



Teaching and Learning About Scripture



**Diocese of Sale:
The Lord's Prayer
Luke 11:1-4**



Where do we find this passage?

- We find the story of the giving of the Lord's Prayer in the Gospel of Luke and in the Gospel of Matthew.
- This means it most likely came from a source document that they both had. We call this source 'Q'.
- Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer is longer than Luke's and is placed in a completely different setting.



The giving of The Lord's Prayer is found in two gospels: Matthew's and Luke's. This suggests it is found in the hypothetical source known as 'Q', from the German 'Quelle' meaning source. An early account of The Lord's Prayer is also found in the Didache, an early 2nd century book of teachings.



Where do we find this passage?

- This study is of the version we find in the Gospel of Luke.
- [Diocese of Sale Luke.ppt](#)

This hyperlink will take you to the PowerPoint on Luke.



What literary form is this passage?

- This passage is a recount. However, in the recount, Jesus gives his disciples another literary form, a prayer.
- Prayer is hard to define, but put simply it is communication with God.
- What is easy to see is that most of this prayer *asks for something*: it is, mostly, a prayer of petition. Other verses praise God and express sorrow for wrongdoings.





What literary features are in this passage?

- This passage has some interesting literary features. By understanding them, we can more easily find out what Luke is trying to convey.
- 'He was praying in a certain place'
 - The setting of this teaching on prayer is important: it all happens when Jesus is praying.
 - This passage is *about* one of Luke's favourite themes: Prayer. Luke has more references to prayer than any other Gospel writer.
 - Jesus prays (eg Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 10:21-22; 22:32; 22:41-45;)
 - Jesus encourages other to pray (Luke 5:25-26; 7:16; 13:13)
 - Jesus teaches about prayer (Luke 6:28; 10:2; 21:36)



In Luke the teaching of the Lord's Prayer comes on the road to Jerusalem, during a private teaching with the disciples only. Luke provides a plausible rationale for the teaching in beginning the account with a question from the disciples. Not unreasonably, they want a prayer of their own, one which signifies what they believe in, what they try to live.



What literary features are in this passage?

- 'Lord, teach us to pray'
 - The disciples call Jesus 'Lord', a title given to him after the resurrection. Use of this title reminds us that the recount was written with hindsight, after the death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - This request to be taught a special prayer is not unusual. Often when we admire someone we want to imitate them. Copying what they do seems a good thing to do.





What literary features are in this passage?

- Also, it was quite common for teachers (Rabbi's) of the day to teach their students (disciples) a special prayer – one for them alone. John had given his disciples a prayer (vs 1); now the disciples of Jesus want their own one!
- Finally, this prayer is written for 'us' – it belongs to *us*. The Lord's Prayer is a *community prayer* – it expresses what we believe as a community.



The practise of nomadic Rabbi's gathering disciples (the word actually means student or learner) was common in the first century. Jesus would have been one among many Rabbi's to have had a community of disciples gathered around him.



What literary features are in this passage?

- The Lord's Prayer is a carefully constructed prayer made up of a greeting and five simple prayers.
 - 1: Keep God's name holy
 - 2: Let God's kingdom come
 - 3: Give us enough bread
 - 4: Forgive us whatever sins we commit
 - 5: Don't test us
- Although each prayer is simple, it teaches something important.





Keep God's Name Holy





Let God's Kingdom Come



3



Give us enough Bread





Forgive us whatever sins we commit



Don't test us





What literary features are in this passage?

- 'Father....'
 - The most common metaphor we use when we speak of God is 'father'. When we call God Father, we express an important part of our belief: that we are invited to know God and relate to God in the same way a loving parent knows and relates to their child.



'Father' is the most common metaphor for God in the Second Testament is Father. When we call God Father, we remember that we are invited to know God as a loving parent – a loving father. Be mindful that for some students the suggestion that God is like a father may be unhelpful or unpleasant. If your student's life circumstances do not lead to this designation being a positive association, use an alternative (Scripture contains a large number of metaphors for God including mother, teacher, king, singer and midwife) or explain the ideal carefully.



What literary features are in this passage?

- ‘Holy (Hallowed) be your name....’
 - The first prayer reads as both a statement of something we should do, (keep God’s name holy) and as a statement of something that is (God’s name *is* holy)
 - Calling God’s name holy praises God. It makes clear that God is different from all others and reminds us that God is God and that the way we speak about God must show our great respect and reverence.

Keep God's Name Holy

Three lit candles with yellow flames, arranged in a row.

Holy (Hallowed) be your name....

This petition reads as both a statement and a prayer: God’s name *is* holy....and God’s name *must be kept* holy.

Calling God’s name holy praises God. It makes clear that God is different from all others.

