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S E R I E S



When You Pray...

The Lord's Prayer with
Dr. James Nestingen

Study Guide

By Rev. Katherine Evansen

 LUTHER PRODUCTIONS

When You Pray...

S E S S I O N S

The basis of prayer

In this first session, we will begin to ask why it is we dare to pray.

Our Father who art in heaven

This session focuses on who this God is that we pray to, and what we can expect from this God.

Hallowed be Thy name

In this third session, we consider what it means to call God holy.

Thy kingdom come

In this fourth session, we ask God to bring us to faith, recognizing it as a gift.

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

Here we explore in greater depth what it means when we pray for God to take control of our lives.

Give us this day our daily bread

In this petition, we are invited to remember God's great generosity.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us

In this session, we consider how God clears out our past, and opens us up to a new future.

And lead us not into temptation

In this eighth session, we ask God to protect and keep us, so that we might live in the hope of the resurrection.

But deliver us from evil

In this seventh and final petition, we ask God to take care of us now, and until the very end.



Professor of Church History **James Nestingen** was first affiliated with Luther Seminary as an instructor in 1976–78. He came back as assistant professor of church history in 1980, and was named professor in 1992. Following ordination in 1971, he was pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Coquille, Oregon for the next three years before becoming curriculum editor at Augsburg Publishing House from 1974 to 1976. He served as assistant pastor of St. Ansgar Lutheran Church in Toronto, Canada in 1978–80. A graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota in 1967, Nestingen earned the M.Div. degree from Luther Seminary in 1971 and the M.Th. degree in 1978. He received the Th.D. degree from St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, in 1984. He received the Bruce Prize in New Testament at Luther Seminary in 1971. Nestingen's books include: *The Faith We Hold* (1983); *Martin Luther: His Life and His Writings* (1982); *Roots of Our Faith* (1978); and *Free to Be* (with Gerhard Forde, 1975).

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Leaders' Guide

Optional additional reading or reference tools

- *Lutheran Woman Today, "Teach Us To Pray: A Study of the Lord's Prayer"*
- *The Large Catechism, Martin Luther*

When You Pray...

The Lord's Prayer with Dr. James Nestingen

We begin our study of the Lord's Prayer by first acknowledging its familiarity. We can say it by rote, hardly thinking at all about what we are saying. To be sure, there are times when we really see the need to come to God, exposing our deepest fears and hopes. There is nothing deeper. At such times there is nothing more poignant or visceral, and yet so full of grace, than prayer. In this video study of the Lord's Prayer, we will explore together what it means to pray, learning from the One who said, "when you pray, pray like this."

The study on the Lord's Prayer is ultimately grounded in both relationships and faith. It's about our relationship with the One who created us, and formed us in our mother's womb from the same raw materials that form the stars. That relationship was cemented in our baptism when the cross was placed upon our forehead, beginning a covenant with us that extends beyond death.

The Lord's Prayer is also about the relationships with those around us, our neighbors. These neighbors may be intimate to us: our spouses, parents, children, or friends. But Christ urges us to broaden our vision. He bids us to be in concerned relationship with our global neighbors as well as those we encounter casually.

The study of the Lord's Prayer is also a study of faith: it is learning more about this One who has called us into relationship, and learning that we can trust. As Christians, we know we live in-between the now and the not-yet. Our lives are shaped both by the reality of the world and also by the promises of Christ. The very rhythm of living takes on the shape of the cross and resurrection. We all experience the hurt of betrayal, the cruelty of disease and grief over death. But we can also look back and see how Christ walked through those dark times with us. We can see Christ working in the world despite the "valley of the shadow" (Psalm 23:4). In this we take hope.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray for both relationships and faith. We pray that that both will be strengthened, especially when we are too weak to carry on. We pray that God will make our struggles and our deaths meaningful, that he will bring to each loss the promise of new beginnings—resurrection. We pray that God will not be silent, but speak to us so that we can once more see the hope in our future. We pray that though sin and death still wrack our world, Christ will once more raise our eyes to that which he gives, making all things new. We also pray for those we see and those we shall never see, those we love most deeply, and all others in God's creation.

