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**How to Write a Prayer**

**using the format of a Collect**

*Every three years, the United Thank Offering collects prayers from around The Episcopal Church to publish in a book of prayers. Often, we hear that people are afraid their prayers aren’t good enough or that they don’t know how to write a prayer. As Episcopalians, we have wonderful examples of how to construct prayers found in the Book of Common Prayer. Below you’ll find a worksheet that introduces the structure of the collects in the Book of Common Prayer and how to write your own. You can also just write a prayer, or conversation between yourself and God, that you’re willing to invite others into. The good news about writing prayers is that whatever you write is a blessing and we are grateful when you share it with us for the booklet.*

Collects are prayers that have a certain structure or form. The word *collect* comes from the Latin *ecclesia collecta,* meaning a prayer prayed by and for the assembled church.

**Collects have the following sections:** (although sometimes a part is omitted and it is still a collect)

1. an address

2. a phrase that says something about the attributes of God

3. petitions or requests

4. results

5. words of praise

Here is a collect from the *Book of Common Prayer* for the Second Sunday in Advent:

**Address:** Merciful God,

**Attributes:** who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation:

**Petition:** Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins,

**Results:** that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer;

**Praise:** who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

A collect can be complete and not include all of the parts and a prayer can be complete and not include any of these parts!

**Here’s a chart you can fill in to help you write a collect.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Address |  |
| Attributes |  |
| Petition/Request |  |
| Results |  |
| Praise |  |

**Or just write a prayer (a conversation with God) from your heart:**

Now that you’ve written your own collect or prayer, please submit it for publication in the next edition of the UTO Prayer Booklet at <https://dfms.formstack.com/forms/uto_book_of_prayers>. Anyone of any age can submit a prayer and you can submit it in the language that you prefer.

*To read more about collects, see* [*this article*](https://earthandaltarmag.com/posts/e6lhvb6bgq0q7sduxzdtoo6cndis2v) *from a past UTO grant site,* Earth and Altar *magazine.*