

St. Paul 2017 Faith Focus: The Small Catechism
Week 3: Lord's Prayer
Host guide

Warm Up

If there are new people, you can introduce yourself; then have each person in the group share:

- Who is someone in your life who had a strong prayer life

Teaching: Audio

These audio segments will be available online and in a CD format.

Segment 1 of audio content (3 minutes): Lord's Prayer in Scripture

- Appears in two of the Gospels and picked up by early church.
- Focus on Luke: Teach us to pray!
- I have a third section on why Roman Catholics do not say 'The kingdom, power and glory are yours' when praying the Lord's Prayer in worship. This is optional.

Some discussion questions:

- When did you learn the Lord's Prayer?
- Do you ever pray the Lord's Prayer outside of church?
- Do you think it is important to recite the Lord's Prayer in church?
- Do you ever feel like the disciples – not confident in your prayer life? What are things that helped you develop a richer prayer life?

Segment 2 of audio content (3 minutes): Luther's insights into the Lord's Prayer

- Luther was a man of deep prayer.
- Luther gets at the tension in prayer between God's invitation to ask for things and God not being a 'genie in a bottle'.
- Luther emphasizes the Lord's Prayer as words of grace.

Some discussion questions:

- Do you find that your prayer life is better during good or bad times?
- Do you find yourself ever wondering if God is listening to your prayers? Do you think good praying would change God's heart or your heart?
- Does Luther's commentary help you see why we sometimes call it "Saying grace" when we pray?

Application: 3rd Petition

3rd Petition: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is this done?

When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow the name of God nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

Some discussion questions:

- Do you believe bad things will happen to you if you do not pray? Do you believe that bad things did happen to you because you did not pray enough?
- What might it look like if God's will was done among us? In your life? Your family? Your church? Your community? Your nation?
- For Luther what is the medicine for Christians against evil? [the Word, prayer, and faith.]
- [If you want to open a can of worms]. Throughout Luther's writings, Luther never puts evil in one location. He refers to evil that arises out of the world, the devil and the sinful self or flesh. For Luther, evil is embedded in the world's systems; evil also arises out a conscious force set against humanity and God; evil arises out of the human heart. Where do you see evil arising in our world.

Prayer:

Luther emphasizes praying through the parts of the catechism. In a book to his barber, he emphasizes four moods of praying through each of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. For example, using the 3rd petition of the Lord's Prayer.

+ Meditate -- Ask God what does this mean for my life; meditate on its meaning

+ Thank -- Thank God for the way in which God has done his will in your life

+ Confess – Confess to God the ways in which you have stood opposed to God's will in your life and our world

+ Pray for binding – Ask God that you would be an instrument of God's will in this world.

I do not have a separate audio file; hopefully the first two audio files on praying through the Lord's Prayer suffice.

I would suggest the class close with roughly a minute to give each person time to prayer through the 3rd petition of the Lord's Prayer. I would end by inviting everyone to conclude with the Lord's Prayer.