
What is the Church?

Parent Leader's Guide: Unit 2

We are People who Pray



Main themes

- ♦ The Holy Spirit enables the Church community to pray to the Father as Jesus taught us.
- ♦ We pray to our Father, not my Father.
- ♦ As members of the Church we pray in a variety of ways during the Mass.

Link to the Mass - The Mass is Prayer

"If we gather as we ought - singing together, being silent together, responding together - we will be a community praying, and know that we are such."

(Cardinal Bernardin, *Guide to the Assembly*, page 10)

During the meeting, parents will:

- ♦ discover what the parish catechists will do with the children
- ♦ be given an outline of the celebration, and be clear about their own role
- ♦ consider suggestions for supporting their child at home
- ♦ appreciate some of the ways their child learns about prayer in school
- ♦ explore different ways of praying
- ♦ recognise the different ways in which the community prays during Mass
- ♦ understand the importance of the Our Father for the People of God
- ♦ be invited to pray together

Unit 2 – Approach A

Before the meeting begins: have the following clearly displayed -

a large candle or oil lamp

a copy of the 'Our Father' prayer card

an icon.

(if possible: some of the prayer books and other resources used in school)

You will also need:

copies of the parents' leaflets for those attending

one large copy of the Cardinal Bernardin quotation

1. Welcome the parents and make some reference to the celebration of 'Presentation', perhaps affirming the parents' involvement and inviting any comments they may have.

Distribute copies of the parent leaflet for this unit and work through the main points which the catechists will be covering with the children. You may wish to include some or all of the following points:

- ♦ the Holy Spirit enables the People of God to be a People who pray together
 - ♦ our children are taking their place within this praying community
 - ♦ prayer can take many forms: individual prayer / community prayer
formal / informal
learnt prayers / spontaneous prayer
silent 'listening' prayer
2. At this point invite the parents to remember the first prayer they ever heard or learnt and to share this with one other person. After a few moments invite them to call out these prayers and see what variety or similarity exists. (If a flip chart is available, it would be good to write these up).
What about their children? What would their first prayer experience have been?

Outline some of the ways in which children will learn about prayer in school:

Teaching about Prayer in Year 3, Salford Guidelines for Curriculum Religious Education - The children will be learning some simple versions of a small number of psalms as ways in which God's people turned to him in times of joy or trouble. They will look at the way people today pray and believe that God is acting in their lives. Some of these psalms have been put to music and the children will learn some of these songs. Children will then be invited to compose their own prayers. They will also be looking at Scripture and finding out about how it can be used in prayer and worship, making their own prayer cards, and creating a special place for the Bible. Children will be developing their ability to use gestures, signs, silence and stillness in their prayer time. They will learn and explore some traditional prayers and some prayers of the Mass.

Continue with some or all of the following points:

- ♦ all prayer leads us closer to God and to one another

- ♦ we don't need to go to a particular place or building to pray; we can pray anywhere and at any time (if possible it would be good to share a personal experience of prayer to illustrate this point)
 - ♦ when the disciples asked Jesus to pray he taught them the Our Father; this is our oldest Christian prayer, handed down from generation to generation
 - ♦ in our celebration for this unit, we will hand on to our children this central prayer of the Christian family, which we pray every time we go to Mass
 - ♦ the Eucharist (the Mass) is the greatest prayer of the Church
 - ♦ the whole of our Mass is prayer: we pray in song; in silence; in our responses
 - ♦ in the bidding prayers, the 'prayer of the faithful', we pray for the needs of the World, the Church and our local community
 - ♦ in the Eucharistic prayer we give praise and we give thanks; we pray that "all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit" (Eucharistic Prayer II)
3. Draw attention to the quotation from Cardinal Bernardin (on the parent leaflet or displayed on a large copy).

Invite the parents to reflect on this for a few moments, thinking especially of the word 'together' and times when they may have experienced this 'togetherness', sharing this with the people around them. Invite them to reflect on their feelings about prayer as adults: has their prayer changed from when they were children?

