

SEVENTH GRADE: **PRAYER TO JESUS**

**Jesus, I believe in you. Jesus, I hope in You.
Jesus, I want to love You with all my heart.**

Jesus, I thank You for having come to dwell in me as I receive You in Holy Communion. I welcome You into my heart and I ask you to “crowd out” whatever might be there that is not of You. And I desire to give You full reign as my Lord, my Savior and my King. Thank You for giving Your life for me on the Cross, loving me this much and allowing me to receive You into my heart in this present moment.

And now that You are so close to me, please help me love You more and more, and serve You by loving the people around me. Amen.

Praying and focusing on this one prayer throughout the entire year will allow young people to encounter the Person of Jesus and to deepen their friendship with Him. They will become more attuned to Jesus’ True Presence in the Holy Eucharist and His continual Presence within them. The following resources are meant to foster this process. Please consider implementing one simple aspect on a weekly basis and at each Faith Formation session.

At the heart of it all: Jesus cares deeply for us and wants us to get to know Him better.

Jesus knows each of us personally and loves us, even with our faults and weaknesses. Jesus said: “I no longer call you servants, for a servant does not know what his Master is doing; but I have called you friends! For all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:15) Our Lord wants us to get to know Him by spending time with Him. We will better realize how much He loves us. Jesus “delights in you.” (Psalm 18:19)

Why do we want to pray the *Prayer to Jesus* every day?

- 1) We will encounter the Person of Jesus on a daily basis and
- 2) Develop / deepen our friendship with the Person of Jesus and
- 3) Become more attuned to Jesus’ True Presence in the Holy Eucharist and
- 4) Develop a continual awareness of the reality of God’s presence, Who is always with us.



The Last Supper

Meaning of the Words of the *Prayer to Jesus* – explain one line at a time

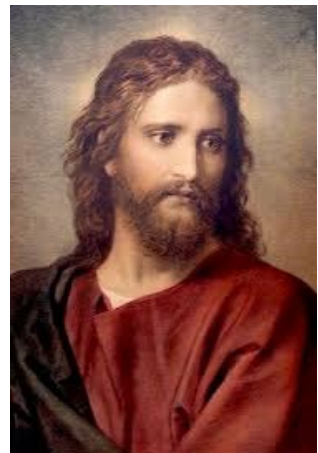
- **Jesus, I believe in you. Jesus, I hope in You. Jesus, I want to love You with all my heart.** This prayer expresses our faith in Jesus, which means that we believe that He is God; And it expresses our hope in Him that we trust in all of His Promises throughout the Bible, which He has kept. And we ask Jesus to strengthen our love for Him.



- **Jesus, I thank You for having come to dwell in me as I receive You in Holy Communion.** We thank Jesus for dwelling in our soul through Baptism, and when we receive Him in the Holy Eucharist during Mass. We don't want to reject Him through serious sin.
- **I welcome You into my heart and I ask you to “crowd out” whatever might be there that is not of You.** We ask Christ to purify our hearts of anything that is not good for us.
- **And I desire to give You full reign as my Lord, my Savior and my King.** We ask that Jesus have full reign of our hearts as He is our Savior and God. As our King, Jesus wants to serve us by loving us and giving us what is good for us.
- **Thank You for giving Your life for me on the Cross; loving me this much and allowing me to receive You into my heart in this present moment.** We thank Jesus for His incredible love for us by giving His life for us and allowing us to be united with Him by receiving Him in Holy Communion.
- **And now that You are so close to me, please help me love You more and more, and serve You by loving the people around me. Amen.** By receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, we are as close to Him as we can be on this earth. As Jesus dwells within us, He strengthens us through His grace. We show our love for Him by the way we love others.

Learning the Principles

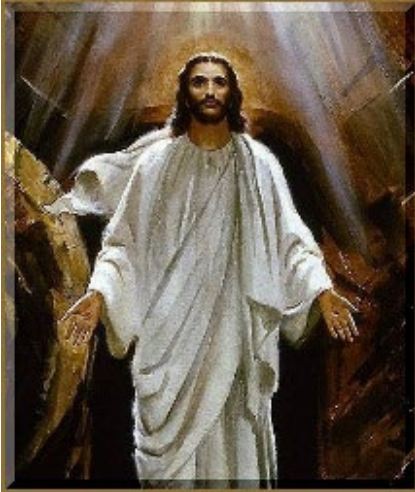
- The words of *this* prayer are addressed to Jesus.
- The *Prayer to Jesus* is a powerful prayer for any time, and most appropriate for praying after receiving Jesus in Holy Communion.
- Prayer is a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable. (CCC 2744-2745) In other words, when we pray 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.
- The *Prayer to Jesus* is a prayer that will help us on our spiritual journey to know, love and be more committed to Jesus as His disciples.
- We want to become more attuned to the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Therefore, along with learning this prayer, speaking about Jesus' True Presence in the Eucharist will be essential.
- The spiritual transformation that occurs upon reception of the Eucharist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass can be more fully realized and appreciated when approached with an attitude of humble and reverent prayer, asking God for the grace to internalize the beautiful, life-giving gift of His Son.



Activities for Learning the Words

- Pray the *Prayer to Jesus* every day, every day in the home and at the beginning (or end) of every session and at every appropriate opportunity throughout the year.

