

“O Give Thanks Unto the Lord”

Ideas for a family discussion.

In the New Church, families often say these words as a blessing before meals: “O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy is for ever” (Psalm 107:1). What do these words mean? Here are some ideas that you may wish to discuss (from a sermon by the Rev. Norbert Rogers).

“O give thanks unto the Lord”

- We are entirely dependent upon the Lord and should be grateful for all that we have.
- The Lord requires that we give thanks to Him—not for His sake—but because this opens our hearts to receive heavenly good from Him.
- If we reflect on all that the Lord does for us, our gratitude will grow year by year. But the best way to thank the Lord is to open our minds and hearts to His love and then share His truth and love with others as we go about our daily lives.

“for He is good”

- The Lord is the source of all good, and His good is infinite.
- When we acknowledge that the Lord is good, we also acknowledge that He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the Giver of Life, and the Fount of Love.

“for His mercy is forever”

- Everything that the Lord does to give us spiritual life and happiness is of His Divine mercy. This includes the giving of life, the human mind, our freedom, the truths of the Word, the first and second advents of the Lord, and all the other ways that we are supplied with the means to receive and enjoy spiritual life and happiness.

The Power of Using Scriptural Blessings:

Using Scriptural passages as blessings at mealtimes can serve as a unifying and reverential custom to center our minds on higher things. Praying “O give thanks unto the Lord...” does just that. Yet words without thoughts or states of understanding and love can become vain repetitions. By reflecting on this common prayer as we are saying the words, we open our hearts and minds to give true thanks to our Lord for His many natural and spiritual gifts.