4. Details of the celebration for "We are people who pray" should now be given.
5. Invite the parents to be still for a moment and to recognise that God is present amongst us, then make the sign of the cross.

Read aloud:

"Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.

He said to them, 'When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."

Luke 11:1 - 4 (NRSV)

After a moment for silent reflection, say:

Lord teach us to pray, teach our children to pray, fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Unit 2 – Approach B

Before the meeting begins: have the following clearly displayed -

- a large candle or oil lamp
- a copy of the 'Our Father' prayer card
- an icon.

(if possible: some of the prayer books and other resources used in school)

You will also need:

the room arranged ready for group work: 5 /6 chairs around a table

1 copy per group of 'We Are People Who Pray' sheet for each group - a pencil, 2/3 glue sticks, 2/3 pairs of scissors, some coloured felts or pencils.

3 sheets of A3 paper, 5/6 copies of sheets containing prayers copies of the parents' leaflets for those attending

1. As parents arrive for the meeting, warmly welcome them and invite them to sit in groups around the prepared tables. Invite them, in their groups to look at the sheet headed 'We Are People Who Pray' and after discussion to choose what they consider to be the seven best forms of prayer. When you feel they are ready, ask each group in turn to list their answers and point out the variety in the responses. Point out that this is because there is no one form of prayer which is 'best' - prayer works in different ways at different times for different people because it is a means of drawing us to the awareness of God's presence and nearness.
2. Outline some of the ways in which children will learn about prayer in school:
Teaching about Prayer in Year 3, Salford Guidelines for Curriculum Religious Education - The children will be learning some simple versions of a small number of psalms as ways in which God's people turned to him in times of joy or trouble. They will look at the way people today pray and believe that God is acting in their lives. Some of these psalms have been put to music and the children will learn some of these songs. Children will then be invited to compose their own prayers. They will also be looking at Scripture and finding out about how it can be used in prayer and worship, making their own prayer cards, and creating a special place for the Bible. Children will be developing their ability to use gestures, signs, silence and stillness in their prayer time. They will learn and explore some traditional prayers and some prayers of the Mass.

Now invite the parents to make a prayer book for their child; this will make their child feel special and they will be able to use it together at home.

Demonstrate, step by step how to make a book from an A3 sheet:

- (i) Fold the paper concertina style into four folds.
- (ii) Fold the paper in the middle, length ways and cut across. This produces two 'zig-zag' books.

Once the books are made, each parent can choose the prayers and pictures they most like from Prayer Sheets 2 & 3, cut them out and stick them into the book. Then they can decorate these and put a title on the front cover, perhaps:

A Prayer Book for (child's name).

3. Suggest that parents use the book with their child before going to sleep each night and assure them that they will really appreciate their efforts. Move on to some or all of the following points:

- ♦ all prayer leads us closer to God and to one another
- ♦ we don't need to go to a particular place or building to pray; we can pray anywhere and at any time (if possible it would be good to share a personal experience of prayer to illustrate this point)
- ♦ when the disciples asked Jesus to pray he taught them the Our Father; this is our oldest Christian prayer, handed down from generation to generation
- ♦ in our celebration for this unit, we will hand on to our children this central prayer of the Christian family, which we pray every time we go to Mass
- ♦ the Eucharist (the Mass) is the greatest prayer of the Church
- ♦ the whole of our Mass is prayer: we pray in song; in silence; in our responses
- ♦ in the bidding prayers, the 'prayer of the faithful', we pray for the needs of the World, the Church and our local community
- ♦ in the Eucharistic prayer we give praise and we give thanks; we pray that "all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit" (Eucharistic Prayer II)

4. Details of the celebration for "We are people who pray" should now be given and the copies of the parent leaflet for this unit.

5. Invite the parents to be still for a moment, then read aloud the quotation from Cardinal Bernardin's Letter:

Invite all to pray together the Our Father.

We Are People Who Pray

Prayer is a means of drawing us to the awareness of God's presence and nearness.

In groups, discuss which of the following you would consider to be prayer:

Saying the Our Father, Hail Mary etc.