May God's blessings be with you as you study this prayer. May you sense the God of the resurrection in all your days. As you pray the Lord's Prayer, may it become a kind of nourishment that revitalizes, refreshes and sustains you from day to day, for truly it is a gift of Christ himself to us.

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Leaders' Guide

Thank you for facilitating this video study of the Lord's Prayer! Whether you are sharing leadership in this study, or it is your responsibility alone, you are participating in something that can change lives. Thankfully, the discussion belongs to the whole group, and does not rest solely upon your shoulders. Your job is simply to initiate conversation, inviting others fully into the discussion. Keep in mind that people participate in groups in different ways. Some may be quiet, while others like to speak up. Welcome each person to the group. Keep in mind time considerations, helping to keep the group focused and on-track.

You will want to make sure appropriate materials needed for each session are available, including photocopies of the study guide sheets. Occasionally, a chalkboard, whiteboard or large easel might be helpful for recording the group's responses, but a simple piece of paper and someone to take notes will also work.

Before each session, be sure to watch the video, and read the questions to be discussed. Also, read through any biblical material that is mentioned, as well as Luther's meaning to each petition.

You will want to prepare the place where you will be meeting. The videotape should be inserted into the VCR and forwarded to the beginning of the particular session you are studying. Chairs should be arranged to facilitate interaction and discussion. Read through the session and see if paper, pens and Bibles might be required.

Finally, since this is a study on prayer, don't forget to pray for the participants and the time you have together.

The study is divided as follows:

- Open with the prayer provided or feel free to make up your own prayer. You might want to share leadership by asking different participants to open with the prayer, or you may want to pray it as a group. Do what works best for you and your group.
- In each session, there will be some questions and comments that are to be shared before showing the video. These are meant to "prime the pump." Do not spend a lot of time on these, however.
- After watching the video, there may be questions or issues that your group wants to discuss that evolve naturally. Go with these if they seem appropriate! Otherwise, follow-up questions are provided to help facilitate discussion.
- End each session with the Lord's Prayer. This helps center and focus the group. Hopefully, this will become more meaningful to you with each session in the study. You may want to stand and hold hands in a circle. You may want to sit quietly and whisper it in a more personal manner. Do what you think works the best for your group and their understanding of the Lord's Prayer.

Photocopying

Feel free to photocopy the contents of this Study Guide to use as handouts.

Leaders' Guide

What you need:

- TV
- VCR
- Paper and pencil/pen for notes and activities
- Bible (Any translation is acceptable, although the New Revised Standard Version Bible has been used with this study)
- Photocopies of the appropriate session for the participants
- Photocopies of Luther's explanation to the Lord's Prayer from *The Small Catechism* found in this study guide, or a *Small Catechism* (optional)

The Lord's Prayer

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.
For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Dr. Nestingen is a Lutheran pastor, a scholar of Reformation History and Luther Studies (Martin). In Dr. Nestingen's material on the Lord's Prayer, he occasionally refers to Martin Luther and his *Catechism*. This reformer of the church wrote *The Small Catechism* in 1529 to help people, including families, to learn the basics of the faith. This tool of Christian learning includes the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Confession, and Holy Communion. It is based on the teachings of the Bible. "Catechism" refers to a type of learning based on question and answer. Luther's *Small Catechism* is useful for us even today. The section pertaining to the Lord's Prayer is included at the end of this study guide. Please feel free to use other resources that your church may have regarding the Lord's Prayer.

When You Pray...

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Session 1

The basis of prayer

In this first video session, we will begin to ask why it is we dare to pray.

Prayer itself is made up of all the deepest fears and hopes of the human heart. Whether we stand at the deathbed or the birthing bed or somewhere in between, when we pray we bring to God all that overwhelms our hearts and souls. Sometimes we do not know how to pray. Even so we are given every encouragement and reason to come to God in prayer. In this session we will begin to explore our difficulties with prayer, the promise God always attaches to the command to pray, and begin to touch on the kind of God to whom we pray.

