

# 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. 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.



### Why should pupils learn it?



As some of the most famous words in the world, it is natural that this prayer should form part of the Religious Education for all pupils in schools. Children will meet the words in church weddings and funerals, in civic services and in a variety of other places as they grow up. 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 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. To ensure there is some

understanding of the meanings of the prayer, schools may like to use the pictures from the Lord's Prayer CD or a system of colours which go with each line and the idea behind it.



## Introducing the Lord's Prayer

It makes sense to introduce the Lord's Prayer afresh each school year even where it is a regular part of worship. The Lord's Prayer CD provides about ten one-off assemblies which introduce the prayer as a whole. These could become annual assemblies delivered by older pupils as part of the school family introducing the Christian family prayer to its younger members.

In church the Lord's Prayer may be prefaced by liturgical words e.g.

- ❖ 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 version)



## Choosing the right version

Several different English versions are commonly used. Today it makes sense to ask advice of the local church as to which version is used in school worship.

Your chosen version can be displayed in school e.g. a large version in the hall, bigger than A4, renewed annually when the prayer is re-introduced. Children may also have their own versions e.g. on bookmarks, laminated and maybe decorated.



## Singing, signing and saying

Learning one particular set of words 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.

## Use of different languages

Tēve Mūsū, kuris esi  
danguje!  
Teesie šventas tavo vardas,  
teateinie tavo karalystė  
Teesie tavo valia,  
Kaip danguje, taip ir Žemėje.  
Kasdienes mūsū dūonos duok  
mūms šiañdien  
ir atlėisk mums mūsū kaltės,  
kaip ir mes atleidžiame savo  
kaltiniñkams.  
Ir nelėisk mūsū gūndyti,  
Bet gelbėk mus nuo pikto.

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 CD contains around 16 different languages and 2 sung Lord's Prayers in Swahili but on this website you will find hundreds of written versions:

<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/>

It is good to ask around for people who can contribute further versions for children to hear. 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.

## Help with the Lord's Prayer

The **Lord's Prayer Project 2010** involved professional recording of 13 songs, including 10 sung versions of the Lord's Prayer, in Ipswich and Kagera, Tanzania. 250 primary school children from Ipswich learnt and performed the songs.



All the songs are presented on a CD which includes support materials for learning about this key Christian prayer: 30 assemblies, an RE Theme day for children from Reception to Year 6, sign language, interactive stations and a reflective story. The CD also contains spoken recordings of the Lord's Prayer in different languages. The artwork on the CD has been provided by Mary Fleeson, of Lindisfarne Scriptorium, and Andrew Gray, whose cartoons are on this sheet and form part of the Reflective Story on the CD.

The CD costs just £15 and can be obtained from Diane Matthews (01473 298570 or [diane@stedmundsbury.anglican.org](mailto:diane@stedmundsbury.anglican.org)).

*Another useful resource for work on the Lord's Prayer is 'The Lord's Prayer Unplugged' (Lucy Moore) produced by BRF. See the Barnabas for Schools website.*

## Background Notes for Teachers

The Lord's Prayer can be found in the Bible in:

Matthew 6: 9-15

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
- Forgiveness
- Discipleship
- God's character
- Challenge
- 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.