

CRASH COURSE for young people who want to follow **Jesus**



2. Making Sure we Stay Close to God

SAYING "YES" TO GOD

Father God,
help me to be like Mary
who always said "yes" to your love
and to your plan for her life.

Very often I say "no" to your love
and push you away from me,
and try to run my own life.

Help me to remember
that you made me to be filled with your love.

Help me to say "yes" to you, just as Mary did,
so that others may come to know your love through me. Amen.



BEFORE MASS

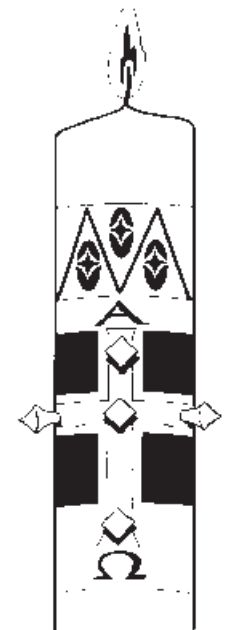
Lord Jesus, come to me.
Lord, Jesus, give me your love.
Lord Jesus, come to me and give me yourself.
Lord Jesus, friend of children, come to me.
Lord Jesus, you are my Lord and my God.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

AFTER MASS

Lord Jesus I give you my hands to do your work.
I give you my feet to go your way.
I give you my eyes to see as you see.
I give you my tongue to speak your words.
I give you my mind that you may think in me.
I give you my heart that you may love in me
– love the Father and all humankind.
I give you my whole self that you may grow in me,
so that you, Lord, may be the one
who lives and works and prays in me.

AN EVENING PRAYER

Father God,
thank you for your love and protection this day.
Please forgive me for those times
when I pushed you away
and when I failed to love others.
May your angels watch over me during this night,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



SOME MORE PRAYERS

THESE prayers are not for learning off by heart. But you might find some of them helpful every now and then.



AT THE START OF THE DAY

Good morning, Father God.
Thank you for this new day,
and all the things that will happen
to remind me of your love.
Help me to walk close to you.
I know that I can't make it on my own,
so take my hand and hold it tight!

Lord Jesus, help me to be loving today
just as you were loving in this world.

Holy Spirit, move in my heart today;
help me to be stronger than I was yesterday,
and to have peace even if things go wrong.

O God be with me, I pray,
so that all my thoughts, words and actions
may point others to you. Amen.

BEFORE SCHOOL

God of Light and Truth,
thank you for giving me
a mind that can know
and a heart that can love.

Help me to keep learning every day of my life,
for all knowledge leads to you.

Help me to know you are with me
in all things and at all times.

Help me when my work is hard
and when I feel like giving up.

Help me when my brain seems slow
and I have trouble understanding things.

Help me to grow in loving your truth
and the world you have made.
Amen.



Making sure we stay close to God

“GRACE” IS STILL AMAZING!

Some people don't care very much about God. They think they can manage quite well without his help.

They say “No” to his love, and they are determined to run their own lives their own way.

They usually end up very lonely. And sometimes it seems as if they die on the inside.



Earthly fathers help us when the road is rocky. Our Father God helps us on our journey through life if we let him.

But, as we grow up in God's family, the Church, WE learn that

- * **God loves us more than we can ever imagine**
and wants to share his life with us.
- * **God is much cleverer than we are**
and wants to guide us in everything we do.
- * **God wants to give us his strength**
so that we can get through our difficult times.

Because God REALLY loves us, he does not FORCE himself on us against our wishes.
He waits for us to RESPOND to his love.

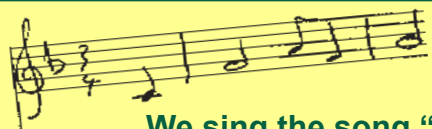
One of the words from the Bible we often hear at church is all about this.

It is the word

grace

Grace is God's free gift to us of his LOVE, his FORGIVENESS, his HELP, his GUIDANCE and his STRENGTH ... in other words, his free gift to us of ...

HIMSELF



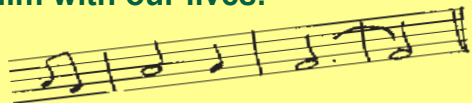
We sing the song "Amazing Grace" because God's grace *IS* truly amazing:

He keeps on loving us
and giving himself to us
even though we are completely unworthy,
and sometimes don't even want him in our lives.

HE GOES ON LOVING US JUST THE SAME.

There is nothing we can do to stop him loving us!

All he wants is for us to accept his love,
and trust him with our lives.



WHERE TO PRAY

Anywhere. In the bus, at school, in a church building or when we are out walking.

WHEN TO PRAY

Whenever we want. Different people pray at different times. Most people who follow Jesus find that it helps to have a regular set time - just as we have regular set times to spend with our family.

HOW TO PRAY

Some people like to use well-known prayers out of a book. Others prefer to use their own words. (Most people do BOTH.) The main thing is to really mean with all our heart what we are saying to God.

The **SAINTS** heard the same Word of God that we hear. They belonged to the Church, God's special family, just like us. They received the sacraments that we receive. They got to know God personally by praying, just as we do. They are now with Jesus in heaven, but they also watch us and pray for us as we make our way to heaven.

In the Bible those who have gone before us are pictured as a great crowd in the grandstands who have run **THEIR** race and are now cheering us on as we run **OUR** race!

That's why there are pictures and statues of saints in our churches. When we look at them we know that we are **NEVER** alone when we pray.



WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE????

Well, most important is **MARY**, the mother of Jesus. In fact, she is the mother of ALL who belong to Jesus.

Then there are the **APOSTLES**, as well as all the men and women, boys and girls who have died rather than give up following Jesus. They are called **MARTYRS**.

