

A Psalm of Thanksgiving

CHAPTER 1 Prayer

A psalm is a Hebrew poem or song found in the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament. Psalms were originally written to praise God, give thanks to God, celebrate God's law, ask God for wisdom or help, or express confidence in God. Psalms are often prayed aloud or sung during worship. You can pray the psalms silently too. In this psalm, we thank God for the gift of creation and for his continuing love and care. When we pray prayers of thanksgiving, we grow closer to God.

Psalm 136

Leader: Take a few moments to quiet your minds. Rest in the presence of God. Now let's pray aloud this prayer together.

All:

*Praise the LORD, for he is good;
for his mercy endures forever;*

*Praise the God of gods;
for his mercy endures forever;*

*Praise the Lord of lords;
for his mercy endures forever;*

*Who alone has done great wonders,
for his mercy endures forever;*

*Who skillfully made the heavens,
for his mercy endures forever;*

*Who spread the earth upon
the waters,
for his mercy endures forever;*

*Who made the great lights,
for his mercy endures forever;*

*The sun to rule the day,
for his mercy endures forever;*

*The moon and stars to rule
the night,
for his mercy endures forever;*

Reflect

*How can I show others I am thankful
for the gift of God's grace in my life?*

CHAPTER
2
Prayer

Praise God

The Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament happens at the end of a period of Eucharistic Adoration. At the Benediction, a priest or a deacon blesses the congregation with the Eucharist, which is inside a monstrance. After that, the priest or deacon prays the Divine Praises. The Divine Praises thank God, the Holy Family, and the angels and saints for all they have done in the work of salvation.

The Divine Praises

Leader: Pray this prayer silently, taking each word and idea to heart. Then take a moment to consider the Reflect question.

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

*Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God
and true Man.*

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.

*Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy
Sacrament of the Altar.*

*Blessed be the Holy Spirit,
the Paraclete.*

*Blessed be the great Mother of God,
Mary most Holy.*

*Blessed be her Holy and Immaculate
Conception.*

Blessed be her Glorious Assumption.

*Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin
and Mother.*

*Blessed be St. Joseph, her most
chaste spouse.*

*Blessed be God in His Angels and in
His Saints. Amen.*

Reflect

*How does giving thanks and praise to
God help me grow closer to him?*



Hope and Trust in God

CHAPTER
3
Prayer

The Act of Hope is a traditional Catholic prayer that appears in a variety of versions. While each version has slightly different words, the message is always the same: we trust in God's love, mercy, grace, and promises. Hope is confidence that God will always be with us and guide us. People often pray this prayer in the morning or when they need encouragement.

Act of Hope

Leader: Take a moment to quiet your mind. As we pray the Act of Hope aloud, let us think about our trust in God. Then think silently about the Reflect question.

All:

*O my God, relying on your
infinite mercy and promises,
I hope to obtain pardon of my sins,
the help of your grace,*

*and life everlasting, through the
merits of Jesus Christ,
my Lord and Redeemer.
Amen.*

Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Reflect

What gifts have I received that help me place my hope in God?



CHAPTER
4
Prayer

Being a Child of Light

Saint Ignatius of Loyola believed that we invite God to speak with us through life's experiences and the use of our senses and imagination. Saint Ignatius developed a special approach to prayer, sometimes called guided reflection, to help us more fully connect our hearts and minds with God. In this type of prayer, we prepare ourselves by becoming aware of God's presence in our lives. We contemplate Scripture or a certain situation. We enter into a conversation with God, and we close with a moment of reflection.

Baptism Reflection

Leader: At the end of the Rite of Baptism, the priest lights a baptismal candle from the paschal candle and gives the lighted candle to the new Christian (or to the infant's parents). The candle symbolizes the light of Christ, burning brightly in our hearts. It reminds us to be a light to the world in the name of Jesus Christ. It is our responsibility to keep the flame of faith alive in our hearts.

Close your eyes and grow still. Think about the symbol of the lit candle. See it in your mind. Take these words to heart as I read them.

