

# The Lord's Prayer

By Kathy Applebee

CHARACTERS: Jesus and disciples (this is written for 5 M (Jesus, Peter, John, James, Mathew) and 4 F (Salome, Mary, Martha and Joanna) however it is possible to do with fewer disciples.

SETTING: Semi bare stage (see director's notes at end)

COSTUMES: Simple (see director's notes at end)

*At rise: Jesus is praying with Peter, James, John, Matthew, snoozing; Mary, Joanna, Salome and MARTHA: watching. JESUS rises. The male characters awake, chagrined they have fallen asleep.*

MARY: Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.

JESUS: When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. *PETER and MATTHEW move to one side and act this out (a second option is to have it acted out as someone sings *Mercy for the sinner*)* And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

JOANNA: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

PETER: *(Proud, boastful)* God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. Blah, blah, blah *(PETER allows his voice to fade out indicating he was going on and on and on)*

MATTHEW: *(not even look up to heaven)* God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

JESUS: *(Placing a hand on MATTHEW's shoulder)* I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

*The disciple's jostle each other for the seat next to Jesus as they sit at his feet to listen. JESUS looks on shaking his head. As they notice this, they are ashamed and move to let someone else have a better seat.*

JESUS: When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor.

*PETER moves stage right while JAMES and JOHN move stage left. The others "take their seats" at a banquet, leaving the space in the middle open. PETER swaggers in and takes the seat, leaning over to speak to the person next to him. JAMES and JOHN enter.*

JAMES: Excuse me, but this seat was reserved for our guest of honor.

*JAMES uses his thumb to oust PETER from his seat. He sends him to the end of the table, humiliated.*

MARTHA: *(clapping her hands like a movie clap board)* Take 2.

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Everyone “rewinds to the start of the scene only PETER takes the lowest seat this time.

JESUS: But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes

JAMES: Friend, move up to a better place. (*JAMES escorts him to the center seat*)

JESUS: Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests.

ALL DISCIPLES: (*in unison*) for all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

JESUS: When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

**SONG: Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord**

SALOME: How often should we pray, Lord?

JESUS: Always. You must never give up. *JAMES and MARY move to act this out.*

JOANNA: In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him.

MARY: Grant me justice against my adversary.

JOANNA: For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself

JAMES: Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't wear me out.

JESUS: Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?

ALL: Yes, Lord!

JESUS: Will he keep putting them off?

ALL: No, Lord.

JESUS: I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.

**SONG: Keep praying**

JESUS: Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say (*MARTHA, SALOME and others as snoring children act this out*)

MARTHA: Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; another friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.

SALOME: Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything. *MARTHA: keeps on knocking*

JESUS: I tell you, even though she will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity, she will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

MARY: What should we say when we pray?

JESUS: This is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

PETER: Kingdom! Where's my sword? *JESUS reaches out to stop PETER and bring him to his senses, meanwhile...*

*JAMES and JOHN push PETER out of the way and like small children fall at Jesus feet and begin begging him like small children asking a parent for a treat. (Ad lib. "Can I sit on your right?" "Can I sit on your left?" Meanwhile PETER tries to push in as do the women. JESUS puts out a commanding hand to signal stop and they fall backwards and silent.*

JESUS: Not an earthly kingdom. *They look puzzled, then as he speaks, they act these out. The parable of the net is done downstage of JESUS; the others use the four corners of the stage*

JESUS: The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.

*PETER, JAMES and JOHN are the fisherman; the other 5 are the "fish".*

JESUS: When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous

*JESUS:* The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.

*JOHN "grows" from a seed to a tree. SALOME and MARTHA: flutter about like birds, finally taking his "branches/hands" as if they perched*

**SONG: The Mustard Seed song**

JESUS: The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.

*MARTHA kneads bread dough, pops it into oven and pulls out a loaf to share with the "birds" that flutter over to eat from her hand.*

JESUS: The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

*MATTHEW “digs”, discovers and sells his coat and ring to PETER who gives him the “deed”.*

JESUS: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

**SONG: Pearl of Great Price**

*JAMES discovers the pearl MARY is selling. He goes to PETER, sells his “coat” and “ring” and returns to buy the pearl.*

JESUS: Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. *SALOME and MARTHA: swoop in and steal the “deed” and “pearl”. JAMES and MATTHEW act distraught.*

JESUS: But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**SONG: You are the Treasure that I seek**

JESUS: *(Praying)* Our father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. *(Not praying)* There was a man who had two sons.

*MATTHEW becomes the father, JAMES and JOHN the sons*

MATTHEW: *(to first son)* Son, go and work today in the vineyard.

JAMES: I will not.

JESUS: But later he changed his mind and went.

MATTHEW *(to second son)* Son, go and work today in the vineyard.

JOHN: I will sir.

JESUS: But he did not go. Which of the two did what his father wanted?

ALL: The first.

JESUS: *(praying)* Give us today our daily bread.

MARY: Why not a week’s worth?

SALOME: Or months’ worth?

JOANNA: How about a year’s worth at once!

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MARTHA: I'd never have to work again! I could sell the extra and get rich!

JESUS: Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions. Listen! The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.

MATTHEW: What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. (*Looks puzzled, then has an "aha!" moment*) This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "Self, You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. (*The others come in and wait on him, bringing food, drink, a robe, playing music*) Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.

JESUS: 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. (*MATTHEW "dies"*) Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? (*The others take his robe, food, etc and run off laughing*)

JESUS: This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.

*The women are "trying on clothes" and dissatisfied while the men eat and drink and are dissatisfied*

JESUS: For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.

