

THIRD GRADE: Our Father

**Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen**

Our Heavenly Father's love for you

Jesus gave us this prayer so that we could know joy in continually praising our Heavenly Father. Jesus also wanted us to experience peace through asking the Father for everything that we need. He knows the most important things in life that will bring us true joy and peace and He is continually faithful. As we speak with Our Heavenly Father each day in pray, we will come to recognize more and more how much He loves us

Why do we want to pray the Our Father every day?

- 1) To come to know God as our loving Father.
- 2) To become more aware of how much our Heavenly Father loves us.
- 3) To understand the qualities and goodness of fatherhood at its finest. A father should be strong yet gentle, firm but understanding, merciful and forgiving. A father is to provide, protect, guide and teach his children. Above all a father is called to love each of his children unconditionally and with understanding. And he finds joy in being a father. Our Heavenly Father is all perfect which means that He has all of these qualities.



Meaning of the Words

- **God Our Father** desires that we come to Him in prayer, asking for all that we need. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, hereafter CCC paragraphs 2777 – 2802)
- **Who art in Heaven** refers to God's majesty and His presence in the hearts of the just. Heaven, the Father's house, is the true homeland toward which we are heading and to which, already, we belong through the Sacrament of Baptism. (CCC, 2802)
- There are seven petitions. The first series of petitions carries us toward Our Heavenly Father, for His own sake: *Thy name, Thy Kingdom, Thy will*. We are to think first of the Person we love before asking for what we need.
- **Hallowed by Thy Name:** His name is holy and is to be held holy.
"By the second petition, **Thy Kingdom come** the Church looks first to Christ's return and the final coming of the Reign of God. It also prays for the growth of the Kingdom of God in the "today" of our own lives." (CCC, 2859)
"In the third petition, **Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven**, we ask our Father to unite our will to that of His Son, so as to fulfill His plan of salvation in the life of the world." (CCC, 2860) Second and third petitions in essence: We will try to live as images of God on earth.
- The last four petitions present our wants to Him: they ask that our lives be nourished, healed of sin, and made victorious in the struggle of good over evil." (CCC, 2857)

- “In the fourth petition, by saying **give us**, we express our trust in our heavenly Father. Give us what we need to live now and later with You in Heaven. **Our daily bread** refers most especially to the Holy Eucharist – receiving Jesus Himself in Holy Communion.
- “The fifth petition, **And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us** begs God’s mercy for our offences, mercy which can penetrate our hearts only if we have learned to forgive our enemies, with the example and help of Christ.” (CCC, 2862) In essence, forgive us for our sins and help us forgive others.
- “When we say **lead us not into temptation** we are asking God not to allow us to take the path that leads to sin. This petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength; it requests the grace of vigilance and final perseverance.” (CCC, 2863)
“In the last petition, **but deliver us from evil**, Christians pray to God with the Church to show forth the victory, already won by Christ, over the “ruler of this world,” Satan, the angel personally opposed to God and to His plan of salvation.” (CCC, 2864) In essence, help us to make good choices and keep us safe in Your love.
- “The final “**Amen**” we express our fiat concerning the seven petitions: “So be it.” (CCC, 2865)

Activities for Learning the Words

- Pray the Our Father every day and at every session
- Echo prayer– have children repeat each phrase after you
- Make flash cards with a phrase of the prayer on each card
- Use the Missalette and pray the Our Father together
- Have the students write out the prayer
- Encourage parents to pray with their children at home, praying the Our Father at bedtime, helping their child to memorize the prayer.



Learning the Principles

- Our Heavenly Father created you in His image. He made a part of you that, like Him, will never die. This part of you is called a soul. Because you have a soul, you have the power to think and the power to love. Our earthly parents cooperated with God to bring us into existence.
- When God made us in His image, He opened up many treasures for us. Our greatest treasure is God Himself. He is always with us. He knows everything about us: who we are, what we do, and even our thoughts. He loves us far more than anyone else loves us. He gave each of us a soul so we could love Him in return.
- Our Heavenly Father loves you completely. God was thinking of you, loving you, and wanting you from all eternity. God our Father only wants what is best for you. In the Bible, He tells us, “I will never forget you. See, upon the palms of My hands I have written your name.” (Isaiah 49:15b-16a)
- The Our Father, also called the Lord’s Prayer, is a prayer recorded in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. It is a response to His disciples response “Lord, teach us [how] to pray.”
- **The Lord’s Prayer is a Summary of the whole Gospel** – it is the most perfect of prayers, and is at the center of the Scriptures. In it we ask not only for the things we desire, but also in the order in which they should be desired. (See CCC 2761)