The following comments and questions are designed to help prepare participants for viewing session one.

- Begin this session, as you will all sessions, with the opening prayer. Then recite together the Lord's Prayer. Ask participants how long they have known this prayer. Do some in your group remember learning it?
- Have participants jot down a reason or two they have difficulty praying.
- Next, jot down any words they might use to describe the God to whom they pray.
- Invite participants to share some of the things they wrote down. Do not spend a lot of time on this; there will be more time for discussion later.
- View the video.

Some questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- Prayer is unbelievably simple; we ask for God to help us. Yet, it is also so difficult. What is so difficult about asking for help? What are some other reasons we might have trouble praying?
- We all know that we should not take God's name in vain. Martin Luther reminds us that we sometimes forget the promise that is found in the second commandment. What is that promise? How should God's name be used?
- It might seem that God is too busy to hear our prayers. God may seem distant or we may have trouble conceiving a God who really listens and is concerned about every individual. But God tells us our prayers are so important, that we are commanded to pray. Read Matthew 7:7. We are asked to knock, seek and ask. Are there any qualifications put on the one who is to knock, seek or ask?
- With the command to pray, God always attaches a promise. What is that promise?
- There are times we cannot pray. When this happens, God promises to intercede for us, in fact, praying for us when we cannot. Read Romans 8:26–27. Describe how Paul's words are encouraging for you.
- God teaches us to pray with the Lord's Prayer, commands us to pray because God loves being our God, promises to answer the prayers we bring, and when we cannot bring them ourselves, intercedes for us with the Holy Spirit. What does all this tell you about the God to whom you pray? Do the words you jotted down before the video session seem consistent with this God? Why or why not?
- Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Opening Prayer

Dear gracious Lord,
we often come to you
so full of life with all
it brings that we cannot
even pray. Thank you for
insisting on our prayers,
so that you turn our very
utterances and groans
into prayers, and then
answer us with your
gracious promises. In
the name of your Son
we pray, Amen.

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Session 2

Opening Prayer

Triune God, you come to us in your stories, and in Christ himself. It is in these stories we get a glimpse of who you are, and what you are like. Though finally you are a mystery to us, we acknowledge that you give us life daily, freeing us through your Word. In this we become more confident and find hope. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven

This second video session focuses on to whom it is that we pray, and what we can expect from this God.

When we go to God in prayer, we need to know to whom we are speaking, and who then will respond. In this session, we will look at the God we have come to know in the Bible, and most particularly in the person of Jesus Christ. We will also explore how this God continues to come to us here and now, through the work of the Holy Spirit. With that, we will begin to see how our prayers are heard, and how they are finally answered in a gracious and life-giving way.

The following comments and questions are designed to help prepare participants for viewing session two.

- Begin with the opening prayer.
- Before viewing the video read Exodus 33:17–23, preferably out loud. Having read the text, write down one or two issues or questions you have regarding this text. To get started, ask yourself, “What might Moses have been feeling when he asked to see God’s ‘glory’ and he was shown God’s backside? What is your first reaction to God’s behavior in this reading?”
- Think of examples in your life when you have, or have not, felt God’s presence. How does this text from Exodus speak to those times in your life?
- Watch Session 2 of the video. In light of the video, discuss some of the issues that were identified earlier in the session.

