-23, Psalm 113, Isaiah 63:11-14</p>
Key Question(s)* concerning the subject	<p><b>Part 1 Group Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can I receive God as "Father" with Jesus and others?</li> <li>2. How is prayer a participation in something powerful?</li> </ol> <p><b>Part 2 Group Questions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do we desire God to reveal himself as the God who rescues?</li> <li>2. What circumstances in the world need God to manifest his name as the God who sets captives free?</li> <li>3. How might God's holy name be good news in our lives or in the world?</li> </ol>

\*What should be in the worksheet

**Announcements**

- First Sundays Lunch
- Service Project and Pizza Friday 9th

**Class Worksheet (next page)**

On Earth as it is in Heaven: A Biblical Study of the Lord's Prayer  
Week 1: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name



Part 1 - Exodus 4:21-23a, Gen 1:27, Isa. 66:13, 1 John 3:1,  
Romans 8:15-17, Matthew 19:13-15, John 17  
Part 2 - Ezekiel 36:22-23, Psalm 113, Isaiah 63:11-14

**Matthew 6:9-13 (NRSV)**

<sup>9</sup>Pray then in this way:  
Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
<sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
<sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread.  
<sup>12</sup>And forgive us our debts, as we also  
have forgiven our debtors.  
<sup>13</sup>And do not bring us to the time of  
trial,  
but rescue us from the evil one.

**Part 1 Group Questions**

- What do these passages tell us about the nature of God as Father? What is the significance of Jesus inviting us to address God as “Father?”
- What do these passages reveal about how God relates to us as children? What do these passages tell us about how we relate to God as Father?
- How can you receive God as “Father” with Jesus and others in a new way today?
- Have you experienced or known prayer as a participation in something powerful?

**Part 2 Group Questions:**

- What does it mean to pray: “hallowed be your name”? Why is this significant?
- How do we desire God to reveal himself as the God who rescues?
- What circumstances in the world need God to manifest his name as the God who sets captives free?
- What are some practical ways you are hallowing God’s name through the way you live?

**Participating with God on earth as it is in heaven:**

- How are you challenged by this lesson, or what have you learned?

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- What does this inspire you to change in your life?

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I heard him call you his beloved son  
And saw his Spirit lighten like a dove,  
I thought his words must be for you alone,  
Knowing myself unworthy of his love.  
You pray in close communion with your Father,  
So close you say the two of you are one,  
I feel myself to be receding further,  
Fallen away and outcast and alone.

And so I come and ask you how to pray,  
Seeking a distant supplicant's petition,  
Only to find you give your words away,  
As though I stood with you in your position,  
As though your Father were my Father too,  
As though I found his 'welcome home' in you.

*Malcolm Guite, "Our Father"*

There's something in the sound of the word hallow;  
A haunting sense of everything we've lost  
Amidst the trite, the trivial, the shallow,  
Where nothing lingers, nothing seems to last.  
But Hallowed, summons up our fear and wonder,  
And summons us to stand on holy ground.  
To sense the mystery that stands just under  
Familiar things we'll never understand.

Hallowed be thy name: the name unspoken,  
The name from which all other names arise,  
The name that heals the sick and binds the broken,  
Whose living glory calls the dead to rise.  
You make this prayer my rising and my rest  
That I might bless the name by which I'm blessed.

*Malcolm Guite, "Hallowed be thy Name"*

## **Introduction**

**Initial Question: When did you first learn the Lord's Prayer? When was a time you found the Lord's Prayer especially meaningful in your life? What makes prayer difficult for you?**

- Prayer is speaking with God, and in the Lord's prayer Jesus gives us not just a model but a revelation about who God is, Who Jesus is, and Who we are.
- Step 3 of AA says, "We entrusted ourselves to God as we understood God." Prayer helps us understand who God is. To learn to pray is to learn theology, and to learn how to live a life with God. Jesus invites us to understand the Father as He does by teaching us to pray.
- The Scope of the Prayer – It covers every dimension of our human existence.
  - It covers our physical (embodied), relational, and spiritual selves.
  - It covers all of time – past (forgiveness), present (daily bread), and future (protection from evil)
- At the center of the Sermon on the Mount, in the Lord's Prayer, is the central clause: 'on earth as it is in heaven.' It captures the passion of the living God to bring the reality of heaven on earth." This is the Gospel of the Kingdom in a nutshell.
- The Lord's Prayer grants us the "dignity of causality"—"When we pray the Lord's Prayer we participate in the transformation of the world." It grants us "the unspeakable privilege of partnering with him in the fulfilling of his purposes in the world. To pray the Lord's prayer is to participate in a cosmic act, the transformation of the world.
- Ultimately, Christian prayer leads us to action, moving our hearts and empowering us to participate with God's in breaking Kingdom.