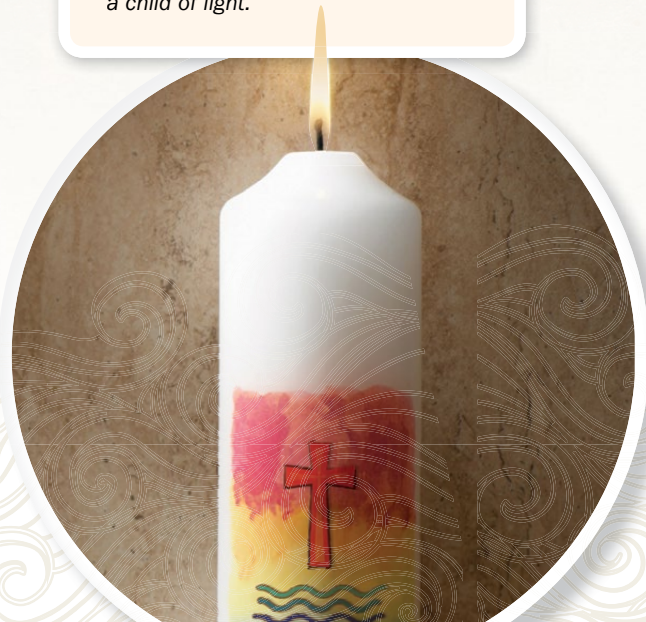
Imagine the priest giving a lit baptismal candle to two parents and two godparents with a baby girl being baptized. Hear the priest's words: *Receive the light of Christ. Parents and Godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. She is to walk*

always as a child of the light. May she keep the flame of faith alive in her heart. When the Lord comes, may she go out to meet Him with all the saints in the heavenly Kingdom.

It's now time to bring our attention back to this room. Let's close our special time with Jesus by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Reflect

How have I shown the light of Christ today? I ask Jesus to help me walk as a child of light.



CHAPTER
5
Prayer

I Confess

The *Confiteor* is a prayer in which we acknowledge our own sins and ask God for mercy. Sin always affects others. When we sin, we hurt other people. We weaken our relationship with God and loosen the bonds that hold us together. For this reason, each week at Mass, we ask God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of the community by praying the *Confiteor*.

The *Confiteor*

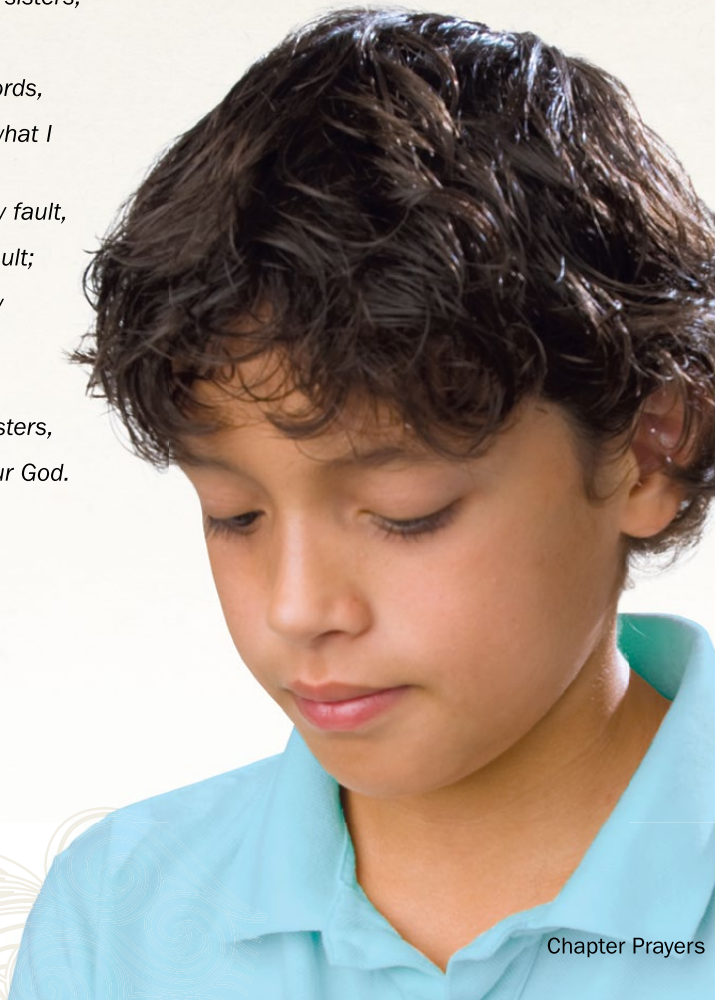
Leader: Rest your body and mind.
After we pray aloud the prayer,
take some time to consider the
Reflect question.

