

Praying With Your Child - Nurturing the Seed of Faith

Seeds are amazing things. Locked inside each seed lays the possibility for new life. Yet, until it is planted it remains dormant. At your child's baptism the



seed of faith was planted and watered. now it awaits your love and care if it is going to grow.

The seed of faith will grow if it receives care. If it does not, it will die. The most important gardener of this seed is you, the parent. The care of your child's spiritual life begins now, not later. Baptism offers you the chance to begin again in your faith life. It is a time to reconnect with prayer and the Eucharist.

Children can know and experience God before they even know a language for God. This experience is found in your holding, feeding, diapering and clothing them.

The first five years of formation are the most important in the life of a child. You as a parent will communicate God's love, forgiveness and healing. At age three the face of the parent is the face of God.

Remember, you cannot teach any beliefs, values, or practices unless they are first a part of your own life. They won't believe unless you believe. They won't be honest if you are not honest. They won't know how to love, if you don't love them. They won't pray unless you pray.



HOW TO PRAY WITH YOUR CHILD

Here are some simple suggestions that will help you bring prayer into your life and teach your child how to pray.

Every morning and every night trace the sign of the cross on your child's forehead. This is a way of extending God's blessings to your child. As your child grows older invite him or her to do the same to you.

Rocking your child is one of the most intimate and nurturing times you will have together. This is a wonderful sign of the love God has for us. Use this time to let your child hear you praying aloud. The **Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary** and **Glory Be** are good prayers to use at this time.



Children find great joy in movement. The **Child's Simple Grace** is a way of using movement in prayer.

A Child's Simple Grace (fold the child's hands in prayer)

Thank you, God, for
(spread the child's arms out)
EVERYTHING!

Children learn best when they use different senses. When praying, you might want them to use "praying hands." This simple gesture of folding the hands in prayer will help to engage them.

At bedtime encourage your child to say his or her own prayer about anything or anybody. Prayer is conversation with God. This is also a good time to start teaching some formal prayers found on the back of this sheet.

Mornings can be particularly rushed, so here is a short simple way of starting your child's day with prayer. After waking, invite your child to say simply, "Thank you, Jesus, for this lovely day!"

SHARING MASS WITH YOUR CHILD

For Catholics the Eucharist is the "sum and summary of our faith" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1326). Baptism is the door which leads your child to this and all the other sacraments. So he or she should attend Mass with you from the start. The church should be a place that is familiar to them.

When bringing children to Mass sit as close to the front as is feasible so they can see what is going on. Looking at people's backs gets boring rather quickly. Bring soft toys and books to occupy them if they do become restless. You might like to keep some special "church toys" that are reserved just for Mass time, a stuffed lamb, children's picture bible, or other items. Sitting at the end of a row helps you to leave easily if your child gets too loud.

Remember that Baptism brought your child in to the community of faith. So, they too should be present and learn to share in our communal worship.

Prayers to Teach Your Children

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit.

Amen



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as
we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,



the Lord is
with you;
blessed are
you among
women,
and blessed is
the fruit of
your womb,
Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

The Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.



Prayer to Our Guardian Angel

Angel of God,
my Guardian dear,
to whom His love
commits me here,
ever this day be at my side,
to light and guard,
to rule and guide.
Amen.



Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord,
and these thy gifts,
which we are about to receive
from thy bounty,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen



Morning Prayer

O my God, you love me,
you're with me night and day.
I want to love you always
in all I do and say.
I'll try to please you, Father.
Bless me through the day.
Amen



Night Prayer

God, our Father, I come to say
thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family and all
the friends you give to me. Guard
me in the dark of night and in the
morning send your light.
Amen.

Act of Charity

O My God,
I love you above all things,
with my whole heart and soul,
because you are all-good and
worthy of all love.
I love my neighbor as myself for
the love of you.
I forgive all who have injured me,
and ask pardon of all whom I
have injured.
Amen

Act of Sorrow

O my God,
I thank you for loving me.
I am sorry for all my sins, and for
not always loving others
and not always remembering my
love for you.
Help me to live like Jesus and not
sin again.
Amen.