**Read Scripture All Together:**

Matthew 6:9: “Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

### “Our Father in heaven”

- Key Question: What is the significance of Jesus inviting us to address God as “Our Father?” What does this mean for us?
- Addressing God as “Father” may be problematic for some:
  - People coming from highly patriarchal backgrounds that overemphasized the masculine nature of God.
  - People coming from family situations without a father or with a complicated relationship with their father
  - We can acknowledge the difficulty here, while first studying what these terms meant in their context.
- **“The Liberating Father and The Vocation of Israel” - Large Group Conversation: Read Exodus 4:21-23**
  - **21** And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in your power, but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. **22** Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD: Israel is my firstborn son. **23** I said to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.”
  - This is the first occurrence in the OT of God as Father.  
**Question for discussion: What does this tell us about the nature of God as Father?**
  - Here we see Israel’s calling, not to be slaves under Pharaoh, but to be “sons” and daughters who serve the living God. This is the vocation of Israel. Who God was calling them to be.
  - Jesus calls God “Father” because He is the true Son of Israel here. Jesus fulfills Israel’s calling. Meaning, he is the One in whom the vocation and salvation of Israel is brought about, so we can call God “Our Father” as well.
  - N.T. Wright claims that in the Lord’s Prayer, this address to God as Father reveals that a New Exodus is at hand: (Quote) “When Jesus tells his disciples to call God ‘Father’, then, those with ears to hear will understand. He wants us to get ready for the

new Exodus. We are going to be free at last. This is the Advent hope, the hope of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The tyrant's grip is going to be broken, and we shall be free."

- Freedom for all would come through the liberating work of Israel's Messiah, who alone can rightly pray this prayer. And now Jesus of Nazareth offers this prayer to his disciples, saying "now you pray this, you call God, Father. You are a liberated people, you are adopted because you are with me."

- **"An Invitation into the Divine Life of God" - Small Group Conversations**

- **Assign Readings to Group:** (Gen 1:27, Isa. 66:12-13,) (1 John 3:1, Romans 8:15-17, Matthew 19:13-15,) (John 17) - What do these passages reveal about how God relates to children—to us? What do these passages tell us about how we relate to God as Father?
- **God as Father (and Mother)**
  - God transcends all created things, including gender. Both fathering and mothering are part of who God is. Cf. Genesis 1:27: "So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Isa. 66:13: "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."
- **Our Calling As Children.**
  - 1 John 3:1: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are."
  - Cf. Romans 8:15-17: "<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup> it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him

- Matthew 19:13-15 - Notice how Jesus joyfully invites the children to him, making space for them and celebrating their humble relation to him.
- Pope Francis: Regardless of our human parents, whether we were loved or let down (fathers or mothers), the most important thing to remember is that “we are not orphans.”
- **Invitation to Commune with God as Jesus does**
  - John 17 - Intimate conversation between Father and Son. Invitation to us to have the same kind of relationship with the Father and Son. We are invited into the divine life with God.
  - John 17:21: “As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us.”
  - When we pray “Our Father,” we are invited into the life of the Triune God of the universe, to share and partake of that life in our lives as we have them now.
  - This is a Shared/communal prayer. Notice “Our” Father: We pray this prayer in community, never alone (even if we are praying it alone)
  - We pray (always) with Jesus. Jesus invites us into *his* understanding and experience of the Father. We are praying alongside of Him, even as he intercedes for us now.
  - **“In heaven” does not mean “far away.”**
  - Does not mean God who is “far away” but in the Jewish imagination, it was God’s throne, and the earth was the footstool (Matthew 5:34-35)
  - “In heaven” is another way of saying “God, who is truly in charge”

### **“Hallowed be your Name”**

- Key Question: What is the significance this portion of the prayer?  
What does it mean to pray: “hallowed be your name.”

