

Praying as a Family

Goals

- Regularly prayer together as a family.
- Cultivate self-motivation to pray.

Barriers

- Many families seldom pray together. 37% of U.S. Catholic families *never* pray together. (Pew Research, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey*, <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>)
- Many parents seldom pray alone. 58% of Catholics in the U.S. pray daily. (Pew Research, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey*, <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>)
- Many Catholic parents are intimidated by prayer. They may not remember the words to formal prayers. They may not know where to start in offering spontaneous prayer or making prayer fun or engaging for their children.

Objectives

Offer parents resources and tools for teaching traditional prayers

- Offer the prayer texts
- Suggest good ways to help children memorize prayers

Teach creative and engaging prayer forms

- Teach creative mealtime and bedtime prayers, as well as traditional ones.
- Suggest blessing and prayer books that children will appreciate.
- Teach about other creative prayer forms, such as praying through art (*Praying in Color* by Sybil MacBeth), prayer through writing (*Writing to God* by Rachel Hackenberg), and imaginative prayer (Ignatian contemplation).

Encourage regular prayer

- Suggest bedtime blessings/prayers.
- Encourage seasonal prayer practices: Advent wreath-making party, Jesse Tree crafts, Lenten prayer book, etc.
- Encourage regular mealtime prayers.
- Suggest prayer as a special activity. We know of families where one parent has regular prayer time with each child once a week. The child picks who/what they pray for and record it in their prayer journal.

Suggest praying at special occasions

- Rites of passage (even relatively minor ones: first day of school) can be great opportunities for prayer.

Encourage parents to model

- We all need to turn to God in prayer
- Telling your child about your own prayer will be a bigger encouragement to them than just telling them to pray.

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