
What is the Church?

Catechist's Guide: Unit 2

We are People who Pray



You will need to gather in the children's worksheets from the first unit (unless this has already been done or unless they are keeping them at home).

Spend a few moments seeing what the children remember from their last session with you - or from any celebration that took place.

Remind them that the first unit was about them belonging to a special family we call the People of God and that they are preparing to become full members of that family through Confirmation and Holy Communion.

The aim of this unit is to explore the different ways in which we pray, especially when we gather together as the People of God. This will be done by reflecting with the children on a number of themes:

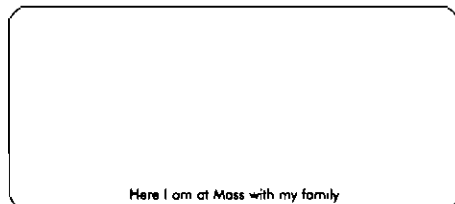
- ♦ The variety of prayers during Mass
- ♦ The special prayer of God's family - the Our Father
- ♦ The fact that the Holy Spirit guides our prayer
- ♦ The different ways we can pray when we are not in Church

In preparation for this session, you might like to look at the prayers of the Mass and to look at the suggested bidding prayers for the celebration for this unit (reprinted on the back page of this guide).

INITIATION
What is the Church?
Children's Worksheet: Unit 2
We are
People who Pray



On Sunday the People of God gather to pray



Here I am at Mass with my family

When we pray at Mass...

- We begin with the Sign of the Cross
- We tell God we are sorry for the things we have done wrong
- We say (or sing) 'Glory to God'
- We ask God for the things we need and the things that other people need
- We thank God for all the good things God has done for us, especially for giving us Jesus
- We pray a special family prayer - The Our Father

Page 1

Talk with the children about coming to Mass with their families (and get them to draw a picture), emphasising how important it is for the People of God to come together to pray.

Take them through the different kinds of prayer listed on the worksheet, perhaps reading some prayers from a missal (Mass book) to illustrate them - or asking the children what they can remember about the different prayers.

[Remember that they will be looking at the penitential rite of the Mass in Unit 3 so there is no need to go into detail here on that particular aspect]

Jesus gives us a special prayer...

One day, when Jesus was talking to his friends, one of them asked him to teach them to pray.

He told them not to use a lot of words because God already knew what they needed.

He taught them the 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.

Page 2

Explain that the disciples often saw Jesus praying and wanted to learn from him.

Look at each of the cartoon-type pictures and explore with the children the way in which the picture captures what the lines from the Our Father are saying.

Then ask them to think about ways in which they can apply the prayer to their lives:

- how and when do they tell God that they love him?
- what kind of things can they do to please God?
- what good things ('daily bread') has God provided for them [more than simply chocolate and ice cream!]
- do they make friends when they have fallen out with someone?
- what do they want God to keep them safe from?

Explain how the Our Father really sums up all other prayers.

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray...

For the Sick



For ourselves
and the things
that we need

For those in charge
of our country



For those who
have died

For all who are
suffering in
the world

Listen for prayers
like these when you
are at Mass

For our families
and people who
help us

As well as praying in Church...

We can pray at h _ _ _ and at s _ _ _ _

We can pray with our f _ _ _ _ and f _ _ _ _ _

We can pray on our own.



When we pray...



We can use prayers that we are given or our own words

We can pray out loud or in silence

We can kneel, or stand up, or sit down

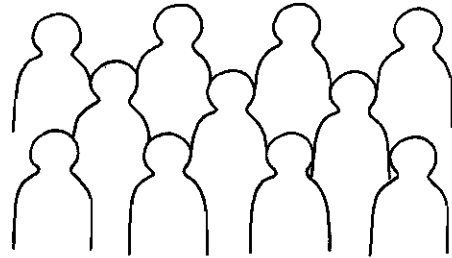
We can pray through music, movement, gestures

We can draw or paint a picture to show what we are praying about

We can pray to God every day about everything

At home...

Spend a little bit of time each day thinking about one person you want to pray for. Write the person's name in one of the figures below (or colour them in to show you have prayed for someone).



Write a short prayer to say thank you to God for something or to ask God to help someone.

Remember to pray the Our Father every day.

This worksheet belongs to: _____

Page 3

Mention the Holy Spirit that they have received in Baptism and will receive fully in Confirmation. Explain how the Holy Spirit helps the Christian community to pray.

Look at the different topics for prayer given on their worksheet. Perhaps read out some bidding prayers that reflect these (cf. the suggested bidding prayers overleaf) or ask the children simply to suggest names that come to mind when they hear these words.

Talk about the fact that they can pray at other times, not just in Church, and that there are a variety of ways of praying. [The missing words are 'home', 'school', 'family' and 'friends']

Perhaps sing a hymn with actions, or let them experience a time of silent prayer.

Page 4

Ask the children to complete this page of the worksheet at home but, if time allows, take them through the ideas that it contains:

There are a lot of people that they can pray for. Simply bringing those people to mind can be a prayer.

They can make up their own prayer to thank God for something he has done for them or to ask his help for themselves or someone else.

Get the children to write their name on the worksheet and remind them to bring their worksheet back to the next session. Thank them for taking part, or tell them how much you have enjoyed working with them.

Finish the session by praying the Our Father together.

Additional Suggestions and Resources

1. Missal (or Mass Book)

This might be a useful resource for you to look at before the session, to pick out the different styles of prayer used at Mass.

2. Prayer Resources

Prepare any necessary materials for the kind of prayer experience you want to give the children (cf. last paragraph of notes for Page 3)

3. Suggested Bidding Prayers

We pray for the Church; for Pope John Paul II, our Bishop Terence, and for all who are part of God's family. *[Pause for prayer*]*

May we grow closer in love as we do God's work. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for our families. *[Pause for prayer]*

May our children grow in knowledge, may parents be generous and understanding, and may our love be strengthened day by day. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for those who are sick or suffering. *[Pause for prayer]*

May God help them, and may we offer them what we can do or give. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our world. *[Pause for prayer]*

May we use wisely and well the gifts of God's Creation, so that all may live in peace and justice. Lord, in your mercy...

Loving Father in heaven,
your Son Jesus taught us to pray,
and your Holy Spirit turns our hearts to you.
Listen to the prayers of your children
now and always.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

** The pause for prayer should be exactly that: a period of silence in which people can think about, and pray the intention.*

4. Prayer Card

You might like to show the children a copy of the prayer card which will be presented to them. This contains the Our Father on one side and a prayer of thanksgiving on the other.

5. Prayer Sponsors

If the parish has arranged for prayer sponsors for particular children, it would be appropriate to remind them of this - that people are praying for them on a regular basis.