

## ***The History of the Catholic Church***

### **Resources: Prayer Services**

#### **The Jesus Prayer**

*Use this complete prayer service with Chapter 3, Section 1 or 4 of The History of the Catholic Church. You may also choose to use only individual parts of the prayer service.*

Needs:

- copies as needed or projection
- rosaries for each student if available
- an internet connection and computer cued to play “The Jesus Prayer Might Radically Change Your Life” by Matt Fradd  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qvsg-R4WMU&vl=en> if desired for the introduction

#### ***Prayer Introduction***

**Leader:** (If desired play “The Jesus Prayer Might Radically Change Your Life” by Matt Fradd as an introduction. If you would rather not play the video, read below.)

The Jesus Prayer is a type of prayer you can utilize that comes to us from the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite churches. It dates back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century Eastern Church Fathers. Often prayed using a prayer cord, it is a very simple form of prayer that centers around the prayerful repetition of the phrase, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner,” said by the blind man Jesus cured in Mark 10: 46-52.

The Jesus Prayer is an aid that prayerfully centers you on keeping Christ always in mind. Through a combination of breathing slowly and deeply, and the words of the prayer, it is an easy way to re-center you on Christ and “pray without ceasing” (1 Thes 5: 17). Today, we will be praying the Jesus Prayer using a rosary and simple Scripture reflections.

#### ***The Jesus Prayer***

**Leader:** Part of how the Jesus Prayer works to bring us into Jesus’ presence is by calming our minds and bodies. To do this we will work to breathe slowly and deeply. As

we say the first part, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God” we will breathe slowly in from the core. Then, as we say the last phrase, “Have mercy on me, a sinner” we will exhale. As we say the words of the prayer, we will use one bead on the rosary, then move to the next bead. (Practice with the students a few times until they remember the words of the prayer, and are relatively calm.)

(Have students get comfortable sitting, then begin with the Sign of the Cross.)

Jesus, we come before you today and ask you to be in our presence. Be with us here in this space. We bring to you all that is happening in this day and set it before you. Fill our minds, hearts, and bodies with your presence as we pray.

(Say an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be on the first three beads of the “tail” of the rosary.)

**Reader 1:** “They came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, son of David, have pity on me.’ And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, ‘Son of David, have pity on me.’ Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ So they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take courage; get up, he is calling you.’ He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man replied to him, ‘Master, I want to see.’ Jesus told him, ‘Go your way; your faith has saved you.’ Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.” (Mk 10:46-52)

(Lead students in slowly repeat the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner” on the next ten beads of the rosary. Focus on breathing in and out slowly.)

**Reader 2:** “But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Lk 18: 13-14)

(Lead students in slowly repeat the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner” on the next ten beads of the rosary. Focus on breathing in and out slowly.)

**Reader 3:** “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” (I Thes 5: 16-18)

(Lead students in slowly repeat the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner” on the next ten beads of the rosary. Focus on breathing in and out slowly.)

**Reader 4:** “Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.” (Jl 2: 13)

(Lead students in slowly repeat the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner” on the next ten beads of the rosary. Focus on breathing in and out slowly.)

**Reader 5:** Enter, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the LORD who made us. For he is our God, we are the people he shepherds, the sheep in his hands. Oh, that today you would hear his voice: Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day of Massah in the desert.” (Ps 95: 6-8)

(Lead students in slowly repeat the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner” on the next ten beads of the rosary. Focus on breathing in and out slowly.)

### *Closing Prayer*

**Leader:** Lord Jesus, stay with us throughout this day. Open our hearts to your mercy and grant us salvation.

**All:** Amen (End with the Sign of the Cross.)