Some questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- The question is important: to exactly what kind of God are we praying, and what is this God like? Fortunately, our Bible is filled with wonderful examples of just how God behaves. We have already seen God’s backside in Exodus 33. Let’s get some other biblical perspectives on this God. Read: Hosea 13:8, Isaiah 41:10 and Psalm 103:1–5. How is God described in each? How do these differing images tell what God is like?
- We see this same God of the Old Testament in the person of Jesus Christ, because Jesus is God in the flesh. Throughout the Old and New Testaments God is always creating, redeeming and sanctifying. Read some examples: Matthew 10:34–36, Luke 22:39–44, Mark 15:33–37, John 11:25–27. Describe Jesus in each reading. How is Jesus like, and unlike, the God described in the Old Testament?
- Finally, God works in our lives now, just as God did with Moses and the disciples of Christ. Read John 14:15–20. What does Jesus promise us? (For more on the Holy Spirit’s work see Psalm 51:11, Isaiah 11:1–5 and 61:1–3, Acts 2, Acts 13:1–4, Romans 8:1–17, 1 Corinthians 2: 6–16).
- Are you able to think of a time when you, like Moses, asked to see God’s face? In other words, you prayed that God would be with you. Describe what happened. Were your prayers answered as you hoped they might be? Describe the God to whom you pray.
- In what ways does the Lord’s Prayer describe God? The hard edges? The mystery? The comfort? End by praying the prayer slowly together.

When You Pray...

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Session 3

Hallowed be Thy name

In this third video session we focus on the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be Thy name."

When we speak the words "Hallowed be Thy name" in prayer, we are asking Christ to come. We ask him to come into our lives with his redeeming and hopeful Word, to come into our lives and shape them to his, to come into our lives and take all our losses, our failures and our ambiguities, and give us the promise of his resurrection. When we pray these words, we call upon God's holy name, a name that defines us, grabs us, shapes us, and finally brings us home.

The following comments and questions are designed to help prepare participants for viewing session three.

- Open by praying together a verse from the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," written by Martin Luther (a church reformer) over 500 years ago. As you do so, reflect upon God's Word and promises, still standing strong, sung through the generations.
- Before viewing the video, write down a few thoughts on what "Hallowed be thy name" means to you. Perhaps you have questions about what it means. Write these down, too.
- Take two minutes to describe what home means to you. Perhaps it suggests memories of your hometown, perhaps it is your home now, perhaps it is your dream home.
- Finally, have a volunteer read Isaiah 40:8. Take a few moments to think about what this verse means to you.
- View the video.
- In light of the video, discuss some of the issues that were identified earlier in the session.

Some questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- It seems that the older we get, the more we sense our losses in life. We see the things that define us slowly slip away, including the people and places that define home for us. If you are comfortable, take a little time to describe some losses in your life.
- At one point in our baptismal liturgy, the pastor makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptized and says these words, "(Name), child of God, you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked by the cross of Christ forever" (LBW, p. 124). What do these words mean to you?
- Read Isaiah 40:8 this way: "The grass withers, the flower fades, Hallowed be Thy name." Does that change the meaning of that verse for you? If so, how? Does it change the Lord's Prayer for you? How?
- According to Dr. Nestingen, the word *hallowed* means holy, or true to its purpose or intention. In other words, when we say God's name is holy, we say that God will be true to his word. This is a word of promise for us. In it, we hear the voice of the One who loves us. What does that promise mean for you and your life? The lives of those you love? Share these things only if you feel comfortable; otherwise you might want to journal your feelings, or simply bring them to God in prayer.
- Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Opening Prayer

God's Word forever shall abide,
No thanks to foes, who fear it;
For God himself fights by our side,
With weapons of the Spirit.
Were they to take our house,
Goods, honor, child, or spouse,
Though life be wrenched away,
They cannot win the day,
The Kingdom's ours forever! Amen.

(*"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," Lutheran Book of Worship, 229, vs. 4*)

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Session 4

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we ask that you come to us in your Word, bringing faith with it. Help us to hear so that we might believe. Grip us with your promises, secure us in your love, which is our hope in this world, and for eternity. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.

The second petition: Your kingdom come

In this fourth video session, we ask God to bring us faith.

Having called out to God and having prayed for the speaking of God's Word, in this second petition we pray that the Word might take effect in us, giving us faith. Faith comes to us through the work of the Holy Spirit, allowing us to see God at work in the world, and so recognizing God's promises among us. Furthermore, we pray that God will defeat all the powers in the world that work against us and our faith.

The following comments and questions are designed to help prepare participants for viewing session four.

