INTRODUCTION

This course is designed to provide first and second grade learners with a first look at the Lord's Prayer as reflected in the writings of Martin Luther in the Small Catechism. Each session focuses on the Introduction or Doxology and one or more petitions.

First and second graders are concrete thinkers. Use images that are simple and concrete and stories that are part of their everyday experiences to help them understand faith concepts. For example, to teach the idea of forgiveness, it would be good to use examples of everyday situations: Forgiving is when . . .

Reading abilities will vary greatly. In fact, many first graders will not be able to read. Get to know your learners' abilities and tailor activities to those abilities.

Your class environment is very important in creating a positive, fun, and inviting atmosphere for learning. Decorate the walls and bulletin boards. Create a warm and friendly place.

The ideal class area has tables and chairs for group seat activities and a larger area for games and other physical or creative activities. An informal seating area is also helpful.

Each session includes four basic parts:
- Learning Focus: the main teaching point for the session;
- Background: insight and direction about the session's content, the learners' developmental readiness to learn, and room setup;
- Heart of the Learning: the learning core, including stories, games, puzzles, projects, catechism connection, and prayer time;
- Response Activities: designed to help learners apply the session content to their daily lives and respond.

Prepare carefully. Read the materials completely and select the activities that will fit your time and space and learners. Not all need to be done during one class time; it's better to teach part of a lesson fully and in a relaxed manner than to rush through everything.

Pray. Ask for wisdom and guidance. Then smile and enjoy!

SESSION 1
LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

LEARNING FOCUS

The learners discover that praying means talking to God as a child talks to a loving parent.

BACKGROUND

The Lord's Prayer was given by Jesus as a response to the disciples' request: "Lord, teach us to pray." They had been observing Jesus and knew that his ministry was supported by the time he spent in prayer. By looking at the parts of the Lord's Prayer, children will discover they can pray to God just as Jesus did.

This session begins by sharing the idea that we are children in God's family and that when we pray
we are talking to God just as we would speak to our fathers and mothers. It continues with activities and learning experiences that give understanding to the first three petitions (requests) as found in the Lord’s Prayer.

It will help to have tables and chairs for seat activities and a space for games and physical movement. Carpet squares or a small rug can become a comfortable storytelling or worship area.

First and second graders are concrete thinkers. They will have specific images of “God” and think of “heaven” and “kingdom” as real places. Use words carefully when explaining these concepts. For instance, stress that God is like a caring father or mother, or heaven is like a beautiful city where God lives.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

Changes and Fears

Preparation: Cut 1” x 6” strips of construction paper. Have available a Bible, pencils or markers, tape or glue, and The Lord’s Prayer Learner Resources (LR).

- Give each child as many strips of paper as there are people in the class, including you. Have them print their names on all their strips. Exchange strips so each child has one from each person.
- Loop and tape the strips to form chains.
- Distribute the learner resource books. Read or tell the story of Joshua (LR, pages 2 and 3). Invite the children to share ideas regarding what Joshua and his mother might pray. Give the children time to write their ideas in the space.

My Family

- Say, “Praying to God is like talking to a parent.” As children draw pictures of their families (LR, page 4), ask about their families.
- Look at the prayer chains. Say, “See how our names are linked together? Just as we each have a family, we are also part of God’s family.”

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray


Beginning

- Ask the children to color the puzzle (LR, page 5). Say, “What words remind us that we are part of God’s family? (Our Father.) You know, anyone—all over the world—who believes in God is part of God’s family!” Talk about places the children have lived or visited or know about.

The First, Second, and Third Petitions

- Read the First Petition and the words that follow (LR, page 6). Work together to circle those actions that will keep God’s name holy.
- Read together or tell the words of the Second Petition (LR, page 7). Share the thoughts in the paragraphs next to it. Talk about wonderful things in God’s kingdom. Then, while children are drawing, comment positively on their work.
- Read aloud the paragraphs and the Third Petition (LR, page 8). Let the children complete the maze.

Prayer Time

- Gather in a circle. Ask children to link arms just like their names are linked in the prayer chain made in “Changes and Fears.” Use the chain and, by name, ask God to bless each child and the entire family of God.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Family of God

Preparation: Collect old magazines and travel brochures. Have available a piece of poster board or a large world map, scissors, and glue.