Taking part in the Mass

Listening to beautiful music

Talking with your child

Saying thank you to God at the end of the day

Silence

Reflecting honestly on your day

Recognising the good in other people during the day

Being struck by the beauty of nature

Singing in church

Making up a prayer

Reciting a verse from the Bible

Sharing the day with your family

Finding out about your child's day and giving thanks to God together

Reading from a book of prayer

Anything else?

Choose the seven which the group considers to be the 'best' prayer forms.

Thank you God, for friends.

Thank you for fun and games and parties.

Thank you for my best friend,

Help me to be a good friend and to keep my promises.

Help me to be friends, even with those I don't much like,

Because you love us all.

May the Lord bless you with peace,

Close your eyes in restful sleep,

And wake you with joy in the morning.

Heavenly Father, bless those who starve while we have plenty to eat;

Those who are homeless while we lie safely in bed;

Those who have no clothes while we throw clothes away.

Help us to care for those less fortunate than ourselves

And to do all we can to help them.

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.

Bless all those I shall meet today

Help us to help each other.

Creator God, we praise you for the wonderful things which you have given to us:
For the beautiful sun,
For the rain which makes things grow,
For the woods and the fields,
For the sea and the sky,
For the flowers and the birds,
And for all your gifts to us.
Everything around us rejoices.
Enable us also to rejoice and give us thankful hearts.

Thank you God for trusting us.
We can all do something to make the world
a better place.
Help us to trust you, and to use whatever you've
given us to make others happy.

I can say it to my family,
I can say it to my friends,
I can say it at school - so I'll say it to you:
Good morning, God, you're great.

May the love of God our Creator
Be in all our homes today.
May the love of the Lord Jesus
Keep our hearts and minds always.
May his loving Holy Spirit
Guide and bless the ones I love:
Parents, grand-parents, brothers, sisters,
Keep them safely in his love.

When I know how much you love me, Jesus,
And that you're always with me,
I can talk to you about being afraid.
You understand, you won't laugh at me.
Give me courage, make me brave,
Not just tonight - but tomorrow as well.

We thank you loving God, that when we come to say sorry, you are always ready to forgive.
Please help us to be like you.
When people say sorry to us may we forgive them straight away,
Ready at once to be friends again.

Bless, Lord Jesus, my parents and all who take care of me.
Make me loving to them, polite and obedient,
Helpful and kind.

Loving God, please guide the leaders of many different countries, at the meetings
where they try, by working together, to make the world a better and safer place.
Help them to want peace rather than power, and show them how they can share the
food in the world so that no one need be hungry.

Almighty Father,
help us to know how much you love us,
so that we may never be afraid
to come home to you
when we have done wrong.

For shelves full of food,
 thank you Lord,
For the colour of chocolate, carrots and cherries,
 thank you Lord.
For the feel of wood, bedclothes and cats' fur,
 thank you Lord.
For sunshine and snowflakes,
roses and oak trees,
the songs of the birds
and the waves of the sea,
 thank you Lord.

Unit 2 – Approach C

*Before the meeting begins: have the following clearly displayed -
a large candle or oil lamp
a copy of the 'Our Father' prayer card
an icon.*

*(if possible: some of the prayer books and other
resources used in school)*

*You will also need: copies of the parents' leaflets for those attending
one large copy of the Cardinal Bernardin quotation
CD or tape of Taize, Veni Sancte Spiritus or similar
copies of prayer images*

1. As people arrive for the meeting, have a Taize chant playing. Introduce the main themes and invite people to form small groups of 4/5. Give out copies of the prayer images and ask them to share with one another the ones they like and dislike. Then, as a group, to try to choose the one image which they feel speaks most to them of 'prayer'.

After sharing the groups' findings, outline the school's Religious Education programme for prayer for the children of Year 3.

The children will be learning some simple versions of a small number of psalms as ways in which God's people turned to him in times of joy or trouble. They will look at the way people today pray and believe that God is acting in their lives. Some of these psalms have been put to music and the children will learn some of these songs. Children will then be invited to compose their own prayers. They will also be looking at Scripture and finding out about how it can be used in prayer and worship, making their own prayer cards, and creating a special place for the Bible. Children will be developing their ability to use gestures, signs, silence and stillness in their prayer time. They will learn and explore some traditional prayers and some prayers of the Mass.

