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Related Material:

1. [Lift Up Your Hearts: God's Children](#)
2. [God's Children: Welcoming Children to Worship](#)
3. [God's Children: Teaching Liturgy to Children](#)
4. [God's Children: Teaching the Lord's Prayer - A Dance Anthem](#)
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God's Children: Teaching the Lord's Prayer -- A Dance Anthem

From ancient times, Christians have used a variety of postures to *em-body* their prayer. For example, the custom of kneeling for prayer is one with which we are all familiar.

A second, marvelously expressive gesture of praise, is that of the *orans* wherein the person stands with head and hands uplifted, palms open and out. The posture would have been familiar to Jesus as the conventional Jewish form of prayer of his day. The word *orans* comes from the Latin for "prayer." The figure at the right shows St. Apollinare in the *orans* prayer posture. He is wearing an alb, chasuble and pallium-stole. It is taken from the mosaic in the apse dome in the 6th century Church of St. Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna, Italy. Many early pictures exist of people praying in the *orans* position. Interestingly, many (most?) are of women. (See *Crafting and Praying the Prayers* [<http://www.worship.ca/sec3.html#craftpray>] for more on the *orans*.)



The following *dance anthem* embraces a variety of expressions including the familiar kneeling and *orans* prayer postures. The anthem may be mimed by a single individual or, preferably, by a whole choir. Children, having learned the anthem, may teach it to their congregation or offer it as a lovely act of community devotion in the Holy Communion liturgy. In the latter case, the choir might be disposed slightly forward and to the left and right of the communion table. During the Great Thanksgiving, they are facing the presiding minister with the congregation. For the Lord's Prayer, choristers turn about 90 degrees toward the assembly to afford the congregation a view of their actions. Perhaps the congregation may be invited to join in the *orans* with which the anthem begins and ends.

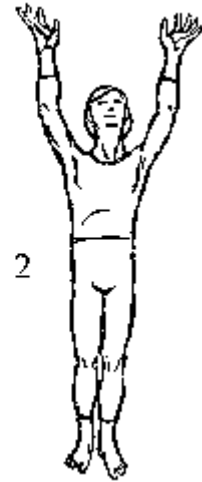
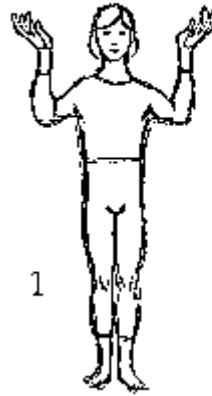
God's Children: Teaching the Lord's Prayer -- A Dance Anthem was originally prepared for a children's after-school program at Syracuse University in the early 1970's. The artwork is by Paul Bosch. Ruth Becker contributed to the choreographic design. This piece was published in slightly different form in *The Circle*, May, 1974, and thereafter in my *The Paschal Cycle: Lent, Easter, Pentecost Worship Resources* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1980). Both volumes are believed to be out-of-print. The text of the Lord's Prayer is that of the English Language Liturgical Consultation (1988).

Paul F. Bosch and André Lavergne +

THE LORD'S PRAYER

1 ~ Our Father

Stand erect.
Raise arms and hands,
palms open.
Raise face.
Smile. (*orans*)



2 ~ in heaven,

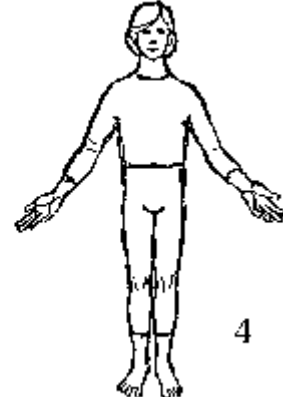
Look up, smiling.
Raise arms over head.
Hands with palms still open.

1

2

3 ~ hallowed be your name,

Lower head and eyes.
Lower hands to face.
Fingers cover mouth,
overlapping, elbows wide.



4 ~ your kingdom come,

Raise head and eyes.
Spread arms wide,
hands with palms open and
out.

3

4

5 ~ your will be done,

Lower head and eyes.
Bring hands together, palms together, fingertips at lips.



6 ~ on earth

Maintain bowed head and posture of hands.
Kneel on one knee.



7 ~ as in heaven.

Remain kneeling.
Raise head and eyes and arms, hands up, palms out.
Smile

8 ~ Give us today

Stand.
Look up with confidence, arms parallel, bent at elbows, hands together, palms up and open, fingers cupped.



9 ~ our daily bread.

Swing elbows out;
keep palms up and open,
overlap hands in front of belly,
palms still up and open,
fingers still cupped.



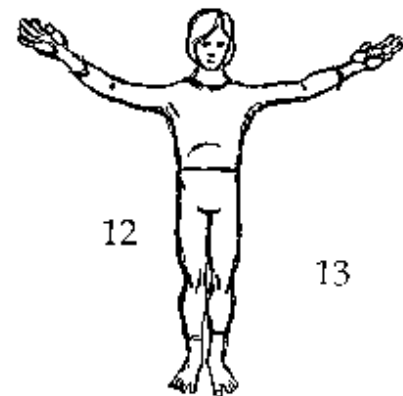
10 ~ Forgive us

Bring right hand up as fist;
strike breast and keep fist there,
head and eyes lowered.



11 ~ our sins

Bring left hand up as fist;
strike breast and keep fist there.



12 ~ as we forgive those

Head and eyes still lowered,
extend right hand as in a crucifixion.

13 ~ who sin against us.

Extend left hand as in a crucifixion.

14 ~ Save us from the time of trial

Kneel on one knee.
Bring left hand in front of face, palm open, fingers spread, thumb down, palm out.
Bring right arm out in front, hand up, palm out, fingers spread.



14

15 ~ and deliver us from evil.

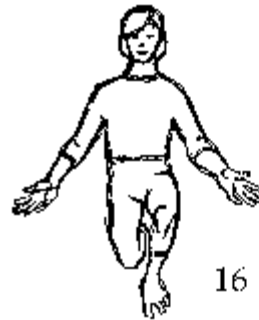
Remain kneeling; bend back and torso, hunch over; lower head; bring hands over face and head as for protection.



15

16 ~ For the kingdom,

Remain kneeling.
Straighten back.
Look up confidently, open arms and hands wide, as at 4.



16

17 ~ the power,

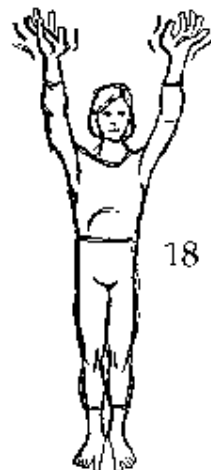
Stand up erect.
As you rise, bring fists up to head height, elbows bent.



17

18 ~ and the glory are yours

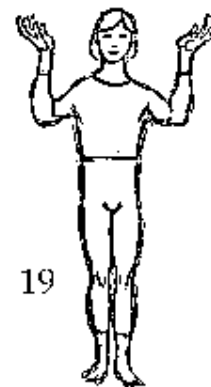
Extend arms full length, face and head raised.
Smile.
Wiggle hands & fingers.



18

19 ~ now and for ever. Amen.

Return to position 1 (*orans*).



19

+ + +