- Before viewing the video, pray the opening prayer.
- Ask a volunteer to read Hebrews 11:1–3 aloud.
- Name an “if/then” condition in your life. For example, a realtor might say, “If I sell this home, then I will receive my commission,” or a parent might say to a child, “If you receive good grades this semester, then you will receive this video game.” How do if/then conditions make you feel? What do they tell you about the way the world works?
- Think of a time in your life when you fell in love. Because there will be more time for discussion later, simply take this time to remember what you were feeling. What did you hope for?
- View the video.
- In light of the video, discuss some of the issues that were identified earlier in the session.

Some of the questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- Life is full of situations where one person dominates another. Name some situations where either individuals, or whole peoples, are dominated. How do all of these situations work on the if/then conditional basis? How do these conditions make others feel? Is there hope? Where?
- Think back to what it was like to fall in love. How is this similar/dissimilar to your relationship with God?
- Do you think God works with the if/then conditional method with us? How are God's promises the same, or different?
- There are several things going on when we pray this petition. First, we ask that God come to us and take control of our lives and our faith, as well as the lives and faith of those we love. Second, we ask that God take control of all the evil forces that are in our world, so that we might not fall victim to them. In essence, we first ask that God will dominate us, and second we ask that God dominate all that is evil. Based upon the discussion above, and what we know about God, how are these two forms of domination the same? How are they different? How can each give us hope?
- Based on the video and the above discussion, describe God's kingdom.
- Close with the Lord's Prayer.

When You Pray...

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Session 5

The third petition: Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

In this fifth video session, we explore in greater depth what it means when we pray for God to take control of our lives.

When the Word is near, Luther commented, the devil is never very far away. And if the devil doesn't get in the way, we and those around us take over, interfering with God's will for the world. And so we pray "your will be done," asking God to overpower all the forces that attack the Word and our faith. And because we know that our God is gracious and good, we also become more confident and hopeful that when it is done God's way, it is just right.

The following comments and questions are designed to prompt discussion regarding the third petition.

- Begin your session by praying together the opening prayer.
- Ask a volunteer to read Romans 7:14–20 aloud. Without taking time for personal confession, have the participants in the group ever felt like Paul?
- Think of the places in your life where there has been conflict. Think of the many conflicts in your community, in the world, perhaps in your own family or church. What does this tell you about human beings?
- In many Christian congregations in the past, part of Sunday's service included a time for confession and forgiveness. Now, depending on the church season, confession and forgiveness may or may not be part of the service. What do you think of this?
- View the video.
- In light of the video, discuss some of the issues that were identified earlier in the session.

Some questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- Tell of a particular time when you felt overwhelmed by a conflict in your life. At such times did you ever doubt God's presence? How were your faith and hope restored?
- As noted previously, confession and forgiveness are not always part of our Sunday morning service. In light of the video, how are confession and forgiveness helpful for an individual or a community? How do confession and forgiveness mirror the way God works in the world? What is God's final word to us when we hear we are forgiven?
- Talk of the devil is not common, and if it is, it may sound frightening or medieval. Where can you see the devil working in the world? In light of the video, what are God's promises to us in this regard?
- We know how we are hindered and defeated in our lives. If we don't fail ourselves, others fail us. Even the world may seem to fail us at times, leaving us feeling overwhelmed and alone. When we pray "your will be done," we pray that all these hindrances will be defeated. But we also pray more positively that good will come from our prayers. What is this positive side of God's will? (Hint: see Romans 8:18–25.)
- End with the Lord's Prayer.

Opening Prayer

Our dear Lord and Savior, your good and gracious will comes to us without our prayer. In this prayer, we ask anyway, that your will may come about in and among us. We pray that you hinder every evil scheme of the devil, the world and ourselves that would not allow us to hallow your name, and would prevent the coming of your kingdom. And strengthen us, keeping us steadfast in your Word and in faith, until the end of our lives. Amen.

(Prayer based on Luther's explanation to the Third Petition)

When You Pray...

