



# Meaningful Meals Power-Up: Part 1

Do you think of meals as a skill to be grown?

Do you prioritize at least one meaningful meal per day with another person (or family unit, if you live in a family) regularly?

**Committing to regular meals together might be one of the most important decisions you make this year.**

When fewer and fewer families are eating together daily, science and our faith tell us meaningful meals have an important role in our children’s mental and physical development and everyone’s spiritual health.

**What does the science say?**

Family meals lead to increased positive outcomes, such as:

- better vocabulary
- higher achievement scores
- more likely to receive A's in coursework
- healthy eating in a child’s later young adult years
- kids who had been victims of cyberbullying bounced back more readily
- increase in positive mood in teens
- more positive view of the future in teens

Family meals lead to a decrease in negative outcomes, such as:

- decrease in obesity in later young adult years
- reduction in some medical disorders, such as asthma
- decrease in smoking, binge drinking, marijuana use, violence, school problems, eating disorders and sexual activity in teens
- lower rates of depression and suicidal thoughts in teens



**Check out our website for:**

- meal conversation guides
- additional resources
- all sources used

<https://stmccath.org/missionary-discipleship/additional-resources-for-discipleship-formation/>

**Rituals provide stability in uncertain times, and are particularly resilient during the coronavirus pandemic. Meaningful meals can be an excellent ritual during this time.**

**Meaningful meals as sacred**

Jesus ate with sinners and outcasts. Shared meals can be places of radical hospitality.

- **Apply it:** Who do you invite to have dinner with you? How does this show what, and *who*, you value?

Jesus also performed miracles in the context of meals and celebrations: think the Last Supper and the Wedding Feast at Cana, where he changed the water to wine.

- **Apply it:** Jesus is inviting you to a meaningful meal. Do you see Mass as a personal invitation?



Stay tuned for part 2 in December, where we will delve into the benefits of shared meals for singles and seniors, as well as additional resources for sharing a meal together.