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# The Lord's Prayer— We Talk to Our Father

## IMAGINE THIS

Three times a day, seven children sit at the kitchen table with their father and enjoy delicious meals. They live in a beautiful home their father cares for, spend the money he gives to them, and wear the clothes he provides for them. But at the meal table and throughout the day, the children ignore their father as if he isn't even there. They never tell him how much they enjoy all the beautiful things he has given to them. They never share with him the disappointments, joys, and hopes of their days. They talk with him only when they are in trouble or when they can't find the solution to a problem on their own.

How is our relationship with God sometimes like the relationship the children in the story have with their father? How does the Holy Spirit move us to act differently than the children in the story?

## WHAT IS PRAYER?

Today satellites carry our phone conversations invisibly through the air, connecting us with others, even over great distances. As we talk over the phone, we communicate our feelings, tell someone our wishes, and invite the listeners to respond to what we say.

Prayer is a two-way conversation—a connection—with God our heavenly Father. God listens to us and answers us when we commu-

nicate with Him. We can't see our words traveling to God. But God made the connection between Him and us possible. We talk with Him through Jesus, the "great connector" between God and His children.

Read 1 John 5:14–15. What is prayer?

How can we pray?

What can we expect of God when we pray?

## WHAT'S OUR HEAVENLY FATHER LIKE?

*Cheri ran into her bedroom, slammed the door, and threw herself onto her bed, crying. Her dad yelled behind her, "And don't ever ask me to drive you to anyone's party when I'm trying to watch TV and you haven't finished the dirty dishes in the sink!" Then he got in his truck and quickly backed out of the driveway with tires screeching.*

If Cheri's only image of a father is based on her experience with her own father, how might she feel about her heavenly Father? What might she expect God to be like?

## The Introduction to the Lord's Prayer Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.



Read catechism question 205, and then consider how you could share the true nature of God with someone who has experienced a poor relationship—or no relationship—with a father.

### IN JESUS' NAME

When Christopher Columbus arrived in the new world, he claimed it for Queen Isabella I of Spain. When Jesus redeemed us, He claimed us for His Father—our Father in heaven. By faith we now belong to Him. Columbus claimed the new land by the name and under the will of Spain's queen. Jesus invites us to pray in His name and according to God's will.

Read John 14:13–14 and 15:7. Tell in your own words how Jesus invites us to pray to our heavenly Father.

### MORE ABOUT PRAYER

Use your Bible and catechism to discover more about prayer. Work with a partner or a small group of classmates.

1. Read Psalm 103:8–13. How does our heavenly Father treat us even though we sin against Him each day?

2. Read catechism question 195 and, as always, the accompanying Bible texts. To whom should we pray, and why?

3. Read catechism question 196. Why is our belief that God is our Father more important to our prayer life than our attempts to do things that please God?

6. How are we helped in our prayer life? Read Romans 8:26-27.

8. Where and when should we pray?

7. Sometimes God answers our prayers with a fast, resounding "Yes!" Sometimes His answer is "Wait a while." Other times, He replies, "I have a better idea for you." How can this last answer, a NO answer, be the answer to our prayer?

### TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

1 John 3:1: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

The Introduction to the Lord's Prayer.

4. What should be included in our prayers? See question 197.

5. Describe the three ways we should pray. See question 198.