All this will help them to begin to see that there are many forms of prayer as they take their place in the Church as people who pray.

2. Continue with some or all of the following points:

- ♦ all prayer leads us closer to God and to one another
- ♦ we don't need to go to a particular place or building to pray; we can pray anywhere and at any time (if possible it would be good to share a personal experience of prayer to illustrate this point)
- ♦ when the disciples asked Jesus to pray he taught them the Our Father; this is our oldest Christian prayer, handed down from generation to generation
- ♦ in our celebration for this unit, we will hand on to our children this central prayer of the Christian family, which we pray every time we go to Mass
- ♦ the Eucharist (the Mass) is the greatest prayer of the Church

3. Now display the quotation from Cardinal Bernardin's letter:

Try to share a memory of a time when you have experienced a sense of 'being together' at Mass; this may well have been a Mass for a special occasion, perhaps connected with school, or a family occasion, perhaps even a funeral.

Invite the parents to think of any particular times when they have experienced that sense of being 'a community praying' and to share this with one other person. Lead a discussion centred on the following questions:

- ♦ What can we do, as a parish community, to help our children experience this sense of being 'a community praying' through our Sunday Masses?
- ♦ What difficulties do we need to work through?

The main purpose of this part of the meeting is to raise the questions, rather than come up with answers, though if practical suggestions are made it would be good to try to find ways of taking them further.

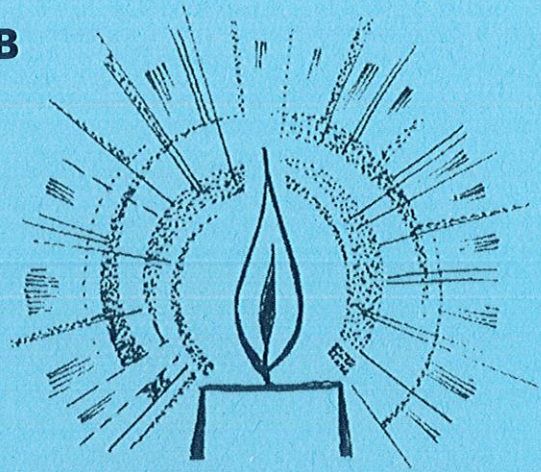
4. Distribute copies of the parent leaflet and encourage the parents to try some of the suggestions for further support at home. Give details of the celebration for this unit.
5. Play the Taize chant used at the beginning of the meeting again, inviting everyone to be still and aware of God's presence.

Fade the music and read aloud Matthew 6: 5 - 8, then with the words, "Pray then in this way" (beginning of verse 9) invite all to join in praying together, 'Our Father ...'

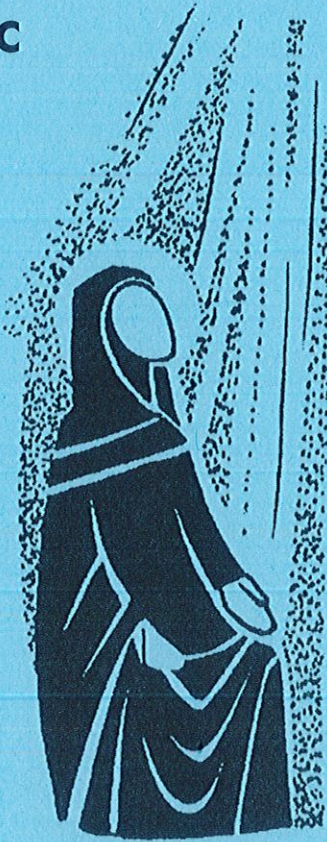
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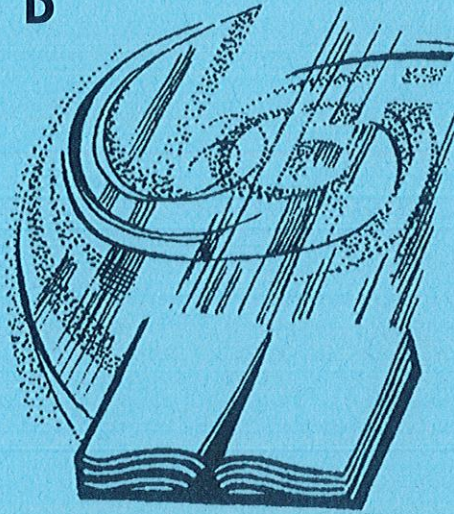
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C