The prayer to keep God’s name holy is found in a number of Jewish prayers. It is also the second of the 10 commandments. Again, it reminds us that God is God and that the way we speak about God must show our great respect and reverence.



What literary features are in this passage?

- 'Your kingdom come....'
 - The petition (request) that God's rule should come on earth is common in Jewish prayer.



The phrase kingdom of God draws on the idea of God being like a king. When God is the 'king' all people will experience love, compassion and peace. It is our role to work towards bringing about God's kingdom on earth now!



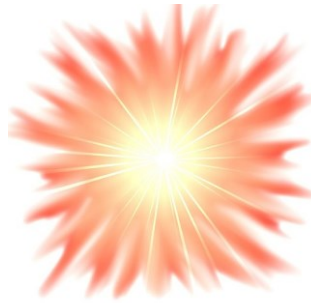
- The nation of Israel had human kings for only a short time in history. After the last one was conquered the people turned their desire for a human king into a dream of a time when God would be their king. As a result, in the First Testament, the most common way of speaking about God is to call God 'King'.





What literary features are in this passage?

- Having this verse in The Lord's Prayer reminds us of Jesus' teaching that a world (a kingdom) where justice and compassion are found is something all should strive for.



Your kingdom come....

Again, the prayer that God's rule should be what happens on earth is common in Jewish prayer. In the First Testament, the most common way of speaking about God is to call God 'King'. This reflects the people's strong desire to have God as their king – a king who would rule the 'kingdom' justly and with compassion. Having this verse in The Lord's Prayer reminds of the dominant teaching of Jesus, the Kingdom of God. In God's rule or era, justice, compassion and mercy would be the governing values. God would rule in a way which restore all people to their rightful place, as creations of God with dignity and value.



What literary features are in this passage?

- 'Give us each day our daily bread...'
 - When Jesus taught this prayer he probably intended this petition to be a request that God provide the disciples with enough real bread each day!



Give us each day our daily bread...

The request for enough bread each day is probably meant to be quite literal – give us enough to eat today! The place of bread in sustaining physical life is found throughout Scripture. However, a metaphorical understanding of feeding and nourishment is also worthy of noting. Luke has told of how Jesus was placed in a manger – a feeding box – after his birth. Jesus, in Luke's mind, brings 'nourishment' and 'food' to all those who lacked it – he IS nourishment and food to those who are sick, outcast, downtrodden, poor and marginalised.



- The place of bread in sustaining physical life is found throughout Scripture. In their wandering in the desert God provided with people with manna; in his lifetime Jesus fed the crowd with bread. Of course, having enough to eat is just the beginning...how we use the energy it gives us is more important!





What literary features are in this passage?

- ‘Forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us....’
 - This part of the prayer is worded as a petition, but it expresses a feeling of sorrow.
 - Luke has taught that God is kind and merciful (Luke 6:35-38) and, of course, forgiving (Luke 15). This expression of sorrow asks God to forgive us when we fail to live as we should. It also reminds us that we too should forgive those who ‘owe’ us.



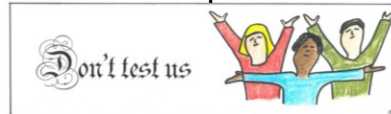
Forgive us our trespasses for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us....

Luke has taught that God is kind and merciful (Luke 6:35-38) and, of course, forgiving (Luke 15). Although we are expected to be as much like God as we can, the prayer asks God to forgive us when we fail to live as we should. It also reminds us that we too should forgive those who ‘owe’ us. For Luke, this is important. Throughout his Gospel Luke has stressed that Jesus teaching that the disciples must forgive others. In fact, asking for forgiveness for those who crucified him is one of the last thing Luke records Jesus as saying before he dies. Jesus lives what he teaches!



What literary features are in this passage?

- ‘Do not bring us to the time of trial....’
 - In the time of Jesus the people believed God could come into their world and arrange for things (usually bad things) to happen. This last petition asks that God not test them in this way. Today we don’t think that God works by arranging disasters to happen. So, we might understand this prayer better by thinking that it asks God to help us to be strong in our faith so that we are not tempted to make poor choices.



Do not bring us to the time of trial....

The Israelites believed God could come into their world to intervene; for good or bad. This last petition reflects this notion. It is important that we take the time to teach students that our understanding of God is not consistent with this belief: God does not send car accidents, disease or natural catastrophes. These things might be better understood as a consequence of our poor decision making.



Something to think about

- Luke puts this teaching on how to pray in a simple, personal and private setting. Jesus teaches only the disciples.
- Matthew puts this same teaching in with a lot of other teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. A whole crowd hear Jesus teach about prayer.
- Which setting do you think suits this lovely prayer – our lovely prayer – the best?

