

The First Sunday after the Epiphany

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).

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of Your people who call upon You and grant that they both perceive and know what things they ought to do and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; 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. Which part is missing?

***Answer:** Address: "O Lord." Petition: "mercifully receive the prayers of Your people who call upon You and grant." Purpose: "that they both perceive and know what things they ought to do and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same." Ending: "through Jesus Christ..." The reason is missing.*

2. The purpose has two halves: knowing and doing. Why do we need God's help with both?

***Answer:** Sin clouds our understanding and weakens our will. Knowing what is right is not enough; we also need power to do it.*

3. Why does the collect ask for "grace and power," not just "power"?

***Answer:** The power to obey comes from God's undeserved grace. It is His gift, not a self-improvement project.*

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

Luke 2:41-52

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. **42** And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. **43** And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, **44** but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, **45** and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. **47** And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. **48** And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." **49** And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" **50** And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. **51** And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. **52** And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

1. How could Mary and Joseph travel a whole day without noticing Jesus was missing (v. 44)?

***Answer:** Families traveled to the feasts in large groups of relatives and neighbors. Each assumed He was with someone else.*

2. Mary says, "Your father and I," and Jesus answers, "My Father's house" (vv. 48-49). Whom does Jesus mean by "my Father"?

Answer: God. These are Jesus' first recorded words, and He already knows He is the Son of God.

3. If Jesus is God's Son, why was He submissive to Mary and Joseph (v. 51)?

Answer: He placed Himself under the Law for us (Galatians 4:4-5) and kept the Fourth Commandment perfectly in our place.

4. Verse 52 says Jesus "increased in wisdom." How can God grow in wisdom?

Answer: According to His human nature Jesus truly grew and learned, as every child does. He is true God and also true man.

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: "Perceive and know what things they ought to do" matches "I must be in my Father's house" (v. 49) and Jesus listening and asking questions (v. 46). "Grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same" matches "he... was submissive to them" (v. 51). "Receive the prayers of Your people" matches the temple, God's house of prayer. Any two, well explained, are enough.

2. Today's Epistle says, "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2). How does that echo the collect?

Answer: The collect asks to "perceive and know what things they ought to do." Paul says the renewed mind discerns God's will. Both are gifts God gives.

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Fourth Commandment. Honor your father and your mother. **What does this mean?** We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

Cross-reference. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.'" (Ephesians 6:1-3)

1. Jesus had a Father in heaven and parents on earth. How did He honor both in this story?

Answer: He stayed in His Father's house, hearing and learning the Word, and then He went home and obeyed His parents.

2. Ephesians says to obey "in the Lord." When would obeying God come before obeying a parent?

Answer: Only if a parent commanded something God forbids (Acts 5:29). That is rare. In ordinary life, obeying parents is how we obey God.

3. Why is it good news for you that Jesus kept the Fourth Commandment?

Answer: His perfect obedience counts for me, since I have not obeyed perfectly.

Parent note: the question they may ask. "Did Jesus sin by staying behind without telling His parents?" No. Jesus was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He was about His Father's business, and Luke tells us Mary and Joseph did not yet understand (v. 50). Right afterward He went home and was submissive to them (v. 51). The story shows who He is, not a boy ignoring his parents.

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: "O Lord, Your Son was about His Father's business and obeyed His parents. Teach us to know Your will and give us grace to do it, that we may grow in wisdom and in favor with You; 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 you have not obeyed?

Answer: *He forgives me. He obeyed His Father and His parents perfectly in my place, and He gives me grace to obey.*