- Tear or cut pictures from magazines or travel brochures that show the many faces of the people who are part of God’s family.
- Glue the pictures to the poster board or on the map as a collage. Print an appropriate title and place it on display in your class area.

Finger Prayers

Preparation: Print these words on a large sheet of newsprint: praise, thank, confess, ask, give. Have available construction paper, pencils, crayons or markers, scissors, and paint-stirring sticks.
• Ask the children to trace one hand on a sheet of construction paper and cut out the tracing carefully.
• Talk about each of the words you have printed on the paper. Explain that each word reminds us of a kind of prayer. Say, “In our prayers, we can praise God for being a great and wonderful God. We can thank God for the many blessings we have. We can tell God (confess) when we have done something wrong. We can ask God for things we or other people need, like Joshua did when he prayed for his aunt and uncle. And we can give God the things we are afraid of or that worry us.”
• Show the children how to print one of these words on each finger of their construction paper hands as a reminder of the many different ways they can talk to God in their prayers.
• Glue each prayer hand to a paint-stirring stick.

Memory Game

Preparation: Print the words to the Lord’s Prayer on 5” x 7” index cards in this way: Card 1, Introduction; Card 2, First Petition; Card 3, Second Petition; Card 4, Third Petition; Card 5, Fourth Petition; Card 6, Fifth Petition; Card 7, Sixth Petition; Card 8, Seventh Petition; Card 9, Doxology. Make several sets. Cut construction paper into 6” x 9” pieces, one color for each set of cards. Have crayons or markers and glue available.

• Divide your learners into groups so each group has one set of cards and nine 6” x 9” construction paper sheets of one color. If possible, the groups should have no more than four children.
• Ask the children to glue each of their cards to a construction paper background to make a complete set of nine cards. Have them decorate the back of each game piece using markers or crayons.
• Stack and shuffle each set. When you say “Go,” invite each group to place its cards in the correct order, using page 4 (LR) to help if necessary. Encourage children to cooperate with one another to see how quickly they can finish.
• Keep the cards available for the children to use in upcoming sessions.

SESSION 2

OUR DAILY BREAD

LEARNING FOCUS

The learners will learn how God provides everything we need for our daily lives and give thanks.

BACKGROUND

In the Fourth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer we pray for daily bread. However, daily bread is much more than food. Jesus wants us to remember that all that we have comes from God. Our blessings are gifts for which we should be truly thankful.

The session gives the learners an opportunity to appreciate the many gifts they have received from God. The activities help the learners focus on expressing their own thanks, and seeing how prayer can be used in many situations. It concludes with a review of the petitions they have studied to this point.

If you wish to bake muffins together in “Jenny and the Cows,” make arrangements to use the kitchen for part of your class time.

Your learners are beginning to share and are learning how to give and take. They may, however, be confused by the fairness and justice issue of God providing things for people who are mean, while some children are poor and hungry. Help them realize that God does care for everyone and often wants us to become the answers to prayers. That is why many churches have places or ways to help feed, clothe, and assist people in need.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

Jenny and the Cows

Preparation: Make your favorite muffin mix batter. Bring muffin tins, paper baking cups, and spatulas if needed. Have a Bible, pencils, markers or crayons, and The Lord’s Prayer Learner Resources (LR) available.
• Invite the children to place the paper baking cups in the muffin pans. Pour the muffin mix into the pans and bake according to the directions.
• Share the story (LR, page 9) as you wait for the muffins to bake. Read aloud the Fourth Petition (found on LR page 10). Ask, “What do you think ‘daily bread’ means?” Let the discussion remain open-ended.
• Serve the muffins only to those with blonde hair, or only boys, or only those with freckles. Ask the rest of the children how they feel. (It doesn’t feel good to be left out.) Then give everyone a muffin. Eat and enjoy!
• Say, “God doesn’t leave anyone out! God gives good things to everyone!”

Daily Bread

• Turn to page 10 in the LR and ask the children to circle the things we need for our daily life. Share that God is not like Santa Claus. God doesn’t always bring us the most expensive toys or biggest houses or fancy clothes. God wants us to be thankful for the sun and rain and fields of vegetables and factories that make clothes and houses, and God wants us to share with others who may not have as much as we do.

My Prayer

• Turn to page 11 (LR). Have children complete the activity as instructed.
• To remind the children that praying is like talking to our fathers or mothers, ask a few review questions. “Why do we call God ‘Our Father? Who is in God’s family? Can we talk to God about anything?”

