

The Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity

Middle School · Student Edition

For the student: Read along, fill in the blanks, and write your answers on the lines. Your parent has the answers.

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, absolve Your people from their offenses that from the bonds of our sins, which by reason of our frailty we have brought upon ourselves, we may be delivered by Your bountiful goodness; 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?

2. "Which by reason of our frailty we have brought upon ourselves." What does that phrase admit?

3. On what does the collect rest our deliverance, and by what means does it come?

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

Matthew 22:15-22

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. **16** And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. **17** Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites?

19 Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. **20** And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" **21** They said, "Caesar's."

Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." **22** When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

1. The Pharisees and the Herodians usually opposed each other. Why did they team up, and how was the question a trap?

2. Their opening words praise Jesus (v. 16). What is ironic about that?

3. Why did Jesus have them bring the coin?

4. "Render to God the things that are God's." What bears God's image?

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.

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2. Today's Epistle says, "But our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). How can a Christian be a good citizen of his or her country and of heaven at once?
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Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Table of Duties: Of Citizens. The Small Catechism gathers these passages for citizens. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21) "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." (Romans 13:1) "Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed." (Romans 13:7) "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Cross-reference. "Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor." (1 Peter 2:16-17)

1. The Table of Duties quotes today's Gospel. What does Romans 13:1 add about why we honor rulers?
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2. How does 1 Peter 2:16-17 connect freedom from the bonds of sin with honoring the emperor?
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3. What if a ruler commands what God forbids?

Think about it. Do Christians have to obey leaders who do wrong? Read Romans 13:1 and Acts 5:29 and be ready to talk about it.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

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

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

2. What does Jesus do for you when your sins tie you up?