- **Assign Group Readings:** Ezekiel 36:22-23, Psalm 113, Isaiah 63:11-14
  - Ezekiel 36:22-23: “<sup>22</sup> Therefore say to the house of Israel: Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act **but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. <sup>23</sup> **I will sanctify my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations and which you have profaned among them, and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes.”
  - Psalm 113:
    - <sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord; **praise the name of the Lord.** <sup>2</sup> **Blessed be the name of the Lord** from this time on and forevermore. <sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised.
  - Isaiah 63:11-14:
    - Where is the one who put within them his holy spirit, <sup>12</sup> who caused his glorious arm to march at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them **to make for himself an everlasting name**, <sup>13</sup> who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. <sup>14</sup> Like cattle that go down into the valley, the spirit of the Lord gave them rest. Thus you led your people, **to make for yourself a glorious name.**
- “Hallowed” has the sense of praise, honor, magnify, revere.
- “Name.”
  - “A name often stood for ‘the personal and incommunicable character’ of a person.” (Quoting Willard)
  - “To speak of someone’s ‘name’ in this sense is a way of referring to their ‘character,’ ‘personality,’ or ‘reputation.’”
- The verb “hallowed” is in the imperative: “Make your name holy.”
  - It’s in the passive voice: “Your name be hallowed.” Not “I am making your name holy.” Instead, You are the one who will make your name holy and only you. It is a request for God to do something. (Jesus invites us to speak to the Father in a bold



way). “And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray.”

- “Make your character and love known to the ends of the earth.”

### **Group Reflection Questions**

- Have you experienced or known prayer as a participation in something powerful?
- Why does Jesus start here, with an address to God, in his model prayer to the disciples? Why is this important as we think about prayer?
- Have you learned something new about God as Father today? How can you receive God as “Father” with Jesus and others in a new way?
- If it is true that Jesus invites us to command (nicely) the Father to make his name (his character and his liberating mission) holy, how does that shape the way we pray? How does that shape the way we live?
- What circumstances in the world or in our lives do we need God to manifest his name as the One who is making all things new and setting captives free?
- What are some practical ways you are hallowing God’s name through the way you live?

### **Model Repentance:**

- Tell the story of how you’re challenged by this lesson and share how you’re responding to the change
- Shawn: “I get too comfortable with prayer or take for granted the holiness of God and God’s power. I am reminded by the power of God that I call ‘Father’ and inspired to take bolder action with God for the benefit of others.”

### **Invitation to participate\* (in concrete/specific ways)**

- Now that you know \_\_\_\_\_, how does that change how you live?
- Shawn: “This looks like praying more often, with greater expectation and attention, and petitioning God for things that I worry about or think need to change in my life or in this world.”

### **Closing prayer/practice**

- Pray the Lord's Prayer together

### **Other Helpful Questions to Consider**

1. What does this prayer show me about God? What does this tell me about the Gospel of the Kingdom?
2. What is the Good News in this passage for me? What is the "bad news" that it is speaking to in my life?
3. What does it look like to "repent and believe the Good News" of this passage for me today? What steps can I take today to believe the Good News in my life?

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## **Catechism References:**

### **God the Father**

- Q. What do we learn about God as creator from the revelation to Israel?
- A. We learn that there is one God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
- Q. What does this mean?
- A. This means that the universe is good, that it is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains, and directs it.
- Q. What does this mean about our place in the universe?
- A. It means that the world belongs to its creator; and that we are called to enjoy it and to care for it in accordance with God's purposes.
- Q. What does this mean about human life?
- A. It means that all people are worthy of respect and honor, because all are created in the image of God, and all can respond to the love of God.

### **God the Son**

- Q. What do we mean when we say that Jesus is the only Son of God?
- A. We mean that Jesus is the only perfect image of the Father, and shows us the nature of God.
- Q. What is the nature of God revealed in Jesus?
- A. God is love.
- Q. Why did he take our human nature?
- A. The divine Son became human, so that in him human beings might be adopted as children of God, and be made heirs of God's kingdom.

### **Prayer and Worship**

- Q. What is prayer?
- A. Prayer is responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words.
- Q. What is Christian Prayer?
- A. Christian prayer is response to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Q. What prayer did Christ teach us?  
A. Our Lord gave us the example of prayer known as the Lord's Prayer. See page 364
- Q. What are the principal kinds of prayer?  
A. The principal kinds of prayer are adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition.
- Q. What is adoration?  
A. Adoration is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.
- Q. Why do we praise God?  
A. We praise God, not to obtain anything, but because God's Being draws praise from us.
- Q. For what do we offer thanksgiving?  
A. Thanksgiving is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.
- Q. What is penitence?  
A. In penitence, we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with the intention to amend our lives.
- Q. What is prayer of oblation?  
A. Oblation is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God.
- Q. What are intercession and petition?  
A. Intercession brings before God the needs of others; in petition, we present our own needs, that God's will may be done.
- Q. What is corporate worship?  
A. In corporate worship, we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God's Word, to offer prayer, and to celebrate the sacraments.