God Hears Our Prayers

• Read the opening paragraphs on page 12 and work together to complete the activity.
• Read Psalm 118:29. Ask if the words sound familiar to anyone. Some people use this verse as a table grace to remind them that all good gifts come from God. Say the verse several times, having the children echo you, one phrase at a time.
• Gather in a circle. Have the children say aloud the verse they’ve just learned and then end by saying “thank you” as they learned on page 11 (LR).

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Prayer Bags

Preparation: Purchase paper lunch bags. Collect old magazines. Have construction paper, markers or crayons, scissors, and glue available.

• Give each child a lunch bag. Ask the children to decorate their bags with drawings of things God has given them. They may print “My Prayer Bag” on the side of the bag.
• Have the children look through the magazines and cut out pictures of things for which they are thankful.
• Have them glue their pictures to pieces of construction paper and put them in their prayer bags.
• Invite the children to take their prayer bags home and use them to say prayers at mealtimes by drawing one picture out of the bag before each meal and saying a prayer of thanks for that item.

Thank-You Game

Preparation: Have a soft rubber ball or a ball of yarn ready for this game.

• Explain the rules of the game carefully. Say, “We are going to see how many things we can think of to say thank you to God. We will begin with the letter A and see if we can go all the way to the letter Z. Each time we throw the ball to someone, we will say together ‘Thank you God for ______.’ The person catching the ball will fill in the blank with something that begins with the next letter in the alphabet.”
• Stand in a circle and practice the game a few times.
• Explain, “If you can’t think of something when you catch the ball, say ‘Pass’ and someone else in the circle can help you by yelling out an answer.” The game is not supposed to be competitive, but seeks to help the children work together cooperatively.
• Continue playing until you reach the letter Z!

More Fun!

Preparation: Talk to your pastor about the children baking bread for an upcoming communion service. Then arrange an appropriate time, space, and materials to bake bread using the recipe on page 13 (LR).
• Tell the children that together you are going to bake a special kind of bread, a bread similar to a kind Jesus would have eaten and that he would have used at the Last Supper. Explain that the bread they make will be used at communion, the celebration of the Last Supper.

SESSION 3

FORGIVING

LEARNING FOCUS

The learners will begin to understand that as God forgives them they willingly forgive others.

BACKGROUND

It is not easy for most of us to admit our failures, sins, and wrongdoings. We like to think of ourselves as being “good” people. The ability to forgive others when they have wronged us is often even more difficult. However, confession and forgiveness are one of the most important aspects of our faith life.

This session helps the learners understand that all of us do things that are wrong, but that God willingly forgives every sin because of Jesus. It gives the learners an opportunity to think about sin as doing things we shouldn’t, as well as a failure to do the things we should.

Most first and second graders are well aware of the things they do wrong. However, as you teach, reassure them that God understands our failures and loves us even when we are doing wrong. Help them understand that God loves the sinners but hates the sin, just as parents love their children but correct them and help them when they do wrong.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

Karla and Timmy

Preparation: Cut a simple person shape from construction paper, one for each learner. Have available a Bible, plastic straws, pencils, markers or crayons, tape, and The Lord’s Prayer Learner Resources (LR).

• Give the children the paper figures and invite them to color them to look like themselves. Tape the finished figures to plastic straws.

• Gather in a circle and ask the children to use their figures to finish the following sentences: I feel happy when; I like people who; I feel sad when; I get angry when; I am special because. Add other sentences if you wish. Encourage the children to see that each one of them is special just the way God made him or her.

• Say, “One of the ways we know how much God loves us is that when we do things wrong, God will forgive us. God doesn’t stop loving us. Instead, God is happy we are sorry and tells us we are forgiven! That’s how special we are to God!”

• Tell the story (LR, page 14). Explain that when it is hard to say “I’m sorry” to God and to other people, we can remember that God is always willing to forgive us. Then we can forgive other people too.

Why Does God Forgive Us?

• Read John 3:16. Say, “This verse tells us why God loves and forgives us. God can forgive us because Jesus died for our sins instead.”

• Let the children complete the puzzle activity (LR, page 15) to discover the cross symbol.

Forgive Us . . . As We Forgive

• Read the paragraphs on page 16 (LR) and explain that we sin when we do things we shouldn’t and fail to do the things we should. Share examples of both. Then read the Fifth Petition and the paragraph that follows.

