

# Teach us to pray • Breaking open the word

Sunday's first reading is the story of how Abraham haggled with God, trying to convince God not to destroy Sodom. The people of Sodom were living a self-destructive lifestyle—they were violent, inhospitable and uncaring. Abraham is relentless in bargaining and God wants to save the city if it can be saved. We are shown that, no matter how much other people might want us to make good choices, and might argue and pray on our behalf, it comes down to us to be responsible for our actions.

In the second reading, Paul reminds us that Jesus has done everything that needed to be done to get sin out of our way so that we could have a full relationship with God. All we have to do is say “yes” to it, and we do that with our actions and our prayer.

In the Gospel, the disciples asked Jesus how to pray. First he gave them the Our Father, which is the perfect prayer. It acknowledges that God is above all things, honors God, tells God that we want to put his plans before our own, asks God to give us what we need, and to forgive us and help us to be forgiving. Then, Jesus tells a few stories to show that we should be persistent—really, really persistent. When we pray, we open ourselves to hear God's response to our prayers, we hear what we are really asking for and we open ourselves to have our hearts changed by spending time with God.

You can read this Sunday's readings here:

[Scriptures for the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C](#)

## Break open the word with your family

### Kids

What is your favorite prayer? Share it with your family.

### Teens

You might get in trouble with your parents for nagging, but God loves it. Nag away. If there's something bothering you, or something you need help with, nag God until you get some help. Have you ever had an experience where you asked God for help and got it?

### Adults

Sometimes we fall into the trap of believing that God is "too busy" or has "more pressing" things to deal with than our petty problems. Nonsense! God wants to hear everything you have to say. God also wants you to listen. What is your prayer time like? Do you spend a significant amount of time with God? Do you speak, or do you listen (or both)? How can you be more present to God in prayer?

## A little lectio

The ancient practice of prayerfully reflecting on bits of Scripture is known as *lectio divina*. Want to try it out with your family? Head over to [Lectio Divina for Kids](#) to find out how to adapt this prayer practice for your kids.

## A little Bible study

Want to do a little Bible study with your kids? Here are some tips:

- During Ordinary Time, the Church pairs the Old Testament

and New Testament readings in a way that each sheds light on the other. Ask your kids to look for the common theme connecting the two readings. (Sometimes it's obvious, sometimes it is subtle.) How does the "dialogue" between the readings help you understand them better?

- Get a New American Bible, Revised Edition, and take a look at the footnotes for these readings. How do they change your understanding of what is going on?
- Take a look at the context for the readings—what happens before, or after?
- Read the NABRE's introduction to the book of the Bible that the readings are taken from. How does that help you understand the readings?
- If you don't have a copy of the NABRE at home, you can view it online at the USCCB website at the [Daily Readings](#) web page.

For even more resources for breaking open this Sunday's readings, head over to [The Sunday Website](#).