

Week 2: Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Welcome if this is your first encounter with the materials, and welcome back and thank you if you liked week one and are back for more. We hope you did lots of wondering and exploring last week and saw God at work for good in your life, and in the world around you.

This week we're going to keep practising some of the exercises that we introduced last week. Remember they are called 'practices' for a reason. Keep gently reassuring yourself and your household that these are good, useful and important things to do in order that we create spaces to be with God. Spaces where we can pay attention to who God is and how God is at work for good in the world.

Remember to pray the whole of the Lord's Prayer each day if you can.

Introduction

The prayer that Jesus taught, known as the Lord's Prayer, begins and ends with God. People are in their right place in the middle; surrounded and secured by God's concern for our physical needs, our relational needs and our well-being and spiritual needs.

This week we are exploring more of the beginning part about God, shifting from who is God (our Father in heaven), to focusing on God's Kingdom. What is God's Kingdom? Where is it? When is it? Who lives there? How do you get there?

There is also the opportunity to explore what 'God's will' might mean, who knows God's will and how do they know it?

Wow! We've barely begun and already the questions are flowing! Why don't you take some time to jot down what questions are buzzing around you, your children and household at the moment.



Don't worry at all, if you feel you 'don't know' answers to these questions. In fact, that is a strong starting point! The idea is not to answer these questions today but to journey through some wondering, some exploring, and see where we get to. By the end of the week, if you have unanswered questions, you can send them in, and we'll see if we can give you some pointers. You can email us at communications@oxford.anglican.org

Household activity

The Oxford Concise Dictionary describes Kingdom as: 1. An organised community headed by a King or Queen; 2. the territory subject to a King or Queen; 3a. the spiritual reign attributed to God (Thy Kingdom Come); 3b. the sphere of this (Kingdom of heaven); 4. the domain belonging to a person or animal; and, 5. a province of nature (the vegetable kingdom).

With these definitions in mind, we invite your household to build a new kingdom together. Use Lego, bricks, road, rail and other toys, boxes and junk, stones, leaves, sticks or other materials from outside or anything else you'd like to use to build a kingdom.

What will it look like? Who or what will live there? Are there any rules or laws? What will make it a great kingdom? What grows and thrives there?

Stilling (an exercise to bring calm and focus)

As we continue our journey through the Lord's Prayer, let's take a few moments to be still together. Remember that although the invitation is to sit or lie down. You could do this outside in a garden or park or as you walk along.

Sit, lie down, get comfy. Take some deep breaths and continue to breathe deeply. Smile. Close eyes if it helps.

One person (child or adult) says slowly:

'Your Kingdom come (PAUSE) Your will be done' (PAUSE)

'On earth (PAUSE) as it is in heaven' (PAUSE)

'Your Kingdom come (PAUSE) Your will be done' (PAUSE)

'On earth (PAUSE) as it is in heaven' (PAUSE)

'Your Kingdom come (PAUSE) Your will be done' (PAUSE)

'On earth (PAUSE) as it is in heaven' (PAUSE)

Open your eyes, smile, and gently invite the others in your group to do the same. Gently lead into a time of Noticing with a wondering question.

Noticing (drawing attention to where God is at work)

You should encourage and take turns with anyone present to 'lead' this part, especially children.

Allow conversation to flow where it does or allow silences for personal reflection. Tell those present that they don't have to speak out loud if they so choose.

When something is shared, receive the contribution with thanks and a smile. Don't leap to correct a comment you feel is 'wrong' but do follow up with a further question like 'I hadn't thought of it like that, tell me more' or 'I wonder if we can find out more about that'.

- *"I wonder what you notice about this? Does a word or phrase catch your attention? Do you have a question?"*
- *"How do you feel?"*
- *"Does this part of the prayer remind you of another story, song, poem or prayer?"*

(It doesn't have to be a Bible story or church hymn or song - just notice the connections and sing, say, read or watch it together now or later).

Dwelling 1: What is God's Kingdom like?

If you've had a break it may help to do the Stilling exercise before Dwelling.

This week there are two offerings for Dwelling. You can choose the same one each time you Dwell, or have a go at both during the week.

People have long wondered about God's Kingdom and what it is like. When he was asked about it, Jesus most often answered questions by telling a special kind of story called a parable. Today, you are invited to Dwell in two of Jesus parables from the Gospel of Mark, overleaf.