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Session 6

Opening Prayer

Holy God, your generosity knows no limits, and so we pray that we might be given eyes to see your gracious love at work in our lives. Provide us with tender minds and hearts, so that we might see in others your gifts, and awaken us to those gifts you have given us. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

The fourth petition: Give us this day our daily bread

In this sixth video session, we turn a bit from praying in relation to God, to praying in relation to our neighbor.

When we pray for daily bread, we pray that we might become aware of the lavishness of God. We see that our cup overflows with gifts that God gives us to not only sustain our lives, but to make us useful to those around us. As Christ Jesus takes hold of us, he softens our hearts and minds so that we begin to see God's gifts hidden in the ordinary places in life. We come to recognize too the ways in which God has already been at work in us.

The following comments and questions are designed to prompt discussion regarding the fourth petition.

- Begin with the opening prayer.
- Before watching the video, have a volunteer read Luke 12:24–27.
- Think together of some of the downsides of work, the things that make work unpleasant. Have a volunteer in your group jot some of these things down.
- Brainstorm together about some of the positive things about work, things that make work enjoyable. Write these things down.
- Name some things that you have learned from work throughout your life.
- View the video.
- In light of the video, discuss some of the issues that were identified earlier in the session.

Some questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- Work can be demanding, full of duties and responsibilities. Yet work can be a blessing too; there is no better feeling than a job well done. How is life like work in both its demands and its blessings?
- When we pray this petition, we ask that our hearts be softened so we can see more of life as a gift. Name some moments when you felt life was a gift. Why are these moments of grace?
- Sometimes we don't realize we have a gift until we lose it. What advice about life as a gift would you give someone younger than you? What do you wish you had known when you were younger?
- Describe a miracle in everyday life. Does your work have anything to do with it? What is the gift that comes with it?
- Read John 6:35. What does Christ promise?
- Close with the Lord's Prayer.

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Session 7

The fifth petition: Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

In this seventh video session, we ask to be forgiven so that we might be strengthened to forgive others.

When we are forgiven, Christ Jesus strips us of guilt and accusations and opens up to us a future of freedom. We are strengthened to forgive, and Christ's forgiveness spills over into our relations with others.

The following comments and questions are designed to help prepare participants for viewing session seven.

- Begin your session as always with the opening prayer.
- Ask a volunteer to read John 8:1–11.
- Discuss and note what it feels like to not be forgiven.
- Think of a time when you held a grudge or one was held against you. Discuss how that felt.
- Define and describe what freedom means.
- View the video.
- In light of the video, discuss some of the issues that were identified earlier in the session.

Some questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- In the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–11), the people are rightfully following the law, but Jesus asks them to do something different. What is it? How does it free the woman from her past? How does it open up the future for the woman? How does it do the same for the crowd?
- Based on the video and your discussion, is there freedom in forgiveness? How? Is the response to each similar? How?
- As noted in the video, when we pray this petition to forgive others as we have been forgiven, it feels like a command: If you forgive, then you can be forgiven. Is that what it means? How is this petition a message of grace? In other words, why is it more like a gift, or a message of love, than a demand placed upon us? What does this tell us about God?
- In Luther's explanation to the fifth petition, Luther explains that God "will give us all things by grace." That is, we ask that our whole future, even our day-to-day events be shaped by God's good will. What does this mean for your future? What does it mean for those who have trouble forgiving another?
- There is one thing better than talking about God's forgiveness, and that is putting it into effect. Go around the circle, asking each individual to make the sign of the cross on their neighbor's forehead and saying these words, "In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven."
- End with the Lord's Prayer.

Opening Prayer

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will
declare your praise.
For you have no delight
in sacrifice; if I were to
give a burnt offering,
you would not be
pleased. The sacrifice
acceptable to God is a
broken spirit; a broken
and contrite heart,
O God, you will not
despise. Have mercy on
me, O God, according
to your steadfast love;
according to your
abundant mercy blot out
my transgressions. Wash
me thoroughly from my
iniquity, and cleanse me
from my sin. Amen.

(Psalm 51:15–17, 1–2 NRSV)

When You Pray...

