



# 4th grade

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer is found twice in the New Testament (Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4). The prayer starts with a personal address to God ("Our Father, who art in heaven ...") followed by six petitions or requests. The first three are all similar in theme: we pray for God's name to be hallowed (honored and respected), for God's kingdom to come on earth, and for God's divine will to be done just as it is in heaven. These are ultimately prayers for the world around us.

The second half of the prayer focuses on our personal needs. It is important to note that the needs Jesus addresses are all simple in nature: for our daily bread, for the grace to be forgiven just as we forgive others, and for God to rescue and lead us away from evil.

In most Christian worship services, we add the phrase "for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever." This phrase was not part of Jesus' original prayer, but was added by the early church as a way of recognizing God's authority and power.

Jesus' prayer is astonishing in both its depth and simplicity (note that the whole prayer is less than 60 words!). However, if Jesus' words seem a little formal for your children, start with these simple phrases that capture the heart of most prayer:

**"Thank You."** Meister Eckhart once said if the only prayer we learn to pray is "thanks," it is enough. Help your children learn to daily thank God for your blessings.

**"I'm sorry."** We all have a tendency to hide our mistakes, or to give excuses and cast blame somewhere else. One of the best things we can teach our children is to move quickly to honesty, trusting that God will forgive them (John 1:9).

**"Help."** Just as Jesus prayed for daily bread, we can ask God to supply our basic needs. Make sure, though, that your "help" prayers aren't all self-focused; one of the best ways to develop a soft heart in our children is to encourage them to ask God's help for others.

Children (and adults) often have lots of questions about prayer. How do I know if I'm doing it right? How do I know if prayer works? Does prayer actually change anything? As you practice leading your child in prayer, it's OK not to have all the answers. Sometimes we do things without understanding how they work. But you'll probably find, as you develop a habit of prayer in your family, that the biggest change you'll notice is in yourself.

Prayer helps us build a closer relationship with God, over time we develop the freedom to share our hearts with God just the way we would with a close friend. Remember, even Jesus needed to find time to pull away from the rush of life and spend time alone with God in prayer. If we want to follow in Jesus' footsteps and share God's love with others, then we need to find the time to pray as He prayed, and to develop the same confidence and trust in God.

# prayer bracelet

## ADVANCED PREPARATION:

Gather beads (*black, blue, white, purple, red, green, orange, yellow, gold and two clear beads*) and 18-20 inches of thin twine, cording or string

### Step #1

Read Matthew 6:9-13 together.

### Step #2

Explain that you're going to make a bracelet together to learn the prayer that Jesus taught us, with each bead representing part of His prayer. Take the twine and string one clear bead onto it. Tie a knot around the bead with the twine, and follow the order below to add successive beads:

- **"Our Father in heaven" (blue):** The blue bead stands for the sky (heaven), and reminds us that God is our Father.
- **"Hallowed be your name" (white):** The white bead stands for the holiness of God and the respect we should have for God's name.
- **"Your kingdom come" (purple):** The purple bead stands for the majesty of God, and we pray for all to recognize God as king.
- **"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (green):** The green bead stands for the color of the earth, and we pray for all to do God's will.

- **"Give us today our daily bread" (yellow):** The yellow bead stands for wheat, which is used to make bread. We think of those things we need.
- **"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" (red):** We remember how our sins hurt God and others, but we also remember that Jesus died so we could be forgiven.
- **"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (black):** The black stands for the temptations we want to do our best to avoid.
- **"For thine is the kingdom, power and glory forever" (gold):** The gold stands for the promise of heaven, and the assurance that God is in charge and watching over us.

### Step #3

Finish your bracelet with another clear bead, again tying a knot to secure the beads in place. Over the coming week, pray the Lord's Prayer with your child every night before bed, using this bracelet to help them remember each phrase. Once they've memorized each phrase, encourage them to pray through each bead using their own words and thoughts—for instance, to list the "daily bread" needs that they have, or the "temptations" or struggles they face at school.