All:

*I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I
have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary
ever-Virgin
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.
Amen.*

Reflect

*What can I do to show that I am sorry
for my sins?*



CHAPTER
6
PrayerA Prayer from
Saint Ignatius

A good way to develop the habit of finding God in all things is to pray the Daily Examen, a daily habit practiced and encouraged by Saint Ignatius of Loyola. In this prayer, you look over your day to recognize how God is actively involved in your life. When we pray the Daily Examen, we can grow closer to God.

The Daily Examen

Leader: Calm your hearts and minds. Pray the Daily Examen to yourself, pausing at the end of each step. When finishing the prayer, consider the Reflect question.

Be still. Remember that you are in the holy presence of God. Open your heart to him. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you pray honestly and listen closely.

Be grateful. Give thanks to God for his gifts. Think about sharing these gifts with others.

Look back. Review your day step-by-step—what you did, whom you encountered, and your thoughts and feelings along the way.

Talk with God. Tell God the things you feel good about and those you regret. Express sorrow for the times you ignored God. Ask him to help you make different choices next time.

Look ahead. Ask God to help you be your best self as you look forward to a new day tomorrow.

Reflect

How can I make this kind of prayer part of my daily routine?

I Am Sorry

The Act of Contrition is a traditional Catholic prayer that we can pray during a liturgical service, privately when we do an examination of conscience or any other private time, or when we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There are several different versions of the prayer or we can use our own words to express sorrow to God. In this prayer, we acknowledge our sins, ask God for forgiveness, and express our desire to repent. When we pray this prayer, we invite God's grace into our lives and ask for a fresh start.

Act of Contrition* (or Prayer of the Penitent)

Leader: Pray this prayer privately, taking this prayer to heart. Then consider the Reflect question.

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong
and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance,
to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ
suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.
Amen.

Reflect

What are some ways I can avoid temptation and sin?



* Traditional Act of Contrition on page 105.

CHAPTER
8
Prayer

Over and Over Again

Communal prayer is when two or more people gather together to raise their minds and hearts to God. A prayer service is a form of communal prayer that follows a set order with designated parts, such as *Leader*, *Reader*, and *All*. In this prayer service, we reflect on the idea that God is our Good Shepherd. He loves us and wants us to be close to him. He will look for us over and over again.

God, Our Good Shepherd

Leader: Let's pray aloud this prayer together and then take a moment to consider the Reflect question.

Praise be to God, our Good Shepherd, who loves us and wants us to stay close to him.

All:
Blessed be God forever!

Leader:
Let us ask for God's help and thank him for his love.

All:
Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Leader:
*Show me your paths and help me to follow;
guide me by your truth and teach me.*

All:
Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Leader:
*You keep me safe; I always trust you.
Help me remember you are always patient and kind.*

All:
Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Leader:
You welcome me home again and again. Thank you, O Lord, for your love.

All:
Blessed be God forever! Amen.
Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Reflect

How can I follow the way of the Lord today?



Bless the Lord

King David danced and sang for joy when the ark of the covenant came to Jerusalem. He loved God and wrote many psalms to show praise and thanksgiving. A psalm is a Hebrew poem or song found in the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament. Jesus prayed the psalms, and we continue to pray them. Psalm 103 is a song of praise for God's goodness and holiness. We show our love and praise for God and place our trust in him through prayers of praise.

CHAPTER 9 Prayer

Psalm 103

Leader: Let's pray together and then take time to consider the Reflect question.