There are also lots of **ORDINARY PEOPLE** from every walk of life who have grown close to Jesus and become holy and loving like him.

LEARNING ABOUT THE SAINTS helps us to trust Jesus in happy times as well as in sad times, just as they did.

ASKING THE SAINTS TO PRAY FOR US helps us to feel that we are not alone: ALL our brothers and sisters cheer us on.

HOW GOD'S GRACE COMES TO US

There are **TWO** main ways that God gives us his grace:

(1) Prayer

When we love someone or have a close friend, we like to spend a lot of time with them. And so . . .

WE TALK about our hopes and our dreams; we laugh about the funny things that happen; we cry about the sad things in our lives.

When we do something that hurts the other person we feel bad until we say "sorry."

When our friend gives us something we say "thank you."

And when we are in trouble we ask our friend for help.

WE LISTEN quietly to what our friend has to say. Imagine how long a friendship would last if one person did all the talking and no listening!

WE ENJOY BEING TOGETHER When people are *really* good friends, they like just "being" together. They don't have to say words all the time. Even the silence they share makes them feel close to each other.



That's what prayer is - loving God so much that we want to talk to him, listen to him, and just enjoy "being" with him.

Many people say that when they pray they know God pours his love and peace into them, and that he makes them strong enough to keep going when they have big problems.

(2) The Seven Sacraments

Baptism



The Sacrament of Baptism

Confirmation



Holy Communion



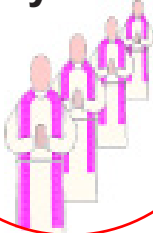
Reconciliation



Marriage



Holy Order



Anointing of the Sick



Sacraments are ...

outward signs celebrated by the church family in which God meets us and gives us his grace.



Even when we THINK we are alone, there is a crowd of angels and saints all around us. They belong to the same family we became part of when we were baptized.

Every time we pray, we share with them in the love of God. THEY love us, too, and they pray for us, especially when we are trying to solve big problems.

The **SAINTS** are people like us, except they are already in heaven with Jesus. They are our brothers and sisters. Like us, they had problems and temptations. Lots of them had to struggle with doubts and fears. Some of them were really bad people until they discovered God's love. Many saints even felt like giving up along the way.

But they kept relying on God's **GRACE**, and they made it in the end!

on earth as it is in heaven: These words belong to the last three parts of this prayer:

Hallowed be thy name on earth as it is in heaven

Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven

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

Give us this day our daily bread: God is the giver of all good things. By 'daily bread' we mean all that our souls and bodies need. We ask for today. Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow, but to trust him.

And forgive us our trespasses: Our trespasses are our sins. To trespass on land means to go beyond the place where we ought to have stopped. God has made boundaries to keep us safe. It is wrong to go beyond these boundaries. When we do go beyond them, we ask our heavenly Father to forgive us.

as we forgive those who trespass against us: We often hurt each other. We are often hurt by our friends. Jesus tells us that if we expect God to forgive us we must forgive others.

and lead us not into temptation: Our Father does not tempt us to sin, but he does allow us to be tempted. Sometimes it seems as if sin is like a great wave trying to drown us. We ask God to make us strong in times of danger.

but deliver us from evil. There are evil powers wanting to destroy us. God is stronger than all of them. We have nothing to fear with his protection.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Although this is not really part of the prayer that Jesus taught, for many hundreds of years Christians have used it as good way of ending, because it put the attention back onto God.

Amen. This is an old way of saying, "I mean this prayer with all my heart."

When we pray ...



We thank God

for all the wonderful things he has done for us.

We praise God

for his greatness.

We confess our sins to God

when we are truly sorry.

We pray for others,

especially when they are sick or have problems.

We ask for ourselves

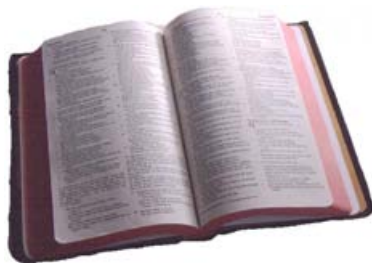
when we are in need.

PRAYER IS ALSO ... **listening**

WE LISTEN TO GOD mainly by thinking about what we read in the Bible. God speaks to us from its pages. That is why we call it "God's Word."

We hear parts of the Bible read at Mass. Then the priest explains what God is saying to us. We call this time of teaching the "sermon."

We should also have our own Bible that we can read at home. We should talk to God about what he is showing us when we read it. That way, we grow in our knowledge and understanding of God.



WE ALSO LISTEN TO GOD by finding time to be quiet and thoughtful, maybe in a church, maybe in our favourite park or garden, or maybe in our room.

Sometimes we have to do our other prayers first, because of all the things that are on our mind. After that, we should just be with God without talking, so as to:

- take in the wonder of his love,
- know that he is with us,
- try and understand what is happening in our lives.

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS GAVE US



One day the followers of Jesus asked him to teach them how to pray.

You can read about this in your Bible. Look up Matthew 6:9-13.

Jesus gave us a "model" prayer which we use at Mass as well as the other times we pray. It covers just about everything! We call it

the Our Father or **the Lord's Prayer**

Our Father: It is "OUR" and not "MY" because we belong to a big family. We share God our Father with all our brothers and sisters.

who art in heaven: Some people call the sky "the heavens", but God's heaven is all around us - "the spiritual world" - so we can always find him. The angels and saints are there too!

hallowed be thy name: This means that we want everyone to know how special God is. We want everyone to worship and serve God as the angels and the saints do.

thy kingdom come: A kingdom is made up of people. God is the great King and everyone should love him. It is sad that so many people turn away from God and don't want to be part of his Kingdom.

thy will be done: God's will is what he wants us to do. He loves us so much that he has promised to lead us and protect us. But he does not force his way on us. We can choose.