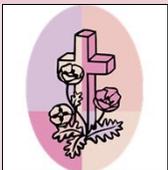




## IDEAS ON HOW TO PRAY TOGETHER

- Invite your children to close their eyes and imagine they are a sponge soaking up God's love each time they breathe in
- Ask your children to name each of the people who are important in their lives and pray for them individually by praying, "God bless \_\_\_\_"
- Give your children their own special 'prayer journal' in which they can write or draw as a way of communicating with God about what is happening in their lives
- Tune into the mystery of God's beauty around them, then give thanks for God's daily presence
- Encourage your children to close their eyes and imagine themselves sitting in a special place talking with God or Jesus



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# SIMPLE PRAYERS FOR FAMILIES TO PRAY TOGETHER



## CREATING A PRAYER FOCUS IN THE HOME

Children learn from what they hear, see and smell but especially from the way they feel. If a child feels safe and loved in the home, then the familiar objects of the home and the words spoken and prayed will stay with them as they grow and become the basis of their adult life.

The catholic church clearly identifies the family as being the first educator of their children in faith and the first place where children learn to pray.

If parents pray simply with their children it lets them know that they are precious both to their family and to God, then prayer will become natural for them too.

## SETTING UP A SACRED SPACE

It is easy to set up a simple sacred space within the home. In an appropriate space, such as a small table, shelf, coffee table, mantelpiece etc, have a crucifix or a suitable picture and a candle on a cloth. You could change the colour of the cloth according to the *church's liturgical season*:

- \* *White/ gold for Christmas and Easter*
- \* *Purple for Advent and Lent*
- \* *Green for Ordinary Time*
- \* *Red for Pentecost*



## SHARING A PRAYERFUL EXPERIENCE

Parents probably begin to teach their children to pray early in their childhood years when they are old enough to be able to repeat simple words. They are taught about the awe, wonder and mystery of God, and the need to have a relationship with God through prayer to guide, sustain, nurture and challenge them through life.

### **There is no right or wrong way to pray**

- Provide a variety of prayer: scripture stories/ traditional prayers/ writing personal prayers/ writing family prayers/ drawing for prayer/ music/ meditation
- Choose a time for prayer that is free from interruptions. It may be at the same time throughout the week when all of the family is available
- Create a place for prayer that is set up as a sacred space. This space may be either indoors or outdoors.



## PRAYER BEFORE MEALS

Mealtimes are an excellent opportunity for sharing and the following are models for short family prayer:

- Bless this meal we are about to eat, dear God, and bless those who provided the food, cooked it and prepared it for us. We make this prayer through Christ, Amen
- We are thankful for this food we are about to eat, bless it and keep us always united in your love. Through Christ our Lord, Amen
- Bless us, dear God, and these gifts that you give us from your goodness. Through Christ our Lord, Amen



## A BIRTHDAY BLESSING

Pray this prayer just before cutting the cake. Ask everyone gathered to raise one hand in the direction of the birthday child. Then someone prays aloud:

Today we celebrate .....’s birthday, and we ask God’s special blessing upon them. May the year ahead be one of joy and growth for you. May you know that you are loved by many. May your talents develop and the year bring surprises. God bless, Amen.

