



Parent Pages

Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church*

* The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home.

Prayer and Ritual at Home

A dear friend from our church, Jerry had a daily ritual where he had placed eight votive candles on the family prayer table, each labeled with the name of one of his children. Each morning, he would light the eight candles as he said a prayer for each one of his children. When one of his sons or daughters awoke, and saw their lit candle, they knew that Dad was up and had already said a prayer for their intention. It was a beautiful way for the father and each of his children to begin the day with prayer. At the Jerry's funeral Mass, his children spoke about the great prayer life that their father shared with them and how it transformed their own life and instilled that tradition in their home. The one memento that those children wanted to take from the family home was "their" candle.

Prayer while making the bed

There are tasks throughout our day that can become prayer for us. One of those tasks that no one in our family seemed to enjoy was making the bed. When we turned this task from a simple chore to a prayer opportunity, it became less of a burden and more of a ritual, a holy habit of our family life.

Dear Lord, bless the person who will sleep in this bed. Let it be a place of comfort and rest for the body and a place to restore the soul. I ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

What are the chores in your family that seem to be burdensome? How can they become a prayer?

Prayer when leaving home

While we are staying home and practicing social distancing, there are moments when we may leave the house to go to the grocery store, or to



take a walk, etc. Let us invite the Lord to walk with us and be a part of our relationships, our conversations and all that we do.

Dear Lord, bless us as we leave our home and we ask that you allow us to be kind in our relationship with others, to walk in your love, and do your will today. Amen.

Meal Prayers

The family may say the traditional meal prayer to bless their food. You may also invite the members of your family to use the Daily Examen to talk about the ways we can appreciate the gifts of our day and recognizing moments of gratitude in our life. The Examen is a prayer technique developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, where one reflects on God's presence in their daily life. As you begin this prayer tradition in your home, it is important for family members to be consistent with this prayer form. Parents will want to remind siblings that when members of the family share, there is no teasing, criticizing, or judging. As the family begins the meal, take turns going around the table and respond to:

- What can I thank God for today?
- Or Where did I see God present today?
- Are there times today when I was not open to God's presence, how can I invite him to that situation next time?
- For what can I ask God tomorrow?



Bedtime Prayers

Your family will have your own tradition for bedtime routine. Make sure that prayer is a part of that ritual. Some nights a family may have traditional prayers they pray at bedtime, like the Guardian Angel Prayer, or a Thank You Litany, other nights they may pray a prayer that you create yourself that responds to the needs of your child.

If you do not pray before bed, how do you begin the tradition with your child as a 6-9 year-old? Before bedtime, parents can sit with the child and read Matthew 6:9-13, or even begin with the shorter version in Luke 11:1-13, where the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray.

Invite them to wonder with you, "What did you