

2

Pray

MATTHEW 6:5-13



GOAL

Children hear Jesus teach about prayer and express their own prayers.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

God who listens, hear my prayer for these children and the time we will spend together learning and praying. Amen.

THIS SESSION

Prayer is a central practice for people of faith. One may pray in a worship service, in times of crisis, or in moments of gratitude. Prayer as a spiritual discipline has at its root a desire to grow closer to God. Building a relationship with another person or with God requires intentionality and regularity. Drawing closer to God doesn't just happen with an occasional conversation. It requires consistent conversation, expressing all sorts of feelings, and listening as well. Prayer is the foundation of a deepening relationship with God.

THE BIBLE STORY

In the very center of Jesus' teaching in Matthew's Gospel are Jesus' words on prayer (Matthew 6:5-13). They begin with an admonishment not to pray to be showy, with lots of empty phrases or many words, just to be heard or seen (vv. 5-8). Then Jesus offers an alternative and says, "Pray in this way . . ." He provides a model for prayer (vv. 9-13) in both the simplicity of the words and the pattern it provides. This prayer is known as the Lord's Prayer. Churches and denominations may use differing words—traditional or ecumenical language; have various iterations of *debts*, *trespasses*, or *sins*; and add a closing line of praise or not—but the model and pattern of prayer is recognizable as the prayer Jesus taught.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Most children are familiar with prayer as talking to God through experiences in worship, table graces, and bedtime prayers. They may not understand prayer as a conversation with God, building a relationship and spending time with God as one would with a friend. Prayer as conversation, spoken and unspoken, with all its various intentions of praise and adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and petition may be new to children. Jesus' model of prayer can help children learn and practice that universal prayer as well as finding their own voice in prayer.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "The Lord's Prayer" (p. 17): Obtain *The Lord's Prayer* infographic poster (bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters, Bible Basics Set).
- Depending on the options you choose:
 - "Prayer Memory Tool" (p. 19) or "Using Our Bodies to Pray" (p. 19): Gather the Spiritual Discipline journals from session 1. Have a few extra notebooks for children who were not present at session 1. Gather worship bulletins from several worship services.



GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Copies of Resource Pages 1 and 2
- ☐ Pencils and crayons

Resource Page 2 solution:
Prayer is a conversation with God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER PUZZLES

G

Greet the children as they arrive. Provide copies of Resource Pages 1 and 2, pencils, and crayons. Invite the children to work on one or both puzzles as they wish. They can also color the pictures on the pages.

DRAW NEAR TO GOD

AM

The opening ritual is a responsive litany with one line changing to correspond to the spiritual discipline in each session. The motions help children learn their responses, which are printed in the bold text and remain the same throughout the unit.

Draw near to God

and God (*raise both arms to the sky*)

will draw near to us. (*bring hands toward heart, crossing them over your heart*)

When we pray, we are changed by being with God.

Let us (*extend arms forward, palms facing upward*)

keep company (*bend elbows and bring together hands in prayer*)

with Jesus. (*sign "Jesus" using right middle finger touching the middle of left palm, repeat with left middle finger touching the middle of right palm*)



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

- ☐ Internet-connected device

WHAT IS PRAYER?

C T

Engage the children in a conversation about prayer using the following questions:

- ✦ What do you think prayer is?
- ✦ When do we pray?
- ✦ Why do we pray?

Show the children a series of three short YouTube videos:

- ✦ "What Is Prayer?" (bit.ly/FMWhatIsPrayer, 0:47)
- ✦ "Why Do We Pray?" (bit.ly/FMWhyPray, 1:01)
- ✦ "How Do We Pray?" (bit.ly/FMHowPray, 1:04)

Revisit the three questions asked before the videos and wonder if there is any new information the children learned about prayer and praying.

Introduce, or remind the children of, what a spiritual discipline is, something we can do that can draw us closer to God. Say the words *disciple* and *discipline*. Tell the children that the two words come from the same origin meaning "to learn." A disciple is someone who learns from another, and discipline is an activity or experience that provides training or learning. Suggest that spiritual disciplines are those things that help us train to be

disciples, to practice being a follower of Jesus. Wonder together how praying is a spiritual discipline and how the children might incorporate it in their daily lives.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

C

Wonder together who has heard of the Lord's Prayer and who knows all the words of the prayer. Ask those who know the words how they learned them. Some may say they memorized them at some point, while others may say that they just learned them as they heard them spoken over and over in worship services. Tell the children that the Lord's Prayer is probably the most well-known prayer for Christians. It is prayed all over the world and in many languages.

