

## LORD'S PRAYER

Entitled by early Christians, the Lord's Prayer is the "prayer which Jesus entrusted to his disciples and to the Church (Matthew 6:9-13). This fundamental Christian prayer is also called the Our Father, which are its first words." Catechism of the Catholic Church (# 2759 and 2761).

### Prayer Origins:

Versions of the Lord's Prayer appear in two gospels: Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4; both consist of petitions for God's glorification as well as for His divine guidance and help. Luke's prayer includes five petitions. However, Matthew's version of seven petitions is the traditional prayer recited today in the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Rosary and other Catholic devotions.

As in the early Church, the Lord's Prayer is now concluded with a doxology or liturgical expression of praise to God, such as: "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen."

### Prayer Ending:

Amen expresses approval of the prayer by the faithful. It is a Hebrew word derived from the same root as the word "believe" and means "truly, it is so, so be it, or let it be done."

Discussion Question: We pray, "thy will be done." What do you think is God's will for the world we live in today? How can we determine what God wants of us?

### References:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Christian Prayer, Second Edition, United States Catholic Conference, Inc, (1997).

New American Bible, Catholic Bible Press, Division of Thomas Nelson Publishers (1987).  
HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. (1995).

Photos: Sean Sprague

## NICENE CREED

The Nicene Creed “is the profession of faith, common to churches in the East and West, which came from the first two ecumenical councils (Nicaea and Constantinople: 325 and 381 AD).” Catechism of the Catholic Church (#195, 196).

### Prayer Origins:

The Nicene Creed we recite at Mass is the profession of faith composed in the early Church by bishops at the Council of Nicaea and later at the Council of Constantinople. This creed was designed to establish and ensure unity in fundamental beliefs between and among Western (Roman rite) churches and Eastern churches: Byzantine, Alexandrian or Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Maronite and Chaldean rites.

The word creed comes from the Latin Credo, meaning “I believe.” Although based upon the preexisting Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed is more explicit and detailed. The Apostles’ Creed, however, is an essential part of the baptismal liturgy in Western churches and may be substituted in Masses for children.

### Prayer Ending:

Amen expresses approval of the prayer by the faithful. It is a Hebrew word derived from the same root as the word “believe” and means “truly, it is so, so be it, or let it be done.”

Discussion Question: We say we believe in the “holy Catholic Church.” What does the word catholic mean when spelled with a small “c” ?

### References:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Profession of Faith, Second Edition, United States Catholic Conference, Inc., (1997).  
New American Bible, Catholic Bible Press, Division of Thomas Nelson Publishers (1987).  
HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. (1995).  
The Nicene Creed: [www.creeds.net/ancient/apostles.htm](http://www.creeds.net/ancient/apostles.htm)

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## ACT OF CONTRITION

Contrition is “sorrow of the soul and hatred for the sin committed, together with a resolution not to sin again.” Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1451).

### Prayer Origins:

An Act of Contrition can be expressed spontaneously in our own words or it can be a formal prayer committed to memory. In any case, we express sorrow for the sins we have committed and confessed, and ask for God’s mercy, forgiveness and grace to avoid sin. The Act of Contrition we recite at the beginning the Mass, as presented on this poster, is part of the Penitential Rite. Other forms of this prayer are part of the sacrament of Penance, also referred to as the sacrament of Confession, Conversion, Forgiveness or Reconciliation.

### Prayer Ending:

Amen expresses approval of the prayer by the faithful. It is a Hebrew word derived from the same root as the word “believe” and means “truly, it is so, so be it, or let it be done.”

Discussion Question: We ask for forgiveness of our sins as an individual person. Are there times when whole communities or even countries need to ask for God’s pardon? When?

### References:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, Second Edition, United States Catholic Conference, Inc., (1997).  
New American Bible, Catholic Bible Press, Division of Thomas Nelson Publishers (1987).  
HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. (1995).

Photos: Sean Sprague

## HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is “the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.” Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1382).

### Prayer Origins:

The Eucharistic Liturgy or Mass is the most solemn form of Christian worship. It culminates in Holy Communion, the sacrament Jesus Christ instituted during the Last Supper. At this Passover meal on the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus broke bread and giving it to his disciples said: “This is my body to be given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” With the wine he said: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood which will be shed for you.” (Luke 22:7-20; cf. Matthew 26:17- 29; Mark 14:12-25; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Priests consecrate the bread and wine at Mass, changing their substances to the Body and Blood of Christ. According to the Church doctrine called the Real Presence, Jesus Christ is truly present in the Holy Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine. Holy Communion also can be received apart from the Mass in circumstances such as illness. The priest, as shown on this poster, or Eucharistic minister offers the consecrated communion host, saying: “The Body of Christ”; and if communion is received in both species: “The Blood of Christ.” Communicants reply: “Amen.”

### Prayer Ending:

Amen expresses approval of the prayer by the faithful. It is a Hebrew word derived from the same root as the word “believe” and means “truly, it is so, so be it, or let it be done.”

Discussion Question: In the Eucharist, Jesus sacrifices his life for all people so that “sins may be forgiven.” What does this mean in a world where not everyone is Catholic or Christian.?

### References:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Second Edition, United States Catholic Conference, Inc., (1997).  
New American Bible, Catholic Bible Press, Division of Thomas Nelson Publishers (1987).  
HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. (1995).

Photo: Sean Sprague