



Book of Faith Lenten Journey: 40 Days with the Lord's Prayer

These worship helps are for congregations shaping their Lenten Wednesday worship services around the Lenten Resource—*Book of Faith Lenten Journey: 40 Days with the Lord's Prayer*. This resource focuses on one petition of the Lord's Prayer for each of the seven weeks in Lent. In these Worship Helps you will find bullet points highlighting each week's key themes from *Book of Faith Lenten Journey*, a Prayer of the Day, scripture readings, hymn suggestions, and several ideas and images to build the worship experience around. Worship planners are encouraged to pick and choose from these worship helps—and even to go beyond them—in planning Lenten worship that speaks to the context of your congregation. Each week in Lent, the worship planner should have read each of the six daily readings from *Book of Faith Lenten Journey* in order to plan worship and prepare a sermon that speaks to the experience of congregational members who are working through this resource as a personal or small group Lenten discipline.

The following types of material is available in each set of Worship Helps.

Introduction to the Day

Sets a thematic course for the day's worship that is aligned with the scripture readings and theme of the course session

Prayer of the Day and Prayer Prompts

A Prayer of the Day and creative prayer prompts connect to the day's theme

Scripture Readings

Support themes of the course sessions and help set the direction for the worship service. (1 Old Testament reading, 1 psalm, 1 epistle, 1 gospel reading)

Hymns for Worship

Nine hymn suggestions for each worship service

Ideas and Images for the Day

Compelling ideas from a wide variety of categories that support and interpret the day's theme in creative, engaging, and interactive ways



Worship Helps for the Fifth Wednesday in Lent

■ Introduction to the Day

To be used as a sermon starter and springboard into the worship service

The theme for the fifth Wednesday in Lent is “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” Forgiveness was at the heart of Jesus’ ministry. He consistently proclaimed God’s forgiveness, he forgave sins as the One sent by God, and he called his followers to radical forgiveness. These three themes, interconnected or taken separately, provide rich material for the preacher. The sermon might even look forward to Good Friday where the dying Jesus spoke the word of forgiveness—to those who murdered him and to those complicit in his murder by their silence—before it was asked for. The preacher might focus on:

- Our *debt* to God (or sin against God) for which we seek forgiveness.
- Our *debt* to each other (or sin against each other) for which we must offer and seek forgiveness.
- How the forgiveness of God and forgiveness between people are both the gift of relationship and the promise of a new future.
- How forgiveness is the chance to get things right, to make new and better choices.
- How the parable of the prodigal son is both a window on God and a model for human behavior.
- The power of un-asked-for-forgiveness.

■ Prayer of the Day

Use this prayer as the Prayer of the Day.

Merciful God, as often as we ask for your forgiveness, you are quick to forgive, and even when we don’t ask your forgiveness is always there, calling us back into relationship with you. May we be as quick to seek your forgiveness as you are to forgive, and may we be as quick to forgive each other, through Jesus Christ in whom you have reconciled us to yourself. Amen.

Use these prayer prompts during the Prayers of Intercession portion of the worship service.

- For we who confess our indebtedness to God and repent of our sin, that we may have the faith, wisdom, and courage to make better choices in the way we live.
- For we who have been sinned against, that we may forgive and release the debt of others as God has forgiven us and released our debt.
- For we who have sinned against others and are in debt to them, that we may have the courage to seek forgiveness and release, and that they might have the grace to forgive and release us.
- For this community of faith, that we might bear with one another in love, supporting and building up one another as brothers and sisters in the family of God.



■ Scripture Readings

Use these readings and reading introductions as the day's lectionary texts.

ISAIAH 6:1-8

The prophet receives a vision of the holiness of God and trembles in fear because he is “a man of unclean lips,” a sinner in the presence of a holy God. Without asking, he is forgiven, and having been forgiven, he is called into the service of God.

PSALM 51:1-12

The psalmist acknowledges and confesses his sin before God, acknowledging that *all* sin is sin against God. He prays for forgiveness and humbly asks God to give him a “clean heart” and a “new and right spirit.”

EPHESIANS 4:30-5:1

Paul links the way we should be with each other with the way God in Christ is with us. In our life together as people of faith, we should reflect the same kindness and forgiveness that God has shown us.

MATTHEW 18:21-22

In response to Peter's question as to how many times he should forgive another, Jesus demands that those who follow him practice radical forgiveness.

■ Hymns for Worship

Become familiar with the selections in your hymnal's Word section. Consider having your congregation learn a new hymn or song celebrating the gift of the Bible that can be sung each week during the time your congregation is engaged in the “Opening the Book of Faith” study. Consider trying a hymn or song that is different in style from what your congregation is most familiar with.

GATHERING

God, When Human Bonds Are Broken ELW 603, WOV 735
Spirit of Gentleness ELW 396, WOV 684

HYMN OF THE DAY

Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive ELW 605, LBW 307
Change My Heart, O God ELW 801
Eternal Spirit of the Living Christ ELW 402, LBW 441

OFFERING

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful ELW 181-184
Accept, O Lord, the Gifts We Bring ELW 691, WOV 759 (only verses 1 & 3 if no Communion)

SENDING

Christ, Be Our Light ELW 715
Go, My Children, with My Blessing ELW 543, WOV 721



Ideas and Images for the Day

Use one or more of these ideas to interpret the day's theme in creative, engaging, interactive, and surprising ways during worship.

PARAPHRASE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER BY ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI:

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES,
in your immeasurable mercy,
by virtue of the passion of your Son,
and through the intercession of Mary,
and all your saints.
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US,
and if we do not forgive perfectly,
Lord, make us forgive perfectly,
so that, for love of you,
we may really forgive our enemies,
and fervently pray to you for them,
returning no one evil for evil,
but trying to serve you in everyone.

ESSAY

An essay from *Word and World* by Arland Hultgren, "Forgive Us, As We Forgive: Matthew 6:12":
http://www.luthersem.edu/word%26world/Archives/16-3_Forgiveness/16-3_Hultgren.pdf

DRAMA

An eight person drama on "Forgiveness" that could be used in place of or to complement the sermon:
<http://www.dramatix.org/archive/Walk/forgiveness.html>

MUSIC VIDEO

A YouTube Christian music video on the theme of love, unity, and forgiveness:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chC6ej-OxCw&feature=related>

ARTWORK IF YOU USE A PROJECTION SCREEN

A [Max Pechstein woodblock](#) (1921) of the forgiving father and the prodigal son as an illustration of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer.

A [contemporary Asian representation by Frank Wesley](#) (undated) of the forgiving father and the prodigal son.