Read Matthew 6:5–13 from a Bible and then ask a volunteer to read the adapted Bible story on Resource Page 3. Display *The Lord's Prayer* infographic poster. Invite children to take turns being the leader, pointing out each part of the Lord's Prayer with any notes provided on the infographic poster, and asking what other words or phrases could be used to help understand that section of the prayer. As suggestions are made, write them on sticky notes and add them to the infographic poster. For example, someone may point out that "Our" means that God is everyone's God and that anyone can pray to God.

Display a sheet of newsprint next to the infographic poster. Tell the children that Jesus not only gave us words to pray but also gave us a pattern of prayer that we can follow. Write the following on the newsprint:

1. Address and praise God
2. Five petitions (requests)
 - a. May we follow God's way of living
 - b. May we have what we need each day
 - c. May we be forgiven for what we have done wrong AND may we forgive others for the wrongs they have done to us
 - d. May we do better (not get tempted to do wrong again)
 - e. May we be safe
3. Words of praise

Note a couple of things for the children: 1) the infographic poster begins the petitions with daily needs, but the desire for God's kingdom on earth is a petition too, and 2) the words of praise at the end of the prayer were not in Jesus' model but were added by the church in later years.

Wonder together how this pattern could be used with their prayers. Comment that this pattern suggests that we can address and praise God, that we can ask God for what we need, that we can tell God what we've done wrong and ask for forgiveness, and that we can close with words of praise again. Suggest that giving thanks is also a way of praising God. Keep the infographic poster and newsprint displayed through the rest of the session so the children may refer to them.

- Bible
- Resource Page 3
- The Lord's Prayer* infographic poster (Bible Basics Set)
- Sticky notes
- Newsprint
- Markers



When praying the Lord's Prayer, use the words that are used and familiar in your congregation. Help the children understand that, though different words may be used in some parts, the meaning Jesus intended is the same.



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

- Worship bulletins
- Highlighter markers, markers
- Hymnals

PRAYER IN WORSHIP

C

Ask the children about different places and times they pray, have seen others pray, or might imagine prayer happens. Affirm all answers and explore each one for a moment, wondering what prayer might be like in those places and times. Tell the children that worship is a good place to look at where different types of prayer happen.

Form groups of two or three, placing non-readers and readers together. Hand out worship bulletins, highlighter markers, markers, and hymnals to each group and invite them to highlight all the instances of prayer in the worship service bulletins they have (not in the hymnals). As a challenge, suggest that they also look at the hymns in the worship service and see if they might be a prayer as well. Have the children place the following symbols by the prayers or parts of a prayer in the worship service bulletins (not in the hymnals):

- Star by prayers of praise and adoration
- Cross by prayers of confession
- Circle by prayers of thanksgiving
- Zigzag by prayers where something is being asked for oneself or others
- Music note by a hymn or song that is also a prayer

Invite each group to share what kind of prayers they found in their worship service. Wonder how many instances of prayer happened in the worship services and what that might tell us about prayer.

- Internet-connected device
- Glory to God* hymnals, or hymnal with “Our Father, Which Art in Heaven” (WEST INDIAN)
- Rhythm instruments

SINGING THE LORD’S PRAYER

M T

Tell the children that one way to pray is through singing. Wonder what songs the children might know that are prayers. Some children may be familiar with mealtime prayer songs. Suggest that the Lord’s Prayer is a prayer that has been set to music and has been sung by many singers. Show the children clips from one or more of the following YouTube videos:

- “Andrea Bocelli Sings Angelic Lord’s Prayer as Pope Francis Watches” (bit.ly/FMBocelliPrayer, 4:56)
- “The Lord’s Prayer with Motions” (bit.ly/FMMotionsPrayer, 3:08)
- “Citizen Way—The Lord’s Prayer (Official Lyric Video)” (bit.ly/FMCitizenPrayer, 3:55)
- “The Lord’s Prayer New Version (Our Father—Simple Melody)” (bit.ly/FMSimplePrayer, 1:37)

