

# The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Late Elementary · 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

A collect is a short prayer the pastor prays for the whole church. Here is today's collect:

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Words to know.** *Continually*: always. *True faith*: believing what God's Word really teaches. *Relying*: leaning on, depending on. *Parable* (in the Gospel): a story Jesus tells to teach about God's kingdom. *Weeds*: useless plants that look like wheat. *Reapers*: harvest workers.

1. We ask the Lord to keep His family the \_\_\_\_\_.

*Answer: Church.*

2. We ask Him to keep us in the true \_\_\_\_\_.

*Answer: Faith.*

3. We want to be defended by His mighty \_\_\_\_\_.

*Answer: Power.*

## Step 2 Understand the Gospel

### Matthew 13:24-30

**24** He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, **25** but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. **26** So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. **27** And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' **28** He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' **29** But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

1. What did the man sow in his field?

*Answer: Good seed (verse 24).*

2. Who sowed the weeds?

*Answer: His enemy (verses 25 and 28).*

3. Did the master want the weeds pulled right away? Why or why not?

*Answer: No. Pulling them would root up the wheat too (verse 29).*

4. What happens at the harvest?

*Answer: The weeds are burned, and the wheat is gathered into the barn (verse 30).*

## Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

*Say to your child:* Our prayer asks God to keep His Church in the true faith. In Jesus' story, an enemy tries to ruin a good field, but the master protects his wheat. Let's find our prayer in the story.

1. The collect asks God to *keep Your family the Church*. In the story, what does the master protect?

**Answer:** *His wheat (verse 29).*

2. The collect asks for the *true faith*. Who planted the weeds that spoiled the field?

**Answer:** *An enemy (verse 28).*

3. The collect asks that we be *defended*. What happens to the wheat at the end?

**Answer:** *It is gathered safely into the barn (verse 30).*

**Parent note.** In the Church on earth, wheat and weeds grow side by side, and we cannot always tell them apart. Jesus does not ask children to sort people. He keeps His own wheat safe and will gather it at the harvest.

## 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.

1. According to Luther, who gathers the Church and keeps it in the true faith?

**Answer:** *The Holy Spirit.*

2. Luther says the Spirit "keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith." How is that like the master in the story?

**Answer:** *The master keeps his wheat safe until the harvest.*

## Step 5 Wrap It All Up

Pray today's collect together one more time. Then ask:

1. What does Jesus do for you in His Church?

**Answer:** *He keeps me in the true faith by His Word and Spirit, and at the harvest He will gather me into His barn, which is heaven.*