



The Lord's Prayer and Blessing in Plains Indian Sign Language

Arranged by Mark G. Thiel, 2001

Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions Records, Series 8-2 Bureau American Indian Language Records

Introduction:

UPPER CASE letters identify the signs which are described according to *Indian Sign Language* by William Tomkins, 1926. (Parentheses) indicate synonyms. Both prayers use a different combination of the following 29 signs. The number given shows the number of times each sign is used:

ALL (me, us, we) = 6, ALWAYS (forever) = 1, AND (with) = 2

BAD = 2

CALL (name) = 1, COME = 1, COOK = 1

DAY = 1, DO (make, want, work) = 4

FLOUR = 1, FOLLOW = 1

GIVE = 1, GOOD = 1, GREAT = 2

HEART = 3, HEAVEN = 2, HOUSE = 1

KEEP (guard) = 1

MAN = 1, MEDICINE (holy, mystery, power, sacred, spirit) = 3

NOW = 1

PEOPLE = 1, PITY (forgive) = 2, PLACE (country, earth, kingdom, land) = 3,

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.) = 9

SIT = 1, SUNRISE = 2

YOU (he) = 3

WAY (path, road) = 2

For instruction by video, see *Universal Indian Sign Language* with Larry Pendleton ("Chair Burner") and James Upchurch ("Lodge Too Small"), The Pioneer Skill Series, 55 minutes, 1999. Distributed by Wooden Hawk Trading Co., Dallas, Texas 75227, 214-381-5850, FAX 214-381-7004, woodenhawk@aol.com.



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Our Father who art in Heaven = POSSESSION HEART MAN HOUSE SIT HEAVEN

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

HEART MAN (father). **HEART**: With right hand in a fist tap right side of chest two or three times. **MAN**: With right hand in a fist, hold right index finger straight up in front of face.

HOUSE SIT (in). **HOUSE** (corner of log house): With hands in front and palms facing each other, interlace the fingers near tips at right angles. **SIT** (remain): Hold right hand in a fist in front of the right shoulder and move the hand down several inches.

HEAVEN: With right hand in a fist, hold right index finger straight up towards heaven (place of person indicated) and look up with reverence.

Hallowed be thy name = YOU CALL GREAT MEDICINE

YOU (he): With right hand in a fist, hold right index finger straight up towards heaven (place of person indicated).

CALL (name): With right hand in a fist in front of chest, quickly snap right index finger straight ahead.

GREAT: With arms slightly bent and fingers separated and slightly bent, hold the hands a few inches apart and several inches out in front of the chest. Then quickly move the hands farther apart as if to hold a beach ball.

MEDICINE (holy, mystery, power, sacred, spirit): Separate the right index and second fingers and hold the fingers to the forehead with the palm outwards and the thumb and other fingers closed. Then move hand upward while turning it in a clockwise spiral.

Thy kingdom come = POSSESSION PLACE COME

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

PLACE (country, earth, kingdom, land): With other fingers closed, point the right fore finger towards the ground. Then with palms down and hands and fingers spread out flat, reach down and hold both hands near the ground.

COME: Hold up the right index finger with the others closed and sweep it towards the face.

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven = POSSESSION WAY DO PLACE HEAVEN

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

WAY (path, road): With both hands open palms up, alternately move them back and forth while next to each other.

DO (make, want, work): Hold hands flat out in front of the body sideways with the thumb sides up and spaced few inches apart. The right hand should also be a few inches higher and back of the left hand. Then raise and lower the hands by wrist action only, to indicate working.

PLACE (country, earth, kingdom, land): With other fingers closed, point the right fore finger towards the ground. Then with palms down and hands and fingers spread out flat, reach down and hold both hands near the ground.

HEAVEN: With right hand in a fist, hold right index finger straight up towards heaven (place of person indicated) and look up with reverence.

Give us this day, our daily bread = YOU GIVE ALL DAY POSSESSION FLOUR COOK ALL DAY

YOU (he): With right hand in a fist, hold right index finger straight up towards heaven (place of person indicated).

GIVE: Hold out right hand open in front of chest with finger extended and slightly open and raise up hand and close extended fingers together; and touch right shoulder with finger tips.

ALL (me, us, well): Point right thumb at center of chest. Then hold out the right hand flat with palm down and fingers together, move it clockwise in a horizontal circle at chest height.

DAY: Hold out both hands flat about four inches apart with palms down; pull hands back and upwards toward shoulders and twist wrists outward to bring palms up.

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

FLOUR COOK "bread". FLOUR: Cup the right hand palm up close to the chest and clockwise run the edge of the thumb across the tips of the other four fingers and then with the hand in a fist and the right index finger extended, point ahead.
COOKING: Rub the hands together back and forth as if shaping a flat pancake-like fry bread, first right over left and then left over right.

ALL (me, us, well): Point right thumb at center of chest. Then hold out the right hand flat with palm down and fingers together, move it clockwise in a horizontal circle at chest height.

DAY: Hold out both hands flat about four inches apart with palms down; pull hands back and upwards toward shoulders and twist wrists outward to bring palms up.

