

OPENING PERIOD PRAYERS FOR REFORMATION CHURCH CLASS

Topic 1 Opening Prayer from Martin Luther (1483-1546)

“O give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens which cry. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man; but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

We give thee thanks, Lord God our Father, for all thy benefits, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.”

Topic 2 Opening Prayer from Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536)

“O Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Way, the Truth and the Life. We pray You allow us never to stray from You, who are the Way, nor distrust You, who are the Truth, nor rest in any one other thing than You, who are the Life. Teach us, by Your Holy Spirit, what to believe, what to do, and how to take our rest. Amen.”

Topic 3 Opening Prayer from Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560)

“Almighty and Holy Spirit, the comforter, pure, living, true. Illumine, govern, sanctify me, and confirm my heart and mind in the faith and in all genuine consolation. Preserve and rule over me so that, dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, I may behold the Lord and praise him with a joyful spirit and in union with all the heavenly church. Amen.”

Scripture Reading (Romans 1:16-17) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Topic 4 Opening Prayer from Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531)

“Almighty God, eternal and compassionate, whose Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, open and enlighten our hearts, that we may understand purely and clearly Thy words. May they transform us according to this exact understanding, that we may never be displeasing to Thy divine majesty, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

Topic 5 Opening Prayer from an Anabaptist Hymn

“Our comfort this beneath the rod, whenever we are faint, in Thee oh God, in Thee alone are earthly peace and rest. Who hope on Thee, eternally, are sustained and blessed.” Amen.

Topic 6 Opening Prayer from Jean Calvin (1509-1564)

“My God, my Father and preserver, who of Thy goodness hast watched over me during the past night and brought me to this day, grant also that I may spend it wholly in the worship and service of Thy most holy deity. Let me not think or say or do a single thing which tends not to Thy service and submission to Thy will, in order that thus all my actions may aim at Thy glory and the salvation of my brethren, while they are taught by my example to serve Thee.

And as Thou art giving light to this world for the purposes of external life by the rays of the sun, so enlighten my mind by the effulgence of Thy Spirit, that He may guide me in the way of Thy righteousness. To whatever purpose I apply my mind, may the end which I ever propose to myself be Thy honor and service. May I expect all happiness from Thy grace and goodness only. Let me not attempt anything whatever that is not pleasing to Thee.

Do Thou add more and more to the gifts of Thy grace until I wholly adhere to Thy Son Jesus Christ, whom we justly regard as the true Sun, shining constantly in our minds. In order to my obtaining of Thee these great and manifold blessings, forget, and out of Thy infinite mercy, forgive my offenses, as Thou hast promised that Thou wilt do to those who call upon Thee in sincerity. Amen.”

Topic 7 Opening Prayer from Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)

“O Lord Jesus Christ, you are the sun of the world, evermore arising, and never going down, which by your most welcome appearing and sight, brings forth, preserves, nourishes, and refreshes all things, as well that are in heaven as also that are on earth. We beg You mercifully and faithfully to shine in our hearts so that the night and darkness of sins and the mist of errors on every side may be driven away.

With you brightly shining in our hearts we may all our life go without stumbling or offense, and may decently and seemly walk as in the day time, being pure and clean from the works of darkness, and abounding in all good works which God has prepared us to walk in; you who with the Father and with the Holy Ghost live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.”

Topic 8 Opening Prayer from John Knox (~1514-1572)

“Because we have need continually to crave many things at Your hands, we humbly beg You, O heavenly Father, to grant us Your Holy Spirit to direct our petitions, that they may proceed from such a fervent mind as may be agreeable to Your holy will. Amen.”

Topic 9 Opening Prayer from Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)

“Teach us, Lord, to serve You as You deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to labor and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Your will. Amen.”

Topic 10 Opening Prayer – Psalm 79:8-13 (Psalms were a focus of the Roman Catholic Medieval Hours and the Protestant Reformers, especially among the French Huguenots)

“O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die; And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord. So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.” Amen

Topic 11 Closing Prayer from Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560)

“O God, we do not desire new contentions and discord. We pray only that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us and rose from the grave, will guide us, that all of us who are in many churches and many communions may be one church and one communion and one in Him. Amen”

Topic 12 Opening Prayer from Hermann Witsius (1636-1708)

Witsius was a Dutch Calvinist theologian and pastor

“Open Thou our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law. May Thy Holy Scriptures be our pure delight. May we neither be deceived in reading them nor handle them deceitfully. Sanctify us through Thy truth. Thy Word is truth. Preserve, defend, and enlarge this church [seminary]; consecrate it to Thy glory. Let envies, strifes, divisions, and heresies be forever at a distance. May orthodoxy prevail; may piety flourish. Let mercy and truth meet together. Let righteousness and peace kiss each other. Our beloved country, rescued by Thy wonder-working right hand from so many evils, do Thou preserve in safety and peace. After our days in this life have been spent in prolonged felicity, do Thou at last transfer us with all Thine elect to heaven itself. This is the sum of our prayers. This is the sum of our hope. Hear and accept us, Oh triune Jehovah. Amen.”