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Session 8

Opening Prayer

O Lord, I give over to you the things in my life that overwhelm me. I ask you to fill these things with your fullness. And to fill me in the same way, that I might let go, and that you bring upon us your blessing. Amen.

(Adaptation of prayer Nestingen says at end of video.)

The sixth petition: Lead us not into temptation

In this eighth video session, we ask God to protect and keep us so that we might live in the hope of the resurrection.

One of the marks of being Christian is the experience of temptation. Living in Christ, we are exposed to the powers that also work against him. But just as we are marked with the sign of the cross, we also live with God in the hope of the resurrection, freeing us to give all that we fear and all that is unknown over to God's promises. In this we have a steady and sure confidence.

The following comments and questions are designed to help prepare participants for viewing session eight.

- Begin with the opening prayer.
- Before viewing the video, have a volunteer read Matthew 4:1–11.
- What were the temptations for Jesus in this text?
- How might these temptations overwhelm Jesus?
- What does Jesus lean on when confronted with these temptations? In other words, how does he respond to the devil?
- View the video.
- In light of the video, discuss some of the issues that were identified earlier in the session.

Some questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- In light of the video, and Matthew 4:1–11, what was a deeper temptation for Christ than food or power? Why is a loss of faith in God so devastating?
- Think about your own life. Have you ever thought of despair or unbelief as a temptation before? Why or why not?
- How can the little temptations in our lives lead to despair or unbelief? How can a traumatic life event lead to despair and unbelief?
- When Christ is tempted in Matthew 4, he does not try to depend upon himself, but turns to the steady and life-giving promise of God's Word. What are some Scripture passages that give you comfort and provide hope? Share them with the group.
- Often when we are in the depths of despair, we are in such pain that we want instant relief. But as Dr. Nestingen says, prayers are like snowflakes, piling up over time until they are able to move mountains. Have a volunteer read Matthew 1:28–29. What is God's promise to you? What might you do the next time you are tempted to despair or unbelief?
- Close with the Lord's Prayer.

When You Pray...

The Lord's Prayer with
Dr. James Nestingen

Session 9

The seventh petition: And deliver us from evil

In this seventh and final petition, we ask God to take care of us now, and until the very end.

Summing up the entire prayer, this petition is God's promise to protect us both now, and in the life beyond. Though we all have difficult times and may often find ourselves in the valley of the shadow with all its tears, we turn to the One who bore the cross before us. Christ did not allow death to have the final word. He rose from the dead and bestows on us all his promises. This promise is brought to us now, and overflows into the lavish hope of the new beginnings now and always.

The following comments and questions are designed to help prepare participants for viewing the ninth and final session.

- Begin with the opening prayer.
- Pray the Lord's Prayer slowly, conscious of each petition and its meaning for you now.
- Read Revelation 21:1–7. Often the book of Revelation is regarded as strange, foreboding, full of frightening images. Is there promise in these verses, however? In light of the study so far, what do they mean to you?
- Before a visit to another country, some people go to a local restaurant that specializes in the food of the country they are about to visit. Why do people do this?
- Now jot down a few reasons Holy Communion is special to you. What makes it so meaningful?
- View the video.
- In light of the video, discuss some of the issues that were identified earlier in the session.

Some questions that might be discussed, if not already identified:

- Can you share examples of answered prayer? What about prayers that were perhaps answered in a way other than you expected or prayed? What does that say about us? About God?
- Have a volunteer read 2 Corinthians 12:9. Can you think of an example in your own life, or someone else's life, when God turned a weakness into strength? What does this say of God's presence and love?
- Now have a volunteer read Psalm 23:5. How is Christ's power different from power as the world understands it?
- In light of the video, the Revelation text, and the question above, how can you approach the future? What are the "enemies" that you fear in the future? What will be God's final word?
- How does Holy Communion take the shape of the cross and resurrection? What does it say of the realities of our everyday experience of life and our future?
- Close with the Lord's Prayer.

