

The Anniversary of the Dedication of Our Church

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 promised to be with Your Church forever. We praise You for Your presence in this place of worship and ask Your ongoing blessing upon those who gather here. Dwell continually among us with Your holy Word and Sacraments, strengthen our fellowship in the bonds of love and peace, and increase our faithful witness to Your salvation; through 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. Write the words that belong to each part.

***Answer:** Address: "Almighty God." Reason: "You have promised to be with Your Church forever." Praise and petition: "We praise You for Your presence... and ask Your ongoing blessing upon those who gather here." Petitions: "Dwell continually among us... strengthen our fellowship... increase our faithful witness." Ending: "through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord..."*

2. One of the five parts has no separate clause in this collect. Which part is it, and where does it end up?

***Answer:** The purpose clause (the usual "that we may..."). The purpose is built into the last petition: "increase our faithful witness to Your salvation."*

3. The collect names the means by which God dwells among us. What are they?

***Answer:** His holy Word and Sacraments.*

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

Luke 19:1-10

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. **3** And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. **4** So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. **5** And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." **6** So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." **8** And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." **9** And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

1. Tax collectors were hated. Why?

***Answer:** They worked for Rome, the occupying power, and often collected more than was owed and kept the difference. People saw them as traitors and cheats.*

2. Jesus says, "I must stay at your house." Why must He? Look at verse 10.

Answer: He was sent to seek and to save the lost. Coming to Zacchaeus was part of His mission from the Father, not a casual choice.

3. Did Zacchaeus give money in order to earn Jesus' visit? Look at the order of events.

Answer: No. Jesus called him first. The giving and repaying came after Jesus came to him, as the fruit of receiving Jesus.

4. Why does Jesus call Zacchaeus "a son of Abraham"?

Answer: The crowd had written him off. Jesus claims him as an heir of God's promise to Abraham.

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

1. Find at least two places where a petition of the collect appears in the Gospel. Explain each one.

Answer: "Dwell continually among us" matches "I must stay at your house today" (v. 5). "We praise You for Your presence" matches "received him joyfully" (v. 6). "Witness to Your salvation" matches "Today salvation has come to this house" (v. 9) and "seek and to save the lost" (v. 10). "Bonds of love and peace" contrasts with the grumbling crowd (v. 7) and shows up in Zacchaeus's giving to the poor and repaying those he cheated (v. 8).

2. In the Old Testament reading for this day, Solomon asks, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?" (1 Kings 8:27). How does the Gospel answer him?

Answer: Yes. In Jesus, God comes and stays in a sinner's house and brings salvation with Him.

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Third Commandment. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **What does this mean?** We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Cross-reference. "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

1. Luther's meaning never mentions a day of the week. What does he say this commandment is about?

Answer: Hearing God's Word. We keep the day holy by holding preaching and the Word sacred and gladly hearing and learning it.

2. How does a church building serve the Third Commandment? Use the collect in your answer.

Answer: The building is set apart as the place where the Word is preached and the Sacraments are given. It is holy for what God does there: "Dwell continually among us with Your holy Word and Sacraments."

Parent note: the question they may ask. "If God is everywhere, why do we need a church?" Solomon asked the same thing (1 Kings 8:27). God is everywhere, but He has not promised to forgive and save us everywhere. He promises to be found for us where He places His name: "My name shall be there" (1 Kings 8:29). Today that means His Word and Sacraments. Jesus is the true temple (John 2:19-21), and He comes to us in this place just as He came to Zacchaeus's house.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

1. Write a short collect of your own for our congregation. Use all five parts.

Answer: Answers will vary. Example: "Lord Jesus, You came to the house of Zacchaeus and brought salvation there. Come to us in this house through Your Word and Supper, that we may receive You with joy and bring others to hear You; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

2. What does Jesus do for you in this church?

Answer: He comes to me in His Word and Sacraments, forgives my sins, and saves me, just as He came to Zacchaeus's house.