



Introduction

The Lord's Prayer, as it is given by Jesus to his disciples (see Matthew 6: 9-13 or Luke 11:2-4), is really a pattern for how we should pray to God.

What an amazingly simple and yet complete set of words it is! Only about 10 lines long and under 60 words, the prayer divides neatly into a focus on God and then on our relationship to God and others. The whole prayer points to the character of God. But almost more important than the words is the fact that it is short and simple. We don't need fancy phrases or complicated words when we pray. Jesus is encouraging us to avoid long shopping lists and instead to tune in to God with fewer words and to listen.

As a pattern for our praying it can help us shape our personal and corporate prayers.

Preparation

Read through the prayer with your group or class, using an easy-to-understand translation such as the Contemporary English Version (CEV). Make this available in large print for groups to work with, so they can write around the prayer.

Also have some copies of the sample paraphrases and alternative versions of this prayer as set out below.

Development

1. In groups ask the children to decide what each part of the prayer is about.
Encourage them to write or draw their ideas around the large print versions of the prayer
2. Talk this through together, deciding what sort of pattern and guidance Jesus is giving us in this prayer. e.g.
 - What is the most important part of this prayer?
 - What personal things does Jesus want us to pray for?
 - Which part of the prayer do you like the most?
 - Which part is the most difficult to understand or to do?
 - Who is this prayer for? (i.e. a person on his or her own, or for a group to use?)
 - Who or what is the focus for each part of the prayer?
3. Introduce all or some of the following 'versions' of the prayer. Can the children see how lines in each of these connect to or are based on the words of the original prayer?

A.

*O close and loving friend,
Both here and beyond this life,*



*You are so very special to us.
You are in charge of everything
And we want to do things your way.
We want the way it is in heaven to be the way it is right here on earth.*

*There are some basic things we need to survive each day;
Please give them to us.
Please release us from the mess we've got ourselves into and help us to pass on that release to others.
There are dangers and pressures on us to do what is bad,
Please protect us and guide us to safety.*

*All because you alone are in charge;
You alone can give us the power to be different;
You alone are the source of all that is beautiful and best;
And you will never change.*

We all agree to this prayer.

B.

*Father God, we honour you.
Come rule in us and all we do.
May things on earth and heaven rhyme;
Your will, your ways and in your time.
For each day's needs, in you we rest;
Please give us what is for our best.
Help us to pass forgiveness on;
For you've released us from all wrong.
Save us from our own worst self;
Keep evil from our spirit's health.
For all is yours, both strength and power;
Our glorious King - each day, each hour.
Amen*

C.

Here is a version of The Lord's Prayer from New Zealand

*Eternal Spirit, earth-maker, pain-bearer, life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all, loving God, in whom is heaven:*

*The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!*



*Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope
and come on earth.*

*With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.*

*For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
Now and forever. Amen*

4. Now invite the group to work on their own versions of this pattern prayer, using language, images and ideas that they feel comfortable with. This could be done as an individual exercise or in groups.
If the children are willing, they could assemble the different versions for a display on Christian prayer or perhaps it might become part of an assembly or group presentation at a service of worship.