D



E



F



G



What is the Church?

Parent Leaflet: Unit 2

We are People who Pray



Main Themes

The children, with their catechists, are thinking about the fact that the People of God gather each Sunday to pray.

They are being asked to think about the different kinds of prayer that we use in Church:

- ♦ Prayers of sorrow
- ♦ Prayers of petition
- ♦ Prayers of praise and thanksgiving

They are being asked to reflect on the special prayer of the Church family - the Our Father.

They are considering some of the things that the Holy Spirit prompts us to pray for.

They are also being asked to think about other places and different ways in which they can pray when they are not in Church.

From Your Child's Worksheet

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

What You Can Do To Help Your Child

Recognise and make use of the opportunities for prayer in your family life:

Talking with your child

Saying thank you to God at the end of the day

Recognising the good in others during the day

Making up a prayer

Come to Mass each Sunday so that your child has the opportunity to recognise the variety of ways in which we pray during Mass.

Encourage your child to keep, value and use the Prayer Card presented to them.

Pray the Our Father together regularly:

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.

Help your child to complete their worksheet - especially the last page, where you can help them to think of people to pray for and to write their own prayer.

Please keep your child's worksheet safe, so that they can bring it back to the next meeting with their catechist.

The Mass is Prayer

We gather as the People who Pray

"If we gather as we ought - singing together, being silent together, responding together - we will be a community praying, and know that we are such."

(Cardinal Bernardin, *Guide to the Assembly*, page 10)

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

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

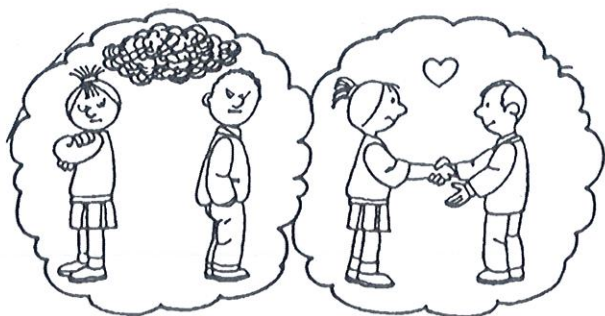


Our Father
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name



Give us this day
our daily bread,

thy kingdom come:
thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.



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.