- **The Lord’s Prayer is important, because it comes to us directly from Christ**, and as such is a model for how we are to pray – most especially to pray with meaning, from the heart.
- Our Heavenly Father is a Divine Person. He is pure Spirit and therefore does not have a body. In Sacred Art our Heavenly Father is portrayed as an old Man to help us think about our Heavenly Father; but He is not an old Man nor is that what He looks like.
- “Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: He is Father not only in being Creator; He is eternally Father in relation to His only Son, who is eternally Son only in relation to His Father: ‘No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.’” (CCC 240; Matthew 11:27)
- Prayer is a vital necessity. Prayer and the Christian life are inseparable. (CCC 2744-2745) In other words, when we pray with our heart, we come to know Jesus Christ personally and deeply. As this friendship with Him grows, we recognize more and more how much He loves us and how much we love Him. From this love, received and given, we respond from a natural desire to be one with Him in all things, and live our lives in a way that is reflective of His own. This brings much peace and joy to ourselves and those around us.

Activities

- Explain one phrase at a time for better understanding then memorize
- Fill in the blanks of key words of the prayer
- Make a booklet of the Our Father prayer, with a phrase on each page and draw a picture that depicts each phrase – what it means to the children.
- Have the prayer printed out on poster board. Cut out in sections and have the boys and girls match the strips into the right order to make the prayer.
- Sing the Our Father to music / video YouTube: “Only boys aloud – The Lord’s Prayer” (3 min. 10 sec.) YouTube – The Lord’s Prayer – Susan Boyle with Lyrics and Pictures (3 min., 45 sec.)
- Read Matthew 6:5-15. As you talk about Jesus teaching the Our Father to His Apostles, include Sacred Art pictures that portray each phrase. Google the picture that you want and then click on Images. Click on Advanced Searches for free to use even commercially.
- Have the children act out a skit where one person prays the prayer and another person portrays our Heavenly Father who answers to each phrase of the prayer. Google “Our Father skit” to see an example.
- Place the one page prayer commitment into a plastic sleeve and tie a small loop of yarn to the top loop. Parents may place the prayer commitment on the child’s bedroom door knob in order to use it for prayer times (so it won’t be misplaced). Prayer commitments at the beginning of the academic year, and during Advent and Lent are especially welcomed. A gift, such as a medal and chain or a small statue could be given for incentive to be faithful each day during a period such as Advent. A calendar could be copied on the back of the prayer commitment. This incentive helps children to develop a daily habit of prayer.
- Teach the children how to pray with their heart; not just rattling words. “Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of Him ‘to whom we speak.’ In the case of the Our Father, we are speaking with the person of Our Heavenly Father (CCC 2700, 2704)
- The Lord’s Prayer is the title that early Christians gave to the prayer which Jesus entrusted to His disciples and to the Church. (*Catechism Glossary*, p. 886)



- Encourage children to make a request of our Heavenly Father for a specific need. Give an example from your own life, such as help on a test, for a sick grandmother, rain for the farmers, safe travel in a storm. When a prayer is answered, it makes faith come alive for them and will help the students to develop a relationship with our Heavenly Father. At a time when students have a specific prayer that was answered, it is most helpful for them to share it with the class. Children might keep a journal of their requests or the class might keep a list of answered requests. Our Heavenly Father desires a relationship with each of us. We don't want to just ask for good things from Him with no desire to speak with Him and develop a friendship with Him.

Spiritual Comprehension – Do they understand?

- Ask questions to ensure that young people understand the meaning of the words.
- **This one prayer is the prayer the children should know by heart and with good understanding before they advance to the next grade level. Therefore it should be prayed at every opportunity.** Please continue to teach the other prayers as listed in the Diocesan Religion Curriculum for Third Grade that are to be introduced at this age level.

Encountering Our Heavenly Father in Prayer

- Pray the Our Father aloud and have the children listen, preferably with their eyes closed. Have them take notice of a word or phrase that stood out for them. Allow some time of silence for the girls and boys to think about why the word or phrase stood out for them. Allowing the children quiet time to reflect on the phrases of the Our Father, after they have received explanation of each phrase, takes it to the next level of a deep personal encounter. As a further progression, provide silence so that they may have a “heart-to-heart” conversation with Our Heavenly Father.



Scriptural References about Our Heavenly Father

- Jesus said, "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' "The unbelievers are always running after these things. **Your heavenly Father** knows that you need all these things. (Matthew 6:31-32)
- Jesus said, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, **your heavenly Father** will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive others, then **your Father** will not forgive your transgressions. (Matthew 6:14-15)
- Jesus said, "For whoever does the will of **My Father who is in Heaven**, he is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:50)
- Jesus said, "If you really knew Me, you would know **My Father** also." (John 14:7)
- Jesus said, "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? "Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will **your Father** who is in Heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:9-11)
- For this reason I bow my knees before **the Father**, from whom every family in Heaven and on earth derives its name." (Ephesians 3:14-15)