

OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH · FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

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 God, because without You we are not able to please You, mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; 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. What is unusual about the reason?

***Answer:** Address: "O God." Reason: "because without You we are not able to please You." Petition: "mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts." Ending: "through Jesus Christ..." There is no separate purpose clause. The reason is unusual: it names our inability rather than something God has done.*

2. Most collects give a reason drawn from God's deeds or promises. Why would this one rest its prayer on our weakness?

***Answer:** The confession of need is itself the reason to ask. We come as people who cannot please God and ask Him to do in us what we cannot do. It is the prayer of faith, not of self-confidence.*

3. Whom does the collect name as the One who directs our hearts, and where does He work?

***Answer:** The Holy Spirit. He works through the Word and the Sacraments, not apart from them.*

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

Matthew 22:34-46

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. **35** And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" **37** And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. **38** This is the great and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **40** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, **42** saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." **43** He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, **44** 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'? **45** If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" **46** And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

1. The lawyer asked "to test him" (v. 35). Why was this question a trap?

***Answer:** The teachers of the Law counted hundreds of commandments and argued over which mattered most. Any single answer could be attacked for neglecting the others.*

2. Jesus says all the Law and the Prophets "depend" on these two commandments. What does that mean?

Answer: Every commandment is a way of loving God or loving our neighbor. The first three commandments teach love for God; the other seven teach love for our neighbor.

3. Why does Jesus follow the lawyer's question with His own question about the Christ (v. 42)?

Answer: The Law shows what we owe God and cannot pay. The real question is who the Christ is, because He is the One who fulfills the Law for us.

4. How can the Christ be both David's son and David's Lord (vv. 42-45)?

Answer: As a man He is descended from David. As God He is David's Lord. Psalm 110 speaks of Him as both.

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: "Please You" matches the great commandment, which shows what pleases God (vv. 37-39). "Without You we are not able" matches "no one was able to answer him a word" (v. 46). "Your Holy Spirit" matches David speaking "in the Spirit" (v. 43). "Direct and rule our hearts" matches loving God "with all your heart" (v. 37). Any two, well explained, are enough.

2. Today's Epistle says that God "will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:8). How does that answer the collect's confession?

Answer: We cannot please God by ourselves, but God does not leave us to ourselves. He gives His gifts and keeps us to the end, and in Christ He counts us guiltless.

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. "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3)

1. The Pharisees knew the Scriptures but could not say how David's son is also David's Lord. How does Luther's explanation account for that?

Answer: "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ." Learning alone does not bring faith. The Spirit must call us by the Gospel.

2. Compare Matthew 22:43 with 1 Corinthians 12:3. What do they teach together?

Answer: David called the Christ "Lord" in the Spirit, and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Spirit. Confessing Christ is the Spirit's work in us.

3. The great commandment asks for love with all the heart. How is it kept for us, and how does it begin to be kept in us?

Answer: Christ kept it perfectly in our place. The Spirit then begins to renew our hearts so that we love God and our neighbor, imperfectly now and perfectly in heaven.

Parent note: the question they may ask. "If I can't believe by my own strength, is it my fault if I don't believe?" Unbelief is our fault; faith is God's gift. The Spirit works through the Word, so the answer is never to wait for a feeling but to stay where the Spirit has

promised to work: in the Word and the Sacraments.

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 God, You showed the Pharisees that David's son is David's Lord. Send Your Spirit to rule our hearts, that we may confess Jesus as Lord and love You above all things; 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 cannot please God by yourself?

Answer: *He loved God and His neighbor perfectly in my place, died for my sins, and sends His Holy Spirit to make me His own and guide my heart.*