- Explain one phrase at a time for better understanding then memorize each phrase.
- Teach the young people 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 *Prayer to Jesus*, we are speaking with the Person of Jesus.
- Encourage young people to make a request of Jesus 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 young people to develop a relationship with Jesus. At a time when they have a specific prayer that was answered, it is most helpful for them to share it with the family and/or the class. God desires a relationship with us. We don’t want to just ask for good things from God with no desire to speak with Him and develop a friendship with Him.
- In pairs, let young people work together to memorize the words.
- Encourage the young people to pray the *Prayer to Jesus* also at night, so that they learn the prayer “by heart”.
- Make a graphic using the words of the *Prayer to Jesus*, drawing out what appeals to each person and how this prayer is meaningful to their lives.
- When teaching about Jesus, include Sacred Art.
- To help young people become more attuned to Jesus’ True Presence in the Holy Eucharist, allow frequent times of silence in the chapel where Our Lord is reserved in the tabernacle. Guide the youth to acknowledge that they truly believe that the Person of Christ is in the tabernacle, and therefore to show this belief by a reverent genuflection and attentiveness to Him. The parent’s and teacher’s language referring to Jesus present in the tabernacle helps to build the awareness of this fact.
- Language is important for how we refer to the Holy Eucharist. We need to avoid referring to the Holy Eucharist as the bread and wine; rather, the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus.
- Look up key Scriptures on the Holy Eucharist regarding the Real Presence of Jesus: John’s Gospel, Chapter 6 refers to the Holy Eucharist through the multiplication miracle of the loaves and fishes, which points to Christ feeding us in the Eucharist. Jesus said, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53).
“I Myself am the living bread which came down from Heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever” (John 6:51).
The Institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper (Luke 22:7-20; Matthew 26:17-29; Mark 14:12-25)
- Youth need guidance in knowing how to prepare for Mass with an attitude of love and worship. We want to prepare to worship God in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which will be made present on the holy altar.
- Read and study the words of the hymn, *Down in Adoration Falling* by St Thomas Aquinas.
- Give young people a “prayer commitment” with the *Prayer to Jesus* in a plastic sleeve for long-term use, helping them to develop a habit of daily prayer.



Jesus rose from the dead

- After praying the *Prayer to Jesus* as a group, allow time for silence so that the youth may journal regarding their thoughts, feelings, desires, problems, intentions etc.
- Take the youth to Church to recite the *Prayer to Jesus* before a Crucifix, or a statue of Jesus, and then allow time for silence so that they can personally speak with Jesus in the quiet of their heart.

Spiritual Comprehension – Do they understand?

- Ask questions to ensure that the young people understand the meaning of the words and to know if they are encountering the Person of Jesus.
- After the young people have become familiar with the prayer, ask them how this Prayer affects them in their daily lives.

- **This one prayer should be learned by heart and with good understanding during the year as it will be important throughout the young peoples' lives. Therefore, it should be prayed at every opportunity.** Please continue to review and teach the other prayers as listed in the Diocesan Religion Curriculum for Seventh Grade.

Encountering Jesus in Prayer

- In some situations, pray the *Prayer to Jesus* aloud and have young people listen, preferably with their eyes closed. After the youth have received explanation of each phrase of the *Prayer to Jesus*, allow them quiet time to reflect on a word or phrase that stood out for them and why. This takes it to the next level of a deep personal encounter with Jesus. As a further progression, provide silence so that they may have a “heart-to-heart” conversation with Jesus.
- Sometimes, after praying the *Prayer to Jesus*, allow time for silence so that the 7th graders may journal regarding their thoughts, feelings, desires, problems, intentions etc.
- Take the youth to Church to pray the Prayer to Jesus before a Crucifix, a statue or stained glass window of Jesus and then allow time for silence so that they can speak with Him.
- Allow young people to have time before the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance in a Chapel or Church. Times of adoration of Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist helps youth to encounter the living Christ and prepare them to receive Jesus more reverently at Mass.
- Allow the young people times of silence in the church/chapel, where they may pray the *Prayer to Jesus* in the following manner:
 1. Read the words slowly and thoughtfully, 2 or 3 times
 2. Consider the meaning of the words and does it remind you of something in your life? (In other words, ponder how this does or might relate to your life)
 3. Notice what word or phrase stood out for you and why (Conversation with God) (The first three steps above are considered meditation)
 4. Repeat silently a word or phrase several times slowly and then rest in God (This step is considered contemplation – being still and resting in God’s presence)

5. Have time to journal

- Ask questions to know if young people are encountering the Person of Jesus in prayer.
- Since the *Prayer to Jesus* is a Christ-centered prayer, we want to pray this prayer with deep respect and love for Christ, which will lead to deeper friendship with Him and adoration of Him each time we recite it.

Scriptural Foundation

- We are given the supernatural gifts of faith, hope and love in the Sacrament of Baptism. These gifts make it possible for us to live in relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (1Corinthians 13:13)
- “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”; “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.” (1Thessalonians 5:18; Colossians 4:2)
- We want Jesus to be the King of our hearts. On the last Sunday of the Church Year, usually the last Sunday of November, the entire Universal Church celebrates the Feast of “Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.
Scriptures on Jesus as King:
Therefore, Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a King. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (John 18:37)
...Which He will bring about at the proper time--He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. (Timothy 6:15)

Resources

- Helping young people encounter Jesus in Adoration, go to <http://childrenofhope.nz>