We praise you, God, for the many blessings in our lives.

Group A:

We praise you for the wonder of a beautiful starry night.

All:

*Bless the LORD, my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
Bless the LORD, my soul;
and do not forget all his gifts.*

Group B:

We praise you for showing us how to help others.

All:

*Bless the LORD, my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
Bless the LORD, my soul;
and do not forget all his gifts.*

Group A:

We praise you for majestic snow-capped mountains.

All:

*Bless the LORD, my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
Bless the LORD, my soul;
and do not forget all his gifts.*

Group B:

We praise you for the love of family and friends.

All:

*Bless the LORD, my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
Bless the LORD, my soul;
and do not forget all his gifts.*

Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Reflect

How can I show praise for God's presence in my life?

CHAPTER
10
Prayer

Scriptural Prayer

We can pray using the Bible. This type of prayer is sometimes called scriptural prayer. In scriptural prayer, Scripture is read, and we reflect on the truths it teaches us. We embrace God's Word in our hearts. There are many forms of scriptural prayer—some prayed alone and in quiet, some prayed aloud in a group. The following scriptural prayer comes from Jesus' parable of the mustard seed.

Nurturing the Seeds of Faith

Leader: Take God's Word to heart while we read aloud the prayer together. After we are finished praying, think silently about the Reflect question.

We all want to be like the seeds that fall on rich soil. We want to learn and grow in faith. Seeds need good soil, sunlight, and water. To grow as disciples, we can listen to God's Word, reflect on it, and use our words and actions to teach others about God's love and mercy. We must nurture the seeds of our faith.

Let's begin by praying the Sign of the Cross. Listen as I read from the Book of Matthew, chapter 13, verses 31–32. "He proposed another parable to them. 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'"

Lord, you sow seeds in us so that we may grow in faith.

All:

We thank you for planting your Word in our hearts, O Lord.

You help us stay rooted in your Word.

We thank you for planting your Word in our hearts, O Lord.

Your Word feeds us and helps us grow in holiness.

We thank you for planting your Word in our hearts, O Lord.

You guide us to sow seeds of your love in others.

We thank you for planting your Word in our hearts, O Lord.

Loving God, thank you for planting your Word in us. Help us sow seeds of kindness, love, and mercy in our families, in our communities, and in the world. Amen.

Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Reflect

What is one way I can show this week that God's Word is planted in my heart?

Imagination in Prayer

CHAPTER
11
Prayer

Similar to the guided reflection in Chapter 4, we can use our senses and imaginations to connect with God. We prepare by becoming aware of God's presence and then use our imaginations to contemplate a situation while entering a conversation with God. Through this type of prayer, we are able to find God in all things. In this prayer, we use our senses and imagination to understand how we can use our gifts to help others and glorify God.

We Use Our Gifts

Leader: Let's pray the guided reflection. Afterward, we'll have a few moments to think about the Reflect question.

God gives us many gifts. He gives us the gifts of creation: animals, flowers, stars, and the sun. He gives us the gifts of family, friends, and our parish community. He also gives us the greatest gift of all. He gives us the gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. How can we possibly thank him for such an amazing gift? The best way to show our thanks is to become the best people we can be. Use your imagination to help you recognize and share the gifts God has given you.

Imagine you are sitting at a table in the school cafeteria. Look around. What do you see? You may see groups of friends eating, talking, and laughing. You may see other young people sitting alone. You see a new student confused as to where to go next. You see a teacher asking for volunteers to make care packages for people in need. You may have noticed a cafeteria worker who didn't give you her normal cheery greeting. What else do you notice? Focus on one situation.

Now imagine that Jesus is sitting next to you. Talk with Jesus about the many gifts God has given you. Together walk to the situation you chose and use one of your gifts to bring God's love into the scene. Go back to the table. Tell Jesus what you think you can offer to God and others this day to show God's presence in the world. Together with Jesus, take a few moments to thank God for the gift that you recognized and shared. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you use your gifts to glorify God and help others. Say good-bye to Jesus and slowly come back to this present time and place.



