

Westminster Shorter Catechism *for kids*

Workbook Eight: The Lord's Prayer
Questions 98 – 107

SAMPLE COPY

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All Bible verses quoted in this workbook are in the New International
(NIV) translation, unless otherwise specified.

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Contents

Introduction	5
• Question 98	7
○ Lesson 1 – What is Prayer?	
○ Lesson 2 – How to Pray	
○ Lesson 3 – Who Should We Pray For?	
• Question 99	19
○ Lesson 1 – Direction in Prayer	
○ Lesson 2 – The Petitions	
• Question 100	27
○ Lesson 1 – Our Good Father	
○ Lesson 2 – Holy Reverence	
○ Lesson 3 – Praying With and For Others	
• Question 101	39
○ Lesson 1 – Knowing God	
○ Lesson 2 – Seeing God	
• Question 102	47
○ Lesson 1 – Thy Kingdom Come	
○ Lesson 2 – The Kingdom of Glory	
• Question 103	57
○ Lesson 1 – Thy Will Be Done	
○ Lesson 2 – Trusting God	

• Question 104	65
○ Lesson 1 – Our Daily Bread	
○ Lesson 2 – God’s Provision in Difficult Times	
• Question 105	73
○ Lesson 1 – Forgive Us Our Debts	
○ Lesson 2 – As We Forgive Our Debtors	
• Question 106	83
○ Lesson 1 – Augustine of Hippo	
○ Lesson 2 – The Temptation of Jesus	
• Question 107	91
○ Lesson 1 – The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory	
○ Lesson 2 – Amen	
Westminster Shorter Catechism Review.....	101

Introduction

The Lord's Prayer concludes the study of the tenets of Christian faith in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. By the time children arrive at this teaching on prayer, they have already learned who God is and how he has redeemed us from sin and made us his children. They have already learned that Christ was humbled for our sake and has been exalted at the right hand of the Father. They have learned about our duty of obedience to God's commandments, and that salvation is found only through faith in Christ, repentance unto life, and the use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates the benefits of redemption to us.

The Lord's Prayer is about day-to-day Christian life. It reminds us of the things we already know about God—that he is our good and generous heavenly Father. It instructs us how to speak to God in light of the way he has revealed himself to mankind. Through the Prayer we learn to ask unselfishly, remembering that God's kingdom and God's will are of supreme importance, and even that the forgiveness God extends to us obligates us to forgive others.

Yet even as we focus on the outward world and the kingdom of God, we are taught to pray for our daily bread. We are utterly dependent upon God for day-to-day sustenance, both physical and spiritual. We are like hungry children clamoring for food, yet God delights to answer even this mundane and self-focused prayer. After all, he knows what we need before we ask him (Matthew 6:8).

God is our perfect Father who knows best in everything and delights to give good gifts to his children (Matthew 7:11).

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Question 98: What is prayer?

Answer: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Lesson 1

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Q. 98. What is prayer?

A.

What is Prayer?

When we pray, we talk to God. Have you ever considered how amazing this is? You can talk to God! You can talk to him any time of the day or night. You can talk to him anywhere—at home, at school, at church, on the playground, in an airplane, or in a deep cave under the ground. God can hear you, and he listens to your prayers.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism gives several characteristics of prayer that a Christian should remember. Let's review them.

1. **Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will.** When we pray, we tell God what we want. However, we should remember that God makes the decisions about what is right for us to have. We should never pray that God will grant our sinful desires. We should also recognize that we cannot have everything we want, and that God knows better than we do what is good for us.
2. **Prayer is in the name of Christ.** We should pray only to God, and we should pray in the name of Christ, recognizing that it is only because Jesus paid for our sins that we are accepted by God.
3. **Prayer includes confession of sin.** Prayer is not only about the things we want. We should also confess our sins to God and repent.
4. **Prayer includes thankful acknowledgement of God's mercies.** When we pray, we should thank God for providing for us. God has already given us so much! He has given us life, and he has provided for our salvation. He has given us homes, families, work, and play. We should tell him how thankful we are for his blessings.

We do not need to include all these elements of prayer in each prayer that we offer to God. However, we should remember

to do all of these things regularly in our prayers. Sometimes we may ask God to help us with a problem, but we should also remember to thank him for the things he has given us already. Sometimes we may praise God for his blessings in our lives, but we should also remember to confess our sins to God.

In the Bible, the book of Psalms contains many beautiful prayers. Some are prayers of praise and thanksgiving, some are prayers of confession of sin, and some are requests for God to help. Let's read one of the prayers.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;
Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.
If you, LORD, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.
I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.
I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.
Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
for with the LORD is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.



Answer the questions below.

Is the psalmist offering up his desires to God? _____

The psalmist cries to God for help, but then says, "I wait for the LORD." How does this demonstrate that the psalmist is praying for things agreeable to God's will?

Does the psalmist express thankfulness to God? _____

Name one thing the psalmist says that shows that he is thankful to God even in his distress.

Lesson 2

Question 98: What is prayer?

Answer: _____ is an offering up of our _____
unto _____, for things _____ to his will, in
the _____ of Christ, with _____ of our
sins, and _____ acknowledgment of his mercies.