Forgiveness

• Have the children find, read, and complete this activity (LR, page 17).

God Is with You!

Preparation: Have two crayons, each a different color and well-sharpened, and a rubber band for each child.

• Complete this activity (LR, page 18).

• Remind the children that God is always with us and will help us do right if we ask. When we do wrong, confession (admitting our wrong) makes
us feel better and opens us up to God's loving forgiveness. Let them pray silently and ask God for help and forgiveness. Then say aloud to them, “God loves and forgives us through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Child of God Medallions

Preparation: Purchase plaster of paris. Cut several 2" heart-shaped patterns. Gather together nails, yarn or cord, waxed paper, spoon, small mixing bowl, and water.

- Put 1 cup dry plaster of paris mix in a bowl. Add small amounts of water while stirring. Continue until plaster is like a thick batter.
- Place a square of waxed paper in front of each child. Drop tablespoons of the plaster mix onto the waxed paper. Have children smooth it into a circle about 2" in diameter.
- Watch carefully and when the plaster begins to harden, let children push a nail through to make a hole for hanging the medallion with yarn or cord.
- When the surface is firm but not hard, etch a heart on the medallion with a nail. Let dry.
- Thread yarn or cord through the hole and wear as a reminder that each of us is special to God—loved and forgiven.

Prayer Reminder

Preparation: Have several colors of construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, and crayons or markers available. Cut construction paper into pieces about 5" wide x 10" high. Cut a circle near the top so the paper can slip over a doorknob. Make a sample doorknob banner, using one piece of construction paper and drawing a cross or heart. Next, tear various colors of paper into small pieces and glue them into the shape like a mosaic.

- Display your doorknob banner. Show how to draw a symbol and then tear and glue paper to make a mosaic.
- Give each child one of the precut pieces of construction paper, and help them create their own doorknob banners. Invite them to place them on their bedroom doorknobs as a reminder to talk to God in prayer.

Happy Face/Sad Face

Preparation: Cut 4" circles from yellow construction paper. Have markers available.

- Give each child a yellow circle on which to draw a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other side.
- Gather in a circle. Read the following situations to the children and ask them to hold up a happy face if the person was doing something good, and a sad face if not.
  - KaTeecia grumbled when asked to set the table.
  - Peter smiled and waved at his neighbor.
  - Fabio read a story to his baby sister.
  - Tammy said “I’m sorry” when she forgot to pick up her toys.
  - Maria’s mother hugged her and wiped away her tears.
  - Sandy and Ben picked up litter at the park.
  - Lorie pushed Austin off the swing.
  - Kerry forgave her brother when he said “I’m sorry.”

SESSION 4

GOD IS WITH US! AMEN.

LEARNING FOCUS

The learners experience the joy of knowing that God is always with them to guide them throughout life.

BACKGROUND

The last two petitions of the Lord’s Prayer are reminders that God promises to be with us and guide us through the dangers and struggles of life here on earth. We are not removed from the evils of this world, but God promises to deliver us safely into our life eternal.

This session helps the children know that we live in a world full of other voices. God’s people are often tempted to listen to these voices, but when we ask, God promises to provide help and
protection. The words of praise and thanksgiving at
the end of the prayer reveal the trust and confi-
dence of God's faithful people that God indeed is
listening and answering their prayers.

This session includes a parade as a response
activity. Plan to be outside part of the time or use a
hallway or large room for the celebration.

Your learners still tend to have faith attitudes
that reflect complete faith and trust in the world
around them. They assume that good things happen
to good people and bad things happen to bad
people. Many adults think the same way. It is
helpful to remember that temptation and evil are
the direct consequence of sin and bad things
happen to everyone. The promise is that God will
be with us in the midst of these difficulties and
dangers.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

Right or Wrong?

Preparation: Have ready a clear pitcher of water, a
dry sponge, black ink, paper cups, and a shallow
bowl. Gather together pencils, markers or crayons, a
Bible, and The Lord's Prayer Learner Resources (LR).