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

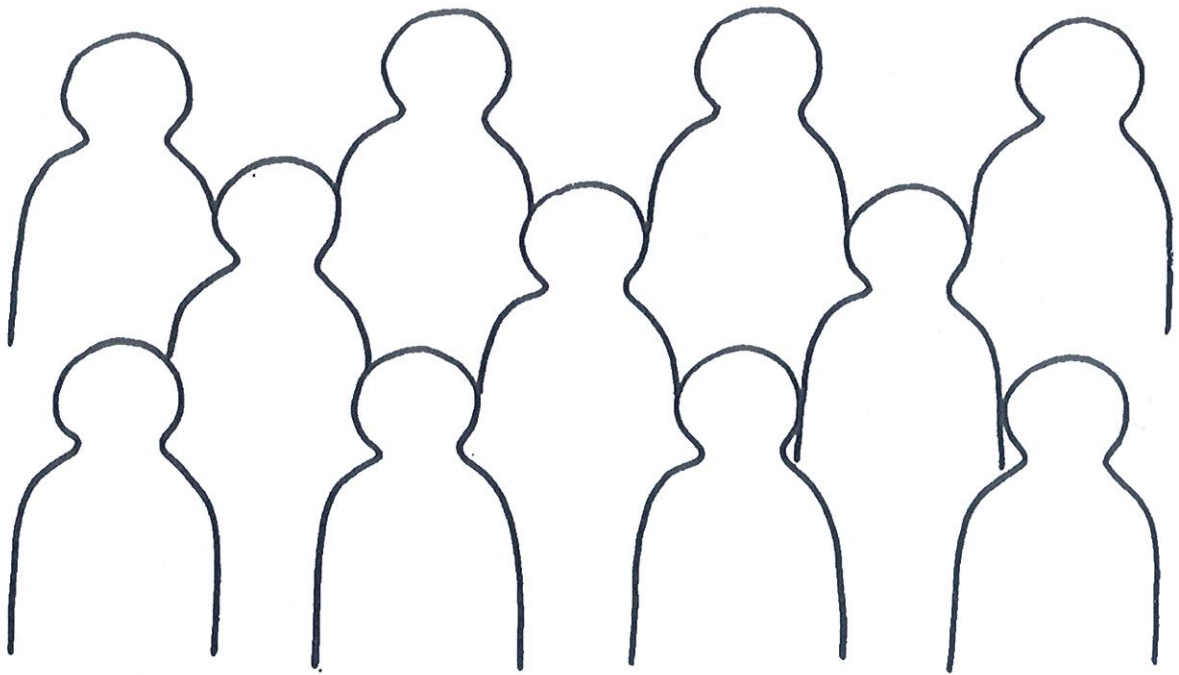
We can pray through music, movement, gestures

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: _____

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.

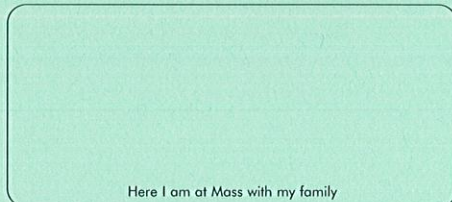
The aim of this unit is to explore the different ways in which we pray, especially when we gather together as the People of God. This will be done by reflecting with the children on a number of themes:

- ♦ 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).



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

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 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]

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

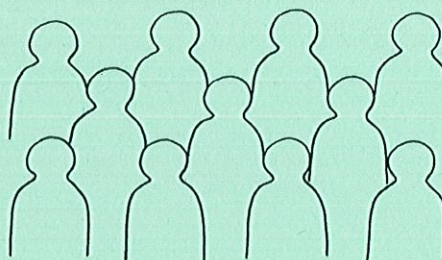
We can pray through music, movement, gestures

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.

What is the Church?

Celebration Guide: Unit 2

We are People who Pray

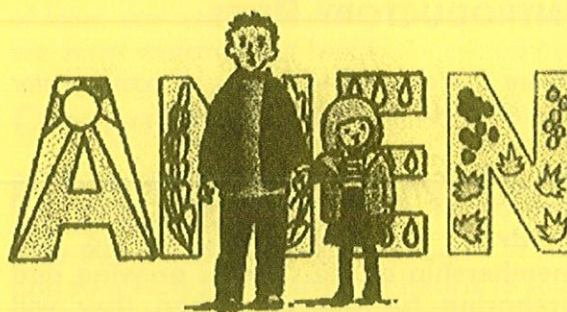
The children are looking at ways of praying in the Church. They will look especially at the Mass, the prayer of all God's people. One of the high points of the Mass is when we all pray together in the words Jesus taught us. We call God "our Father" (not "my" Father) because we are all "the Body of Christ" - the Church.

This celebration is an invitation to the children to take their place in the community that prays. They will be asked a set of questions, and presented with a decorated card with the words of the Our Father, and a prayer which echoes the themes of the great Eucharistic Prayers.

1. The Church is the Body of Christ, and is revealed as such most clearly when it celebrates the Eucharist - the Mass. Then we "receive what we are: the Body of Christ." This is where our children are travelling. The Mass is the greatest prayer of the Church, in which Jesus offers himself to the Father. In the Mass, it is Jesus who prays, in his body, the Church. He gave us a prayer, the Our Father, which is the model of all our praying together.