If there are enough of you, invite two people to read the passage. Decide who is going first and second and remind the readers to read slowly.

Really slowly!

Even slower... so there is space between the words and phrases.


Remind each listener to notice the word or phrase that caught their attention.

Dwelling 1

Mark 4:26-32

Again Jesus said: God's kingdom is like what happens when a farmer scatters seed in a field. The farmer sleeps at night and is up and around during the day. Yet the seeds keep sprouting and growing, and he doesn't understand how. It is the ground that makes the seeds sprout and grow into plants that produce grain. Then when harvest season comes and the grain is ripe, the farmer cuts it with a sickle.

Finally, Jesus said: What is God's kingdom like? What story can I use to explain it? It is like what happens when a mustard seed is planted in the ground. It is the smallest seed in all the world. But once it is planted, it grows larger than any garden plant. It even puts out branches that are big enough for birds to nest in its shade.

 Where was your attention drawn to? :

- "I wonder which part you liked best?"
- "Which part feels most important?"
- "What connections do you make between this story and the part of the Lord's Prayer for today?"
- "Does this story add to or help your wonderings?"

- "Was anything confusing or distracting?"
- "Does it remind you of a situation in the world today?"

Dwelling 2: Your Kingdom Come


When we pray 'your kingdom come' it's easy to think it hasn't arrived yet and that God has been ignoring the prayers of countless believers for generations and generations.

It's a curious thing that God's Kingdom of peace and justice did come at the very beginning. It came near when Jesus was alive on earth. It comes every time there is an act of love, peace, kindness, justice on earth today. And it will come again when Jesus returns at the end of time so we have hope for the future.

Have a go at Dwelling in one or more of these verses. Notice which word or phrase catches your attention or the question you have.

Micah 6:8 *The Lord has told you what is good. He has told you what he wants from you: Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly, trusting your God.* (International Children's Bible)

Mark 12:29-31 *Jesus answered, "The most important command is this: 'Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God, he is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second most important command is this: 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' These two commands are the most important commands."* (International Children's Bible)

 What did you notice in these verses?

- "I wonder what feels very important?"
- "I wonder if anything feels very difficult or impossible?"
- "I wonder who you know who especially needs to experience the goodness of God's love and peace today? How can you help with this?"

Mending

Sometimes our feelings and prayers are beyond words. That means, that no matter how hard we try, we just can't find the right words to describe what's going on. This can happen to adults as well as children.

Make, draw, colour or print out (overleaf) a variety of 'emoji' faces showing a variety of emotion.

What have been the good things this week?

Spend some time thinking about when you have seen or helped God's Kingdom come today or this week. Each member of the household can choose three emojis to express their feelings and use them to help say Thank You or Praise prayers to God.

What hasn't been so good?

When we notice the good things, it is impossible to ignore the things, situations or times when we've seen people treated harshly or cruelly. Or where we've seen or experienced things that just aren't fair. This is the opposite of 'Your will be done'!

For many people, including children, people of different race or cultures, those who live in poverty, people with disability, there are so many things outside of their control or influence which mean they in particular experience the harshness of injustice.

Spend some time thinking or talking about people you know and/or people around the world who face injustice. Choose three emojis to express these feelings to God. If you need or would like to say any 'sorry prayers', you can include them here. Also pray for anyone who is experiencing injustice.

Pay attention to this part and notice the experiences and feelings. Don't rush over a difficult situation. Notice the feelings and emotions an experience of something that wasn't fair has led to. Name the anger, sadness, frustration, disappointment, powerlessness, even shame or humiliation.

If you need to make some more emojis to include these, please do so.

For this practice, you could also look at *Psalms for young children* by Marie-Helene Delvel. Using the book, ask a child to choose a picture that shows how they feel today. Read the words together.

Blessing

Have a look at **Micah 6:8**

'The Lord has told you what is good. He has told you what he wants from you: Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly, trusting your God.'
(International Children's Bible)



Think or talk about how your household will try to live out 'Your Kingdom Come, your will be done' in light of the Micah verse. Write down one action that each person would like to take and try to do at least one thing in the coming week. If you're stuck for ideas, you could:

- Write a letter to or draw a picture for someone you know who is lonely and deliver it.
- If you notice someone at school/work/a group who is alone, invite them to join you.
- Invite someone to go ahead of you in a queue.