How to Pray

The Bible gives many instructions about how to pray. We should pray sincerely and earnestly, and we should be humble in our prayers.

Sometimes people pray to show off in front of other people. They want everyone to think well of them, and so they pray loudly so that everyone will see and hear them. Other times, people pray very long prayers because they think God does not hear them unless they pray for a long time.

Jesus instructed his disciples to avoid showy and unbelieving prayers:

Matthew 6:5-8 And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street

corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

The prophet Isaiah spoke against people who pray, asking God to give them what they want, even while they are committing terrible sins. Isaiah warned that God would not listen to the prayers of people who did not repent of their sins.

Isaiah 1:15-16

When you spread out your hands in prayer,
 I hide my eyes from you;
 even when you offer many prayers,
 I am not listening.
 Your hands are full of blood!
 Wash and make yourselves clean.
 Take your evil deeds out of my sight;
 stop doing wrong.

The book of James reminds us not to neglect prayer when we want things. We should take our requests to God. However, he also warns us not to ask for selfish motives.

James 4:1-3 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you

ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

When you pray, remember that God is sovereign and holy. We should never bring sinful, selfish prayers to God.



Let's Think!

Consider the story below and answer the questions.

When Patrick received a new puppy for his birthday, his little sister Tara was jealous. Tara had always wanted a dog. She was angry that her dad had given Patrick a puppy instead.

"Patrick is older than you, Tara," her father said. "He can take care of a dog. Perhaps when you are older, you can have a puppy for your birthday."

"That isn't fair!" thought Tara. "I want a dog now!"

That night, Tara wanted to pray that Patrick would get sick so that she could have his puppy. "Is that wrong to pray for Patrick to get sick?" she wondered.

Would it be wrong for Tara to pray that Patrick would get sick?

Tara realized that God did not want her to pray that Patrick would get sick. That would be a selfish, sinful prayer. Instead, Tara prayed, "God, please help me to be patient and to be kind to my older brother. Please forgive me for coveting Patrick's birthday present."

Is this an acceptable prayer? _____

How do you know that this is a prayer that God will accept?

In whose name should we offer our prayers to God?

We should always pray in the name of Jesus, because he is the only who can bring our prayers to God.

Imagine you had a friend named Oswald who was very good.
Would it be okay to ask God to bless you in Oswald's name?

Why would that be wrong?

No one but Jesus can be the way to God, and that's why we should never pray in anyone else's name.

Lesson 3

Question 98: What is prayer?

Answer: _____ is an _____ up of our
_____ unto _____, for things _____
to his _____, in the _____ of Christ, with
_____ of our _____, and _____
acknowledgment of his _____.

Who Should We Pray For?

We have discussed the elements of prayer, and we have talked about how to pray in a manner that is acceptable to God. But who should we pray for? Is there anyone in particular that we are instructed to pray for?

We can pray for anyone, of course, but the Bible does particularly instruct us to pray for certain people.



Let's Think!

Each Bible verse below tells us someone particular for whom we should remember to pray. Write it on the line below the verse.

Matthew 5:44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

We should pray for _____.

I Timothy 2:1-3 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior.

We should pray for _____.

Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

We should pray for _____.

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

We should pray for _____ .

Question 99: What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

Answer: The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

Lesson 1

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Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

A.

Direction in Prayer

In the last section, we discussed many Bible verses that contain instruction about prayer. We also have many examples of prayer recorded in Scripture. The psalms are filled with beautiful prayers. We also have examples of prayers prayed by the prophets and the apostles. Our Lord Jesus also prayed. Some of his prayers are recorded in Scripture. However, one particularly stands out as **direction in prayer**. In fact it was not a prayer that Jesus prayed for himself at all. It was given to his disciples to teach them how to pray, and we still use it to instruct us today. We call this prayer the Lord's Prayer because it was given to us by Jesus.

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV) After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.
Amen.



Answer the questions below.

How do we know that this prayer is meant to teach us how to pray?

It is important for you to learn this prayer! Write the prayer below and practice it until you know it by memory.

Lesson 2

Question 99: What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

Answer: The _____ word of God is of _____ to _____ us in prayer; but the _____ rule of direction is that _____ of _____ which Christ taught his _____, commonly called the _____'s _____.

The Petitions

The Lord's Prayer contains a **preface**, six **petitions**, and a **conclusion**. Each of these portions teaches us something about prayer. We will examine each part individually in the next lessons, but first, let's consider how the prayer is organized.

PREFACE : Our Father which art in heaven

FIRST PETITION: Hallowed be thy name

SECOND PETITION: Thy kingdom come

THIRD PETITION: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

FOURTH PETITION: Give us this day our daily bread

FIFTH PETITION: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

SIXTH PETITION: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

CONCLUSION: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.



Practice the Lord's Prayer by writing each portion below:

PREFACE :

FIRST PETITION:

SECOND PETITION:

THIRD PETITION:

FOURTH PETITION:

FIFTH PETITION:

SIXTH PETITION:

CONCLUSION:

Question 100: What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer: The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Lesson 1

Question 100: What doth the preface of the Lord’s Prayer teach us?