Opening Prayer

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want. He
makes me lie down in
green pastures; he leads
me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right
paths for his name's
sake. Even though I walk
through the darkest
valley, I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your
staff—they comfort me.
You prepare a table
before me in the
presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head
with oil; my cup
overflows. Surely
goodness and mercy
shall follow me all the
days of my life, and I
shall dwell in the house
of the Lord my whole
life long.

(Psalm 23, NRSV)

When You Pray...

The Lord's Prayer with
Dr. James Nestingen

The Lord's Prayer from *The Small Catechism*

Reprinted from *The Contemporary Translation of The Small Catechism* by Martin Luther, edited by Timothy Wengert.

Introduction

Our Father in heaven

What is this?

Answer: With these words God wants to attract us, so that we believe he is truly our Father and we are truly his children, in order that we may ask him boldly and with complete confidence, just as loving children ask their loving father.[†]

[†]Luther added this explanation to *The Small Catechism* in 1531 when his oldest child was five years old.

The First Petition[†]

Hallowed be your name

What is this?

Answer: It is true that God's name is holy in itself, but we ask in this prayer that it may also become holy in and among us.

How does this come about?

Whenever the Word of God is taught clearly and purely and we, as God's children, also live holy lives according to it. To this end help us, dear Father in heaven! However, whoever teaches and lives otherwise than the Word of God teaches, dishonors God's name among us. Preserve us from this, heavenly Father!

Bible reading: Acts 13:13–47

[†]The word petition means "request."

The Second Petition

Your kingdom come

What is this?

Answer: In fact, God's kingdom comes on its own without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come to us.

How does this come about?

Answer: Whenever our heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that through the Holy Spirit's grace we believe God's Holy Word and live godly lives here in time and hereafter in eternity.

Bible reading: Luke 15:8–10

When You Pray...

The Lord's Prayer with
Dr. James Nestingen

The Lord's Prayer from *The Small Catechism*

The Third Petition

Your will be done, on earth as in heaven

What is this?

Answer: In fact, God's good and gracious will comes about without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come about in and among us.

How does this come about?

Answer: Whenever God breaks and hinders every evil scheme and will of the devil, the world, and our flesh that would not allow us to hallow God's name and would prevent the coming of his kingdom. And God's will comes about whenever God strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his Word and in faith until the end of our lives. This is God's gracious and good will.

Bible reading: Matthew 27:27–31

The Fourth Petition

Give us today our daily bread

What is this?

Answer: In fact, God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving.

What then does "daily bread" mean?

Answer: Everything our bodies need such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, livestock, money, property, an upright spouse, upright children, upright workers, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors and the like.

Bible reading: John 6:8–10

The Fifth Petition

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

What is this?

Answer: We ask in this prayer that our heavenly Father would not regard our sins or deny these petitions on their account, for we are worthy of nothing for which we ask, nor have we earned it. Instead we ask that God would give us all things by grace, for we sin daily and indeed earn only punishment. So, on the other hand, we, too, truly want to forgive heartily and do good gladly to those who sin against us.

Bible reading: Matthew 18:23–35

The Lord's Prayer from *The Small Catechism*

The Sixth Petition

Save us from the time of trial (lead us not into temptation)

What is this?

Answer: It is true that God tempts no one, but we ask in this prayer that God would preserve and keep us, so that the devil, the world and our flesh may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins, and that, although we may be attacked by them, we may finally prevail and gain the victory.

Bible reading Matthew 4:4–11

The Seventh Petition

And deliver us from evil

What is this?

Answer: We ask in this prayer, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven may deliver us from all kinds of evil—affecting body or soul, property or reputation—and at last, when our final hour comes, may grant us a blessed end and take us by grace from this valley of tears to himself in heaven.

Bible reading: Matthew 15:21–28

Conclusion

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

What is this?

Answer: that I should be certain that such petitions are acceptable to and heard by our Father in heaven for God himself commanded us to pray like this and has promised to hear us. “Amen, amen” means “Yes, yes, it is going to come about just like this.”