Reflect

What other gifts can I offer to show God my love for him and his creation?

CHAPTER
12
Prayer

Praising God for Our Gifts

A litany is a form of a prayer in which we pray a common response to a series of invocations (praises) or petitions (requests) that are presented in a similar pattern. Litanies can be prayed together in groups or alone. In this litany, we thank and praise God for the gift of the Eucharist.

Litany of Thanksgiving

Leader: Let's pray together this litany. Afterward, we'll take a moment to consider the Reflect question.

We begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Let us pray.

Response:

We give our thanks and praise, O Lord.

Leader:

For the gift you gave us at the Last Supper . . . R

Leader:

For the sacrifice you made for our sins . . . R

Leader:

For your presence as we gather as a community to worship you . . . R

Leader:

For the priest whose words you use to transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ . . . R

Leader:

For the real presence in the Eucharist given to us as spiritual food . . . R

Leader:

For the opportunity to share your love and serve others . . . R

All:

God of love, thank you for all the many gifts you have given us, especially the gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Thank you for the gift of our faith community and the unity, love, and nourishment we receive as we remember Christ's sacrifice for our salvation. Guide us to be witnesses of his love in the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Amen.

Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Reflect

What is one small sacrifice I can make to show my love for God this week?



We Pray to God Our Father

CHAPTER
13
Prayer

Jesus himself gave us the Lord's Prayer, which we sometimes refer to as the Our Father. The Lord's Prayer is one of the most important prayers in the Christian faith. You can find a longer form of the Lord's Prayer in the Gospel of Matthew and a shorter form in the Gospel of Luke. In this prayer, we praise and glorify God the Father and ask him to give us what we need so we can be with him someday in heaven. As you pray this prayer, think about the deeper meaning of the words.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader: Let's begin the Lord's Prayer by praying the Sign of the Cross. After we finish praying, we'll take a moment to think quietly about the Reflect question.

All: *Our Father, who art in heaven,*

Leader: How wonderful that I can call you Father because you have created me. I am your child, but you are "our" Father. You are in heaven, but you are still with me. You share your life with me and are close to my heart.

All: *hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.*

Leader: Your name is holy, and you make all creation holy, including me. Keep me on the path to holiness. I pray for your Kingdom to come. Thank you for bringing it near in your Son, Jesus Christ. Help me serve your Kingdom in the way I care for others.

All: *Give us this day our daily bread,*

Leader: You have given me life. How could you not give me the bread that I need? Help me remember that it is "our" bread, one loaf that I must share with many.

All: *and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;*

Leader: How can I ask for forgiveness if I am not willing to forgive? There is no limit to your forgiveness. May there be no limit to mine.

All: *and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

Leader: Give me the strength to face the daily struggles to make good choices. May the Holy Spirit help me grow and give me peace.

All: *Amen.*

Together pray the Sign of the Cross.

Reflect

How can I help others see God's Kingdom this week?

CHAPTER
14
Prayer

Being Our Best Selves

Jesus teaches us how to become our best selves in the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5:3–10. The Beatitudes are eight blessings that are full of meaning that might not be apparent without a deeper look. Each beatitude names a way to live as a disciple of Christ and explains the result for us if we live that way. In this prayer service, we contemplate the Beatitudes and what they mean for us.

The Beatitudes

Leader: Together we will pray aloud each beatitude. Afterward, let's take a moment to think about how you can live each one in today's world.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,

All:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Leader:
Blessed are they who mourn,

All:
for they will be comforted.

Leader:
Blessed are the meek,

All:
for they will inherit the land.

Leader:
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

All:
for they will be satisfied.

Leader:
Blessed are the merciful,

All:
for they will be shown mercy,

Leader:
Blessed are the clean of heart,

All:
for they will see God.

Leader:
Blessed are the peacemakers,

All:
for they will be called children of God.

Leader: *Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,*

All:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:3–10

Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: The Beatitudes are Jesus' guidelines for Christian living. The Beatitudes give us ways to help others. Now let's take a moment to think about the Reflect question.

Reflect

What can I do this week to live one of the Beatitudes?