And forgive us our trespasses = YOU PITY ALL POSSESSION BAD DO

YOU (he): With right hand in a fist, hold right index finger straight up towards heaven (place of person indicated).

PITY (forgive): Hold both hands up in fists side by side with index fingers straight out. While keeping hands together, move them back and up and then forward and down.

ALL (me, us, well): Point right thumb at center of chest. Then hold out the right hand flat with palm down and fingers together, move it clockwise in a horizontal circle at chest height.

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

BAD "thrown away:" Hold right fist near chest. Quickly throw it out and to the right while opening up hand and fingers with palm up.

DO (make, want, work): Hold hands flat out in front of the body sideways with the thumb sides up and spaced few inches apart. The right hand should also be a few inches higher and back of the left hand. Then raise and lower the hands by wrist action only, to indicate working.

As we forgive those who trespass against us = ALL PITY ALL PEOPLE AND BAD DO

ALL (me, us, well): Point right thumb at center of chest. Then hold out the right hand flat with palm down and fingers together, move it clockwise in a horizontal circle at chest height.

PITY (forgive): Hold both hands up in fists side by side with index fingers straight out. While keeping hands together, move them back and up and then forward and down.

ALL (me, us, well): Point right thumb at center of chest. Then hold out the right hand flat with palm down and fingers together, move it clockwise in a horizontal circle at chest height.

PEOPLE: Hold the right and left index fingers straight up shoulder high. Then raise and lower them while keeping them straight up.

AND (with): Hold flat left hand, back to left, in front; bring side of extended right index finger against center of left palm, index finger pointing to front.

BAD "thrown away:" Hold right fist near chest. Quickly throw it out and to the right while opening up hand and fingers with palm up.

DO (make, want, work): Hold hands flat out in front of the body sideways with the thumb sides up and spaced few inches apart. The right hand should also be a few inches higher and back of the left hand. Then raise and lower the hands by wrist action only, to indicate working.

Lead us not into temptation = KEEP ALL FOLLOW GOOD WAY

KEEP (guard): With the right hand, grasp the left index finger and move both slightly to the right and left.

ALL (me, us, well): Point right thumb at center of chest. Then hold out the right hand flat with palm down and fingers together, move it clockwise in a horizontal circle at chest height.

FOLLOW: Put both hands open about four inches apart with palms towards each other but with the left four inches ahead of the right, thrust both forward in an alternating zigzag motion.

GOOD "level with the heart:" Hold the flat right hand, back up, in front of and close to left side of chest, pointing to left; move hand briskly well out to front and to right, keeping it in a horizontal plane.

WAY (path, road): With both hands open palms up, alternately move them back and forth while next to each other.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power = POSSESSION PLACE POSSESSION
MEDICINE*

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

PLACE (country, earth, kingdom, land): With other fingers closed, point the right fore finger towards the ground. Then with palms down and hands and fingers spread out flat, reach down and hold both hands near the ground.

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

MEDICINE (holy, mystery, power, sacred, spirit): Separate the right index and second fingers and hold the fingers to the forehead with the palm outwards and the thumb and other fingers closed. Then move hand upward while turning it in a clockwise spiral.

And the glory, now and forever = POSSESSION HEART SUNRISE NOW AND ALWAYS

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

HEART SUNRISE (glory); HEART: Make a right hand fist with thumb extended. Swing downwards and touch chest with thumb pointing at heart. SUNRISE: Form circle with index finger and thumb of right hand, an incomplete circle, space of one inch between tips; hold hand towards the east; then move it in a curve across the heavens towards the west.

NOW: Put right index finger straight up in front of face about eight inches away and quickly snap it several inches forward and back.

AND (with): Hold flat left hand, back to left, in front; bring side of extended right index finger against center of left palm, index finger pointing to front.

ALWAYS (forever): With the palm towards the head, place the open right hand near to but not touching the right side of the head. Then move the hand two times all the way forward and back past the front and back of the head.



Blessing in Plains Indian Sign Language

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May the Great Mystery make sunrise in your heart! = GREAT MEDICINE DO SUNRISE POSSESSION HEART

GREAT: With arms slightly bent and fingers separated and slightly bent, hold the hands a few inches apart and several inches out in front of the chest. Then quickly move the hands farther apart as if to hold a beach ball.

MEDICINE (holy, mystery, power, sacred, spirit): Separate the right index and second fingers and hold the fingers to the forehead with the palm outwards and the thumb and other fingers closed. Then move hand upward while turning it in a clockwise spiral.

DO (make, want, work): Hold hands flat out in front of the body sideways with the thumb sides up and spaced few inches apart. The right hand should also be a few inches higher and back of the left hand. Then raise and lower the hands by wrist action only, to indicate working.

SUNRISE: Form circle with index finger and thumb of right hand, an incomplete circle, space of one inch between tips; hold hand towards the east; then move it in a curve across the heavens towards the west.

POSSESSION (hers, his, my, yours, etc.): Hold up right hand with closed fist a few inches out to the right of the neck. Then, with wrist action, quickly turn the hand down so the thumb is horizontal and pointing ahead.

HEART: Make a right hand fist with thumb extended. Swing downwards and touch chest with thumb pointing at heart.