2. Our children are learning what it is to be part of the Church: they are learning what it is to be "together" with everyone who makes up the Body of Christ. So our children learn more and more how to take part in the praying of the Church.

3. This celebration is a sort of "commissioning" of the children to take their place in the middle of the praying community. It can take place during Mass (which obviously



emphasises this) or at a celebration outside Mass, sometime in October or early November (but well before Advent). If celebrated during Mass, the prayers and readings are those of the Sunday. Where the normal practice is for a separate Liturgy of the Word with Children, it would be appropriate for them to remain with the assembly on this occasion.

4. It is most desirable to involve "prayer-partners" or "prayer-sponsors" in this Liturgy.

5. It is recommended that all the details of this Rite be thoroughly prepared with parents and children beforehand.

Readers, commentators and other ministers should be selected on the basis of liturgical competence. Some younger children are able to read the Scriptures well, but the witness of adults ministering with care and reverence is often more effective in giving good example, and enabling the word of God to be heard.

6. If the celebration takes place during Mass, the norms regarding musical priorities remain the same. The Gospel Acclamation, "Holy, holy", Mystery of Faith and Great Amen should be sung. Other music should be chosen for its appropriateness to the occasion. Where possible the Responsorial Psalm should be sung, but never replaced by a non-Scriptural hymn.

7. If the Celebration takes place outside Mass, musical priority should be given to the Gospel Acclamation and Responsorial Psalm, and other music chosen for its appropriateness to the occasion and the part of the Rite.

CELEBRATING AS PEOPLE WHO PRAY

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Before the celebration begins, a commentator may introduce it:

We have gathered together again as the Church of God. We rejoice that our children are journeying on to full membership of the Church, growing and preparing for the day when they will stand with us as full members.

We are a community that prays together, and in this celebration we come together to pray, as we do each week, full of joy in the Holy Spirit.

So let us start our celebration as we stand to sing together

The Opening Hymn is sung. The priest and ministers enter in the usual way. It would be suitable for the Book of the Gospels, or another Book of the Word to be carried in procession. When the hymn is over, the priest says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All reply: Amen.

The priest greets the congregation in these or similar words:

My dear children, parents, and all members of God's Family here at (name of Church). I welcome you with great joy. May the Lord, who calls us together to pray, be ever with you.

All reply: And also with you.

Priest:

We come together today as God's Church, filled with the Holy Spirit.

All reply: We come together to pray.

Priest:

We come together today as God's Church to listen to His Word.

All reply: We come together to pray.

Priest:

We come together today as God's Church to celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ.

All reply: We come together to pray.

Priest:

We take our place here as members of God's family, the Church, together with all his people in heaven and here on earth. Let us join together then in our great song of praise:

The "Glory to God in the highest" follows immediately.

The Opening Prayer is of the occurring Sunday.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Readings are taken from the occurring Sunday.

RITE OF COMMISSIONING THE CHILDREN TO PRAY

After the Homily, the priest says:

My dear children, day by day brings you into fuller membership of the Church. I invite you now to come forward and celebrate your place in God's family of prayer.

The children come forward and stand around the sanctuary. They may be accompanied by their prayer partners. The rest of the Assembly remains standing.

Presider: (to the children)

As members of the Church, we praise God's greatness. Will you remember to praise God when you pray?

Children:

Yes, I will.

Presider: (to the children)

As members of the Church, we are thankful for God's love. Will you remember to thank God when you pray?

Children:

Yes, I will.

Presider: (to the children)

As members of the Church, we ask God for the things we need. Will you ask God for the things you need when you pray?

Children:

Yes, I will.

Priest: (holding up the prayer card)

You have promised to be praying members of the Church. This card has the Our Father and a special prayer of Thanksgiving. Take these prayers and make them yours, as members of God's family of prayer.

The children receive the prayer card from the priest and remain on the sanctuary. This may be accompanied by a suitable hymn.

