

The Address

Our Father in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that he is our true Father and that we are his true children, so that we may pray to him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father.

1. With the words of the Address, Jesus sets the mood for the Lord's Prayer by reminding us of our relationship with God. What do the following passages tell us about our relationship with God and how this relationship came about?

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1).

"When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5).

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26).

2. What assurance do we have in prayer from knowing that God is our Father? What other assurances do we gain from this fact?
3. Evaluate: In no other religion on earth is there such a warm relationship between the God worshiped and the worshiper as there is in the Christian religion.
4. Many people in our society have a poor concept of fatherhood. How would you use Scripture's message about our Father in heaven to teach someone about fatherhood? How would you use this message to comfort someone who has never known the love of an earthly father?
5. The words *in heaven* remind us that God is almighty. What added assurance does this give you as you pray?

6. Saint James wrote: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord”* (1:5-7). What things cause us to lack confidence when we pray? How does this hinder our prayer life?

7. Use an *X* on the scale below to rate the boldness and confidence with which you pray (1 being weak; 10 being strong). Use a circle to indicate the frequency with which you pray (1 being infrequently; 10 being often). What will God use to improve both of these aspects of your prayer life?

Luther said:

“God in his Word testifies that our prayers heartily please him and will definitely be heard and granted. This he does so that we may not disdain his promise or cast it to the wind or pray in uncertainty.” (Tappert, p. 423.)

Closing Prayer

Dear Father, by the sacrifice of your Son, Jesus, you have reconciled all people to yourself. By the working of your Spirit, you have called us to faith and have made us your children. We rejoice over this relationship. We thank you for your continual presence. We praise you for your tender care and for the privilege of praying to you as boldly and as confidently as any dear children come to their dear fathers. Amen.

At home

Memorize the Address and its meaning.