

FATHER-CREATOR

THE LESSON: EXODUS 3-4

O God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth: have mercy upon us.

The first line in the Litany addresses God as Father-Creator, and those two titles are packed with meaning for us! When we talk about God as our sovereign Creator we are reminded that he is distinct from and in authority over all that he has created – including us. Theologians call this the “transcendence” of God. But God is also present and involved with his creation. The first epistle of John says, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are” (1 John 3:1). Our Father cares about us in a way that is personal and intimate. He has said that he will never leave us nor forsake us. Theologians call this the “immanence” of God.

Sometimes we can carry over confused or broken ideas into our understanding of God and our relationship with him. If we forget that he is transcendent, we might think that we can customize him to fit our preferences. (We can't!) Or if we forget that he is immanent, we may think he doesn't care enough to listen to our prayers. (He does!)

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In a moment we're going to take a look at the story of God's call of Moses in the book of Exodus. Now you may know the larger story, but in case you don't, here's the scoop: The people of Israel were slaves in the land of Egypt. Though Moses was an Israelite he had been raised by an Egyptian princess. One day he saw an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite and Moses killed him. When it became known, he fled to the land of Midian where he married and settled down, until this one day when he had an unexpected encounter with our immanent and transcendent God.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time thinking about the human failings of your parents. The purpose of this exercise is *not* to make you resentful towards the earthly parents or caregivers that God has given you: Remember that they are human and ask God to help you forgive them when they fail to reflect God's fatherhood. Next, take some time to go through each item on your list and ask God to remind you of what *his* fatherhood is like. End with a time of thanksgiving.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.

(THE COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, BCP PAGE 223)

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EXODUS 3-4: **I AM... WILL BE WITH YOU**

3 ²And the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷Then the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey...

¹¹But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹²He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." ¹³Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you.'"...

4 ¹Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'"... [In response, God provided Moses with miraculous signs.]

¹⁰But Moses said to the Lord, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue." ¹¹Then the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? ¹²Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." ¹³But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." ¹⁴Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. ¹⁵You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do."