- Place the pitcher of water in front of the children.
  Ask them how many ways water can be useful.
  (Washing clothes and dishes, drinking, taking a
  bath or shower, swimming, watering plants.)
- Pour some water into the bowl. Place a dry
  sponge in the water. Ask, "What happens? (The
  sponge soaks up the water.)" Squeeze the sponge.
  Say, "People are like the sponge. They soak up the
  behavior they see around them. If people around
  us speak and act nicely, we usually do the same."
- Pour a little ink into the bowl. Ask, "What
  happens to the water? Would we want to use this
  water for drinking or swimming or washing?"
  Place the sponge in the water and squeeze it out.
  Say, "This is what happens when we soak up the
  bad things around us. We begin to do wrong
  things too."
- Give each child a paper cup. Pour water in each
  cup. Let them drink the pure, clean water. Say,
  "God wants us to pray for help when we are
  tempted to soak up the bad things around us."
- Tell the story (LR, page 19). Let the children talk
  about the questions that follow the story.
- Read the Sixth Petition (LR, page 20) and the
  paragraphs beside it. Let the children have fun
  learning to do S.O.S. in Morse code.

Is There Danger Ahead?

- Read aloud the story (LR, page 21) as the children
color the road signs.

Keep Me Safe, Lord

- Read aloud the opening paragraph (LR, page 22).
- Read the Seventh Petition (LR, page 22) and the
  paragraphs next to it. Let the children have time
to draw in the space provided. End by reminding
  the children that God is with them always!

Yours Forever

- Read Psalm 34:15, 17. Say, "God's eyes and ears
  are always open to our cries for help. God prom-
  ises to hear our prayers and help us."
- Read aloud the Doxology (LR, page 23) and the
  paragraphs next to it.
- Learn the movements as instructed on page 23.
  Then gather in a circle to pray together the Lord's
  Prayer, using the motions just learned when the
  Doxology is prayed.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Praise Parade

Preparation: Have ready paper plates, dried beans or
small pebbles, rolls of crepe paper streamers in
several colors, stapler, transparent tape, scissors, and
markers or crayons. A cassette tape with joyful songs
and music and a tape player would be helpful.

- Give each child two paper plates to decorate with
  markers or crayons. Point out that they should
  color the back of each plate.
- Place a small amount of beans or pebbles in one
  plate and staple the two plates together, with
  backstap. Put the staples close to each other so
  the beans or pebbles won't fall out.
- Cut 6" to 8" crepe paper streamers to attach to
  the rim of the paper plate shakers with tape or
  staples. Let the children pick their colors of
  streamers. Be sure to cover all the staples with
tape to cover rough edges.
• Have a parade outside or through the hallways. Shake the shakers and dance joyfully, thanking and praising God. Sing along to a cassette tape or use other simple rhythm instruments.

**Thumbprint Pictures**

**Preparation:** Provide white drawing paper, a variety of colored stamp pads, and fine-tipped markers. Have a pitcher of water and a roll of paper towels ready for wiping hands.

• Give each child a sheet of white drawing paper.
• Have the children press their thumbs and fingers on colored stamp pads and then press firmly on the paper. Do several prints in different colors. Hands can be cleaned with wet paper towels.
• Let the prints dry for several minutes, then have the learners add features with the markers to create people, animals, flowers, birds, or a variety of other creative things. Display the art as a reminder of the many things for which we praise and thank God.

**Something Special**

**Preparation:** For each child, gather the materials listed on page 24 (LR).

• Thank the children for the good time you’ve had learning together.
• Tell the children you are going to make something special to remember this time and that we are loved by God.
• Read aloud the opening paragraph on page 24 (LR), then make the crosses as instructed there.

**Prayer Mobile**

**Preparation:** Cut strips of poster board about 2" by 12". Make patterns for several simple Christian symbols out of light cardboard: a fish, flame, cross, shell, or heart. You may want to use the letters for pray or praise instead. Have construction paper, pencils, scissors, thread, paper punch, and a stapler or transparent tape available.

• Trace various symbols or letters on construction paper and cut them out. Each child should have at least four or five symbols. They may be all the same or different colors. Allow for creativity!
• Punch a hole in the top of each symbol. Tie a piece of thread through each one.
• Give each child a poster board strip. Tape or staple the strip into a circle. Attach the symbols to the circle with different lengths of thread.
• Invite the children to hang their mobiles in their homes as a reminder of God’s promises to hear our prayers.

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**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Exploring Luther’s Small Catechism**

**Leader Leaflet**

This Leader Leaflet has a corresponding Learner Resource.

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