

OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH · FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The Second Sunday after Christmas

Middle School · Parent Edition

For the parent: Read each part aloud and work through the questions together. Your answers are printed in blue italics, so no preparation is needed. Your child uses the Student Edition.

Step 1 Understand the Collect

Most collects follow a five-part pattern: the **address** (the One to whom we pray), the **reason** (what God has done or promised), the **petition** (what we ask), the **purpose** (what we hope will result), and the **ending** (the closing that names the Trinity).

Almighty God, You have poured into our hearts the true Light of Your incarnate Word. Grant that this Light may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

1. Mark each part of the collect. Which part is missing?

***Answer:** Address: "Almighty God." Reason: "You have poured into our hearts the true Light of Your incarnate Word." Petition: "Grant that this Light may shine forth in our lives." Ending: "through the same Jesus Christ..." There is no separate purpose clause; the petition names the result it hopes for.*

2. The collect speaks first of what God has already done and only then of our lives. Why that order?

***Answer:** Grace comes first. We do not make the Light shine by effort; God puts it in us, and then it shows. Good works are the fruit, not the root.*

3. What does the collect name as the Light, and how does it reach our hearts?

***Answer:** "Your incarnate Word," Jesus. He comes to us through the preached Word and the Sacraments, where the Spirit pours Him into our hearts.*

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

Matthew 2:13-23

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." **14** And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt **15** and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: **18** "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, **20** saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." **21** And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. **22** But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. **23** And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so

that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

1. Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt I called my son." In Hosea that verse is about Israel. Why apply it to Jesus?

Answer: God once brought Israel, His "son," out of Egypt. Jesus relives Israel's story and succeeds where Israel failed. He is the true Son.

2. Why would a king like Herod fear a baby?

Answer: The wise men had called the child "king of the Jews," and Herod feared losing his throne. Sin guards its own power at any cost.

3. Matthew includes Jeremiah's words about Rachel weeping (v. 18). Why include such sorrow?

Answer: Scripture does not hide grief. The Messiah comes into a world where evil kills children, and He comes to end it. Jeremiah 31 goes on to promise hope (Jeremiah 31:16-17).

4. Joseph obeys the angel at once every time (vv. 14, 21-22). What does that show?

Answer: Faith that trusts God's Word and acts on it. Joseph protects the child God entrusted to him.

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

1. Find at least two places where the collect's words appear in the Gospel. Explain each one.

Answer: "Shine forth in our lives" matches Joseph, who rises and obeys at once, even "by night" (vv. 14, 21). "True Light" set against darkness matches Herod's fury and murder (v. 16), a darkness that cannot overcome the Light (John 1:5). "Incarnate Word" matches the real child who must be carried to Egypt and back (vv. 14, 21). Any two, well explained, are enough.

2. Today's Epistle tells Christians not to be surprised "at the fiery trial when it comes upon you" (1 Peter 4:12). How does the flight to Egypt show that the Light can shine in a hard life?

Answer: The Holy Family was hunted and became refugees, yet God kept them. Hardship does not mean the Light has gone out. Peter tells suffering Christians to entrust themselves "to a faithful Creator while doing good" (1 Peter 4:19).

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Third Article. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen. **What does this mean?** I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, **enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.** In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

Cross-reference. "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

1. Luther says the Holy Spirit "called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts." How does 2 Corinthians 4:6 describe the same thing?

Answer: The God who made light at creation has "shone in our hearts." The Spirit's enlightening is God's own light: the knowledge of Christ.

2. Luther adds that the Spirit "sanctified and kept me in the true faith." How is the collect's petition a prayer for sanctification?

Answer: *It asks that the Light already given would shine in how we live. Sanctification is the holy life the Spirit works in those He has enlightened.*

3. Herod saw the Light as a threat. Why does the world still oppose Christ and those who follow Him?

Answer: *Christ exposes sin and claims the throne that sin wants for itself. Jesus said that people loved the darkness, since their works were evil (John 3:19).*

Parent note: the question they may ask. "Why did God save Jesus but let the other babies die?" Scripture does not give every reason, and we should not invent one. It does show that God did not stand far off from this evil: the Child who escaped grew up to die for sinners and will raise the dead. Jeremiah's weeping is followed by a promise of hope (Jeremiah 31:15-17).

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

1. Write a short collect of your own for this day. Use all five parts.

Answer: *Answers will vary. Example: "Almighty God, You kept the Child Jesus safe from Herod's anger. Keep Your Light burning in our hearts, that we may obey Your Word as Joseph did; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."*

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

2. What does Jesus do for you when the world is dark?

Answer: *He is my Light. He went through danger and death for me, He lives in my heart by faith, and no king or enemy can put Him out.*