Answer: The preface of the Lord’s Prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.



Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord’s Prayer teach us?

A.

Our Good Father

When you are hungry, what do you do? Do you go next door and ask your neighbor for help? Do you stand by the side of the road and hold up a sign begging strangers to give you food? Of course not! You ask your father or mother for something to eat. You ask your dad and mom if you need new shoes or money for a class fieldtrip. They give you many things—everything you need, and also some things that are just gifts, like toys and cookies.

God provides for us like a father provides for his children. God has adopted his chosen people as sons and daughters, and he provides everything they need. God gives us apple trees that grow juicy delicious apples. He provides the soil in which apple trees grow. He provides the rain that waters the apple trees. He makes the sun shine. He gives you parents who buy the apples at the store, and he gives us work to earn money to buy these things. Everything we have is from God.

God tells us to approach him like we would approach a father. You are not embarrassed to ask your parents to give you food. You know that they love you, and they want to provide for you. God loves us and wants to provide for us also.

Jesus explained:

Matthew 7:9-11 Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Even though all people are sinners, most people still provide for their own children. If a boy asks his father for bread, the father does not leave him hungry or give him something that would hurt him. Jesus tells us that God is even better than an earthly father. God is good. He never sins, and he always knows what is best. We should ask God for the things we need and trust that he will give us good things.



Let's Think!

The Bible verses below tell us some ways in which God is like a good father to us. Read each verse and fill in the blanks to describe God's provision as our Father.

Matthew 6:31-33 So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Our Father in heaven gives us _____.

II Corinthians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

Our Father in heaven gives us _____.

Luke 12:32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Our Father in heaven gives us _____.

Mark 11:25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

Our Father in heaven gives us _____ .

Lesson 2

Question 100: What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer: The _____ of the Lord's Prayer, which is, _____ *Father which art in* _____, teacheth us to _____ near to _____ with all _____ and confidence, as _____ to a _____ able and ready to _____ us; and that we should _____ with and for _____.

Holy Reverence

In the Lord's Prayer, we are taught to approach God as we would approach our father. We should be confident about asking him for things we need. However, the Westminster Shorter Catechism also tells us to approach God with **holy reverence**.



Let's Think!

Below are some ways children may ask their father for something. If you think the father will give the child what he or she asks for, write 'Yes' on the line. If you do not think the father will give the child what he or she asks for, write 'No.'

- _____ 1. Sam says, "Dad, my teacher says I need more pencils for school. Would you please buy me more pencils?"
- _____ 2. Mackenzie says, "Dad, I want my own island. I want to be queen of the island and you can be my servant. Will you buy the island for me?"
- _____ 3. Camden says, "Dad, I want a cookie. I want it right now. Give me a cookie! Give it to me now! I want it!"
- _____ 4. Beth says, "Dad, may I please have a cookie after I finish my dinner?"

Sam asked his father for something that he needed, and he was polite and respectful to his dad. Beth asked for something that she wanted, but did not really need. She was polite and respectful also. Both Sam and Beth will probably receive the things they requested. Even if Beth is not allowed a cookie, her father will not be angry that she asked. He will just tell her that she will have a cookie some other time.

God wants us to be polite and respectful to him. We should remember that he is God. He is far greater than our earthly fathers. If we are polite and respectful to our own parents, then we should especially be careful about how we talk to God. God welcomes our prayers when we ask him for things we need, and he welcomes our

prayers even when we just ask for things we want. But we must be content to leave the decision to him. Just like Beth’s father knows best about whether she should have a cookie, God knows best about whether we ought to have certain things. We trust God to do what is good for us.

Mackenzie and John did not ask respectfully. Mackenzie wanted her father to make her the queen and let her rule over him and everything else. John threw a tantrum because he wanted his own way. Earthly fathers are displeased when their children behave this way. Our heavenly Father is also displeased when we ask him for things without reverence.

Read the Nehemiah 8:6 and copy it below.

Lesson 3

Question 100: What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer: The _____ of the Lord's _____ ,
 which is, *Our _____ which art in _____* ,
 teacheth us to draw _____ to _____ with all
 _____ and _____ , as
 children to a _____ able and ready to _____
 us; and that we should _____ with and for _____.

Praying With and For Others

God tells us in the Bible that we should ask him for things we need. We can pray alone, and we can pray for ourselves. However, God also tells us to pray with other people and for other

people. Our prayers should not be entirely selfish—only asking God to bless us. We must think of the needs of others.

In the Lord's Prayer, the preface indicates that we are addressing *our* Father. By calling God *our* Father, we acknowledge that we are part of the whole community of God's people. God is not just *my* Father or *your* Father. He is *our* Father. We pray together, and we pray for each other, remembering that God who is my Father is also the Father of all believers.



Let's Think!

Read the Bible passage below and answer the questions.

Nehemiah 1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said:

"LORD, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

“Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’

“They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”

I was cupbearer to the king.

Does the Bible tell us that Nehemiah prayed this prayer with anyone else?

Even though Nehemiah seems to have prayed alone, how did he show that he was thinking of other people?