Invite the children to sing a West Indian, or Caribbean, version of the Lord’s Prayer. Hand out hymnals (*Glory to God* hymnal, #464) or show the YouTube video “Our Father, Who Art in Heaven (Caribbean Lord’s Prayer) [with Lyrics for Congregations]” (bit.ly/FMWestIndianPrayer, 2:31). Once the children are familiar with the tune, add rhythm instruments and sing the song again.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

PRAYER MEMORY TOOL

A QC

Tell the children that you are going to suggest a prayer memory tool that they can add to their Spiritual Discipline journals. Give the children their Spiritual Discipline journals and have a notebook for anyone who was not at session 1. Provide coloring supplies.

Tell the children you will give them letters to write down the left-hand side of a page. Suggest that they might want to make their letter decorative by making outline letters, bubble letters, or something of their own choosing. Have them write the corresponding words by their respective letters and discuss each word. Assist with writing as needed.

- ACTS— Tell the children to write the letters A, C, T, and S.
 - A—Adoration: Praise and adore God.
 - C—Confession: Tell God you are sorry and will try to do better.
 - T—Thanksgiving: Thank God.
 - S—Supplication: Ask God for what you need for yourself and for others. (Explain that this is a big word for asking or requesting.)

Have the children choose one of the words in ACTS and write or draw pictures of their prayer in their journal.

- Spiritual Discipline journals from session 1 and extra notebooks
- Pencils, markers, crayons, and colored pencils

USING OUR BODIES TO PRAY

AM A QC

Tell the children that there are different ways to use our bodies to pray and you are going to suggest one way that they can add to their Spiritual Discipline journals. Give the children their Spiritual Discipline journals and have extra notebooks for anyone who was not present at session 1. Provide coloring supplies.

Provide copies of Resource Pages 4 and 5, scissors, and glue sticks. Invite the children to color and cut out the pictures showing motions for the words and phrases of the Lord's Prayer. Tell them to glue the pictures in their Spiritual Discipline journals in order. Encourage them to practice the motions to the Lord's Prayer.

- Spiritual Discipline journals from session 1 and extra notebooks
- Copies of Resource Pages 4 and 5
- Pencils, markers, crayons, and colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue sticks



FOLLOWING JESUS

BLESSING OUR PRAYERS

QC

Invite each child to hold their Spiritual Discipline journal in their left hand and place their right hand over it like a roof. Have them repeat after you as you lead them in a blessing:

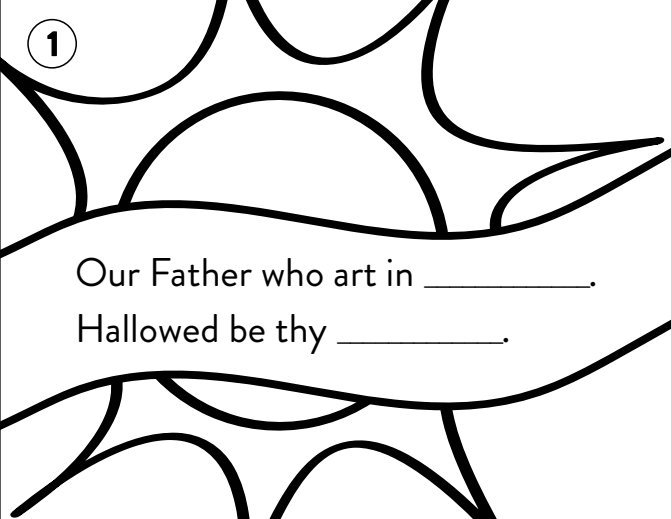

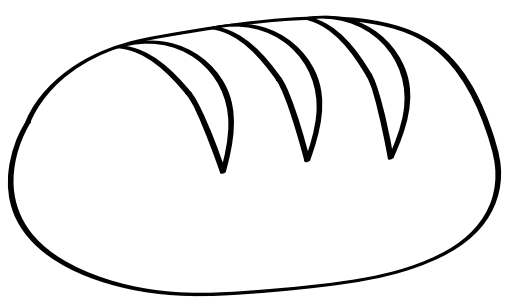
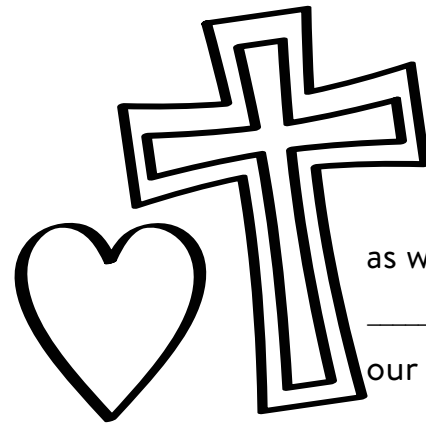

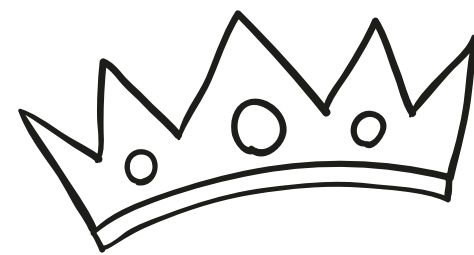
Lord, we bring our prayers to you /
 as we try the practice of praying in the coming days. /
 Accept our prayers as a token of our love and devotion /
 and our desire to grow closer with you. /
 Amen. /

- Spiritual Discipline Journals from "Prayer Memory Tool" (above) or "Using Our Bodies to Pray" (above)

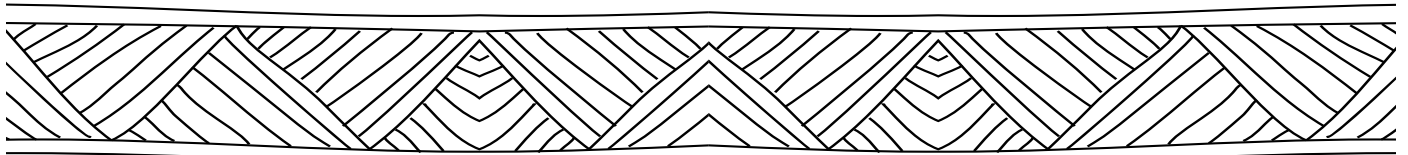


Have the children leave their Spiritual Discipline journals in the room for the next session. Encourage the children to try one of the models for prayer or just have a conversation with God each day.

The Lord's Prayer

<p>①</p>  <p>Our Father who art in _____. Hallowed be thy _____.</p>	<p>② Thy _____ come,</p>  <p>thy will be done on _____ as it is in _____.</p>
<p>③ Give us this _____</p>  <p>our daily _____,</p>	<p>④ and _____ us our debts</p>  <p>as we _____ our debtors.</p>
<p>⑤</p>  <p>And lead us not into _____, but deliver us from _____.</p>	<p>⑥ For thine is the _____,</p>  <p>and the power, and the _____, forever. Amen.</p>

Word Bank:	earth	forgive	heaven	name
bread	evil	glory	kingdom	temptation
day	forgive	heaven	kingdom	



Note: Some words are in the puzzle more than once since they are words that are repeated in the Lord's Prayer.

Word Bank:

BREAD
DAILY
DAY
DELIVER
EARTH

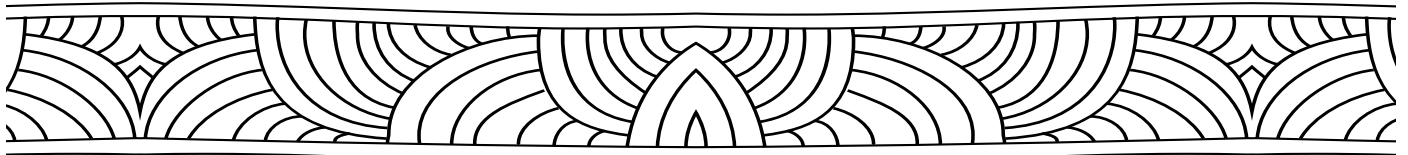
EVIL
FATHER
FOREVER
FORGIVE
FORGIVE

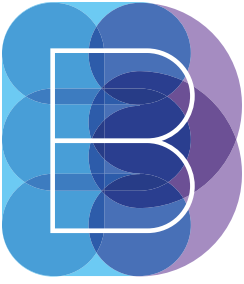
GIVE
GLORY
HALLOWED
HEAVEN
HEAVEN

KINGDOM
KINGDOM
NAME
POWER
TEMPTATION

F	A	T	H	E	R	K	I	N	G	D	O	M	F
H	D	H	A	L	L	O	W	E	D	F	P	R	O
A	E	Y	N	F	E	A	R	T	H	O	E	R	R
K	L	A	I	A	O	S	B	A	C	R	P	H	G
O	I	G	V	N	M	R	R	V	G	G	O	E	I
D	V	N	L	E	E	E	E	E	I	I	W	A	V
A	E	D	G	O	N	R	A	V	V	V	E	V	E
I	R	A	S	D	R	A	D	I	E	E	R	E	T
L	I	Y	O	N	O	Y	W	L	I	R	T	N	H
Y	G	O	D	T	E	M	P	T	A	T	I	O	N

Use the remaining letters to fill in the blanks and find out what prayer is.





BIBLE STORY

BASED ON MATTHEW 6:5–13

Jesus was always teaching his disciples how to follow God. One time, when a large crowd had followed him, they gathered on the slope of a mountain, and Jesus taught them many things. He told them it was important to speak and act honestly and not to do things just to impress others. He talked about praying and said that you didn't need to use fancy words or lots of words. Praying could be simple, as simple as talking to someone you love.

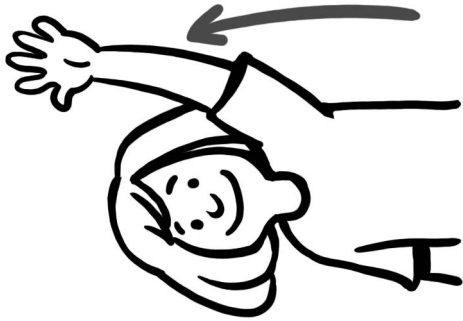
Jesus said, "You can pray like this . . ." And Jesus gave them words, but more than words, he gave them a model for prayers they could pray. Jesus began by talking to God like someone he loved. He said, "Abba," which means he called God *Father* or *Dad*. But he didn't say, "my dad." He said, "our dad." We can all talk to God.

Jesus praised God, "Abba, who is in heaven, holy is your name."

He then said we can pray for the things we need: God's way of living, our basic needs for each day, forgiveness and reconciliation with others, to do better, and protection.

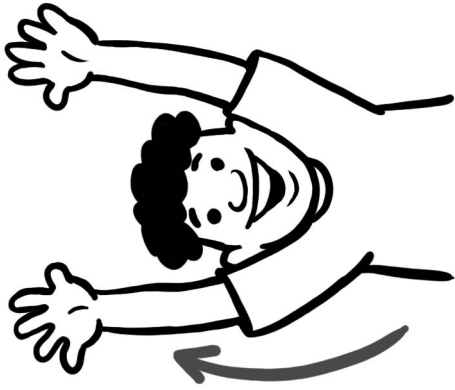
We can pray that God's kingdom and way of living be here on earth as it is in heaven. We can pray for daily bread. We can ask for forgiveness for the wrongs we have done and we, too, can forgive others for the wrongs they have done to us. We can ask God to help us try to do better and not find ourselves in times of temptation to do wrong. And, finally, we can pray to be kept safe from evil.

1



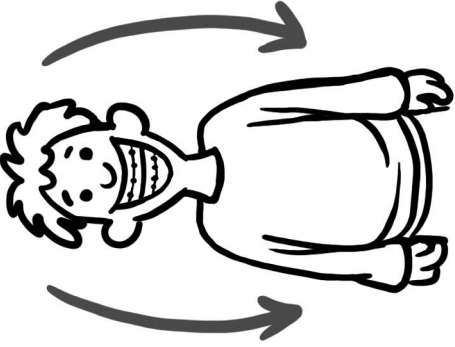
“Our Father, who art in heaven,
(Lift one arm over head,
fingers pointing up, and hold.)

2



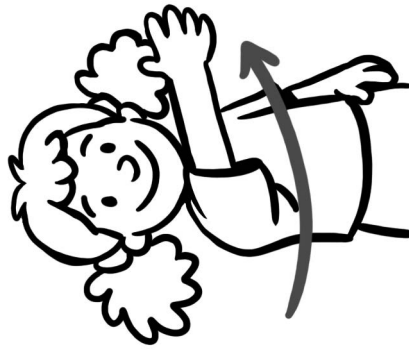
hallowed be thy name.
(Lift other arm over head,
fingers pointing up.)

3



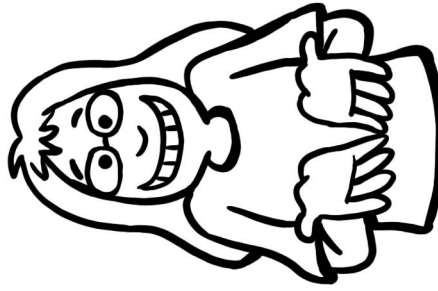
Thy kingdom come,
(Slowly lower both arms
to sides.)

4



thy will be done, on earth as it
is in heaven.
(Sweep one arm across body.)

5



Give us this day our daily bread;
(Cup hands in front of body as
if holding something.)

6



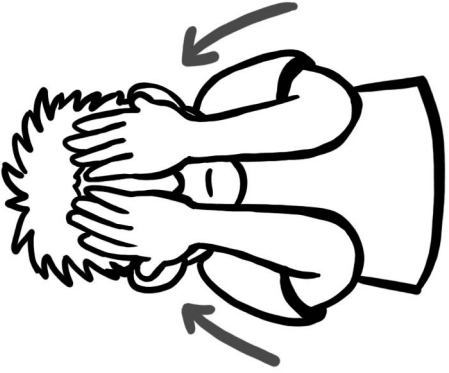
and forgive us our debts,
(Move fist to chest.)

7



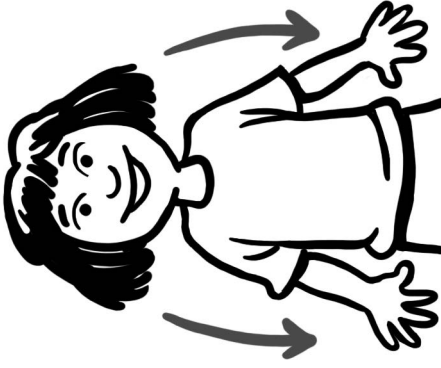
as we forgive our debtors;
(Bow head and fold hands as if praying.)

8



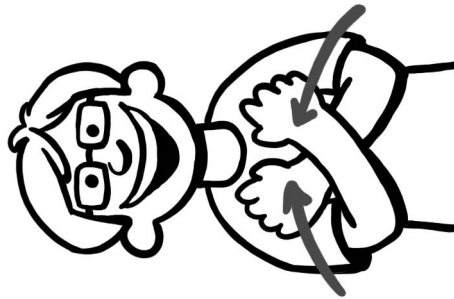
and lead us not
(Hold hands in front of face, palms toward face.)

9



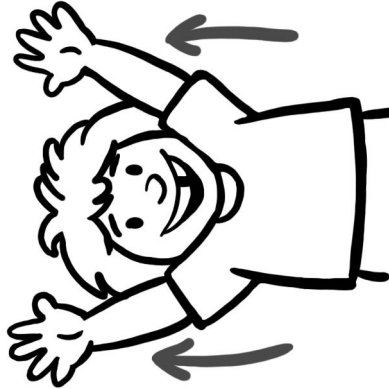
into temptation,
(Arms down, angled out from body, hands open, fingers pointing down.)

10



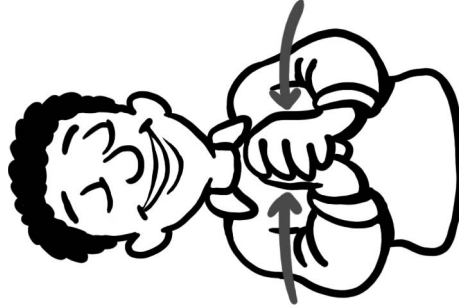
but deliver us
(Make fists with hands; cross arms at chest height by touching wrists.)

11



from evil.
(Open arms and hands; lift arms over head.)

12



Amen."
(Bring hands together and fold as if in prayer.)