

Four Forms of Prayer

St. John Vianney said, “Prayer is nothing else but union with God.” This beautiful quote reveals the core of prayer. Union with God is our life’s goal, and prayer is one of our most valuable tools to accomplish this.

Like so many aspects of our faith journey, one’s prayer life is a continual effort. Most often, people start by memorizing formula prayers, such as the Our Father and the Hail Mary. These prayers are fundamental and will always be essential to one’s prayer life because they embody truths that are central to our Catholic faith.

As we deepen our relationship with God, our prayer life can become more conversational. This type of prayer does not follow a particular structure and is often referred to as mental prayer. Mental prayer can also be voiced aloud; however, it differs from *vocal prayer*, which traditionally refers to formula prayers recited out loud in a group, such as the Rosary. On the other hand, mental prayer comes from the heart, a flow of thoughts from your mind.

As Saint Bonaventure put it, “When we pray, the voice of the heart must be heard more than that proceeding from the mouth.”

Four types of mental prayer include petition, adoration, reconciliation, and thanksgiving. A helpful acronym to remember these is PART, as in, the most important PART of your day is prayer!

Petition

Talking Points:

- Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7).
- A prayer of petition is asking God for something that you desire, like healing, guidance, strength, or forgiveness.
- You can also pray for God’s blessing on others, interceding for their needs or well-being.
- What is something you are struggling with that you need God’s help to fix?
- What is something you hope God will bless you with??
- Who is someone that you know that needs God’s love and grace?

Accompanying Infographic:

- Types of Prayer (<https://www.catholicpearls.org/prayer-1/types-ofg>)
- Worksheet: Types of Prayer

Adoration

Talking Points:

- "Glory be to God for all things!" - St. John Chrysostom.
- A prayer of adoration glorifies God by recognizing His goodness, power, and wisdom.

- Express your love and adoration for God by praising Him and acknowledging His roles as Creator and Redeemer.
- What is one of your favorite things that God gave you when He created you?
- Think of the beauty of nature. What is something that God placed on Earth that you love?
- What is one way that you can show God respect and reverence?

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Reconciliation

Talking Points:

- “And fear nothing, dear soul, whoever you are; the greater the sinner, the greater his right to Your mercy, O Lord.” – Saint Faustina
- A prayer of reconciliation is meant to restore our relationship with God by recognizing our faults, expressing our sincere regret, and humbly asking for forgiveness.
- God is loving and merciful.
- What is one sin that you struggle with most?
- What is one virtue that you can focus on growing, and how will you do this?
- What is an act of penance that you can do to thank God for his mercy and forgiveness?

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Thanksgiving

Talking Points:

- “The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for all that he, in his goodness, sends to us day after day.” - St. Gianna Molla
- A prayer of thanksgiving expresses gratitude to God for His plentiful blessings.
- Consider all the good aspects of your life and recognize their source in God.
- Your life itself is sustained by God in His love.
- Who is someone that you are thankful for?
- What special talent or characteristic did God bless you with?
- How can you recognize God’s blessings in your daily life and show Him thanksgiving?

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