Priest (to the prayer partners - where appropriate)
Are you prepared to continue to support these children by your prayers?

Prayer Partners:
Yes, I am.

Priest: (to the wider community)

My dear friends, the children have promised to pray with us in the family of the Church. We rejoice in that promise. My dear children, return now to your families and friends, so that together as God's holy people we can make our prayers.

*The children return to their places for the Prayer of the Faithful. If the celebration is **during Mass**, it continues as normal with the Presentation of the Gifts.*

*If the celebration is **outside Mass**, the Prayer of the Faithful concludes with the Our Father, followed by the Concluding Rites.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER
My dear children and friends; we have brought our gifts to the altar, and now we praise God our Father; we give thanks that Jesus gave his life for us; we pray together in the power of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OUR FATHER
Jesus was sent by the Father, so that we could know the Father. He taught his disciples to pray together, and he has taught us. So now let us pray in the words he gave us: Our Father...

HOLY COMMUNION

The children may be invited to come forward in the Communion Procession to receive a form of blessing. It would be suitable to use the gesture of laying on of hand(s), with a phrase such as "May God, who loves you, care for you now and always. Amen." Eucharistic ministers can also

use this prayer. (The Trinitarian form of blessing and the sign of the cross, which occur at the end of Mass, and which Eucharistic Ministers cannot use, is not recommended here.)

CONCLUDING RITES

*[Concluding Prayer (only for use **outside Mass**)*

**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.
Amen.]**

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Priest:

The Lord be with you.

All:

And also with you.

The priest stretches his arms over the people and says:

**God our Father,
complete the work you have begun
and keep the hearts of your people
full of love.**

**Make them ready to live the Gospel
and eager to do your will.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

All:

Amen.

Priest:

**May Almighty God bless you, the Father, +
and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

All:

Amen.

Priest:

**Children, each day you are moving
forward on your journey. All of us here
now ask you to be children of prayer, and
prepare well for the rest of this year. Our
love goes with you.**

**Let us go in peace, to love and serve the
Lord.**

All:

Thanks be to God.

The Final Hymn is sung.

IDEAS FOR THE CELEBRATION

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Reader:

**We pray for the Church; for Pope Francis, 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...**

Each of us will have our own special prayers to make. In silence we offer them to God our Father.

Priest:

**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.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR MUSIC

Hymns

Gather us in (Here in this Place)
City of God
Praise to the Lord the Almighty
Father, we come in prayer
Lord for tomorrow and its needs
Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
Come, praise the Lord, the Almighty
Father, we adore you
Let all that is within me
Majesty, worship his majesty
All creatures of our God and king
We gather together as brothers and sisters

Gloria

Gloria, gloria (Mike Anderson)
Gloria (George Salazar)

Psalms

Listen to my Prayer (Christopher Walker)
Come and Bless the Lord (Christopher Walker)
O the Word of my Lord (Damien Lundy)

Gospel Acclamation

'Celtic' Alleluia
Seek ye first (refrain)
Alleluia, give thanks (refrain)

Taize Chants

O Lord hear my Prayer
Confitemini Domino

Instrumental Music: the organ or solo melody instrument or a music group can be very effectively used as an alternative to a song at moments like the Procession of Gifts or the distribution of Prayer Cards.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READINGS (OUTSIDE MASS)

Note: the Sunday readings may always be used.

1st Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Gospel: Matthew 6:7-15

A SUGGESTED BULLETIN INSERT

Our children (in Year 3) continue their preparation journey. The next celebration is "A People who Pray" on

One of the most important things we do is pray together (as well as praying alone). Every Sunday, we come together as the Church to pray the Mass. This phrase, "pray the Mass", might sound rather old-fashioned, but it's what we should do - rather than "hear" or "listen" or "watch". The children are looking at ways of praying, and the prayers that we use during Sunday Mass.

It is a good opportunity for us to think about our praying - and the example of our praying. Will the children see us all praying with the priest - not out loud, but silently in our hearts?

During Mass there are many "types" of prayer: look out for PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, PETITION, INTERCESSION. As the family of God, the Mass is our prayer.