*SALOME repeats sharing with the "birds" that flutter over to eat from her hand.*

JESUS: Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! (*JESUS pats the birds*) Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

*PETER, JAMES and JOHN "throw out their nets" and catch nothing. Hey look worried and upset. Then PETER falls overboard and has to be rescued by JAMES and JOHN.*

JESUS: Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

*The four women become seeds that grow up into beautiful flowers. MATTHEW becomes King Solomon on a throne. They are content and show off their "clothes" which the men admire.*

JESUS: Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

**SONG: Seek Ye FIRST**

JESUS: (*Praying*) And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

PETER: Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me?

JESUS: Peter, I have something to tell you.

PETER: Tell me, teacher,

*MATTHEW is the moneylender, MARTHA: and MARY the debtors.*

JESUS: Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?

PETER: I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.

*MARTHA: skips away joyfully but MARY falls to her knees and kisses MATTHEW'S feet*

JESUS: You have judged correctly.

PETER: So should I forgive up to seven times?

JESUS: I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

*MATTHEW becomes the king, Peter and James, the servants. JOHN is the king's guard. MARY is the wife and MARTHA: and JOANNA the children.*

SALOME: As the king began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

MATTHEW: Pay me what you owe me.

JAMES: I'm broke.

SALOME: Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. At this the servant fell on his knees before him.

JAMES: Be patient with me and I will pay back everything.'

MATTHEW: I will take pity on you. Your debt is canceled. You are free to go. *JAMES and family leave rejoicing until JAMES sees PETER.*

SALOME: When that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him.

JAMES: Pay back what you owe me!

SALOME: His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him,

PETER: *(falling to his knees and begging)* Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.

JAMES: No! *(to JOHN)* Throw him in prison until he pays me!

*JOHN reluctantly arrests PETER and takes him before the king.*

MATTHEW: Bring that servant back! *(JOHN brings JAMES in.)* You wicked servant; I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? *(to JOHN)* Take this one to jail until he repays me.

JESUS: This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

SONG: Remember Christ our Savior or If I have wounded any soul today

*As they sing, the disciples hug and forgive each other*

JESUS: *(Praying)* And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

ALL: For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

SONG: A grand finale of God's glory and power OR the Lord's Prayer or flow from one to the other.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

If you have ever seen a lively version of Godspell with simple costumes and a great deal of movement onstage, you have in mind what I do. Jesus is the teacher and often the narrator, explaining his model prayer with parables. The disciples change from selfish, pushy people who want to be first to humble, forgiving followers.

Songs suggested are only suggested and permission to use them is NOT included with this script. Some are under copyright. Links to the lyrics are included at the end.

The female characters Joanna and Salome can be found in Luke. 8:3, 24:18; Mk 15:40, 16:1. Mary could be either the sister of Martha or Mary Magdalene.

Jesus is in Biblical attire. Disciple costumes can be Biblical or any era but should be simple, neutral colors especially if additional pieces will be added. See example below for how these can be added to show character.

JOANNA: in a certain town there was not a judge (picks up a gavel or tosses on judge's robe) who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow (black head shawl) in that town who kept coming to him

OR

JESUS: Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions. Listen! The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.

MATTHEW: (puts on straw farmer hat) What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.

OR

*MATTHEW (puts on paper crown) becomes the king, Peter and James, the servants. JOHN is the king's guard. (Hold stick for spear) MARY is the wife, MARTHA and JOANNA the children.*

Set could include rocks, benches or something simple for the disciples to sit on (or in the case of the Pharisee praying) stand on. Simple props can hidden be underneath or behind. Coat racks placed onstage can be used to hang simple additions to the costumes.

Suggested songs for Lord's Prayer

<http://www.acadisc.com/wedding2.htm#lords> Lord's Prayer 1

<http://www.acadisc.com/rescuediff.htm#lords> Lord's Prayer 2

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<http://nethymnal.org/htm/l/p/lprayer.htm> Lord's Prayer 3

<http://www.higherpraise.com/choruses/humblethysselfinthesightofthelord.htm> Humble Yourself

<http://www.acadisc.com/ssparables.htm#keep> Keep Praying (Widow and Judge)

<http://www.acadisc.com/ssparables.htm#mustard> Mustard Seed song

<http://www.higherpraise.com/lyrics/cool/y/178.htm> You are my Treasure by Chris Tomlin

<http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/you-are-my-all-in-all-lyrics-point-of-grace/2e8e0f062e750f3a48256c13000d7431> You are the Treasure that I seek

<http://www.acadisc.com/ssparables.htm#mercy> Mercy for the Sinner (Pharisee and Tax Collector song)

<http://www.acadisc.com/ssparables.htm#ask> Ask, Seek and Knock

<http://www.acadisc.com/ssparables.htm#pearl> Pearl of Great Price

#### OTHER POSSIBLE SONGS

<http://nethymnal.org/htm/f/a/fathhear.htm> Father, hear the prayer we offer

<http://nethymnal.org/htm/t/k/tkcofhop.htm> Thy kingdom come, Father hear our prayer

<http://nethymnal.org/htm/d/e/dearlord.htm> Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, forgive

<http://nethymnal.org/htm/e/v/evprayer.htm> Evening Prayer (If I have wounded any soul)

<http://nethymnal.org/htm/r/e/remember.htm> Remember Christ our Savior

<http://nethymnal.org/htm/t/h/y/thykicol.htm> Thy Kingdom come, O Lord

<http://www.klove.com/music/artists/darlene-zschech/songs/pray-lyrics.aspx> Pray by Darlene Zschech

<http://www.onlylyrics.com/hits.php?grid=11&id=1062877> Kingdom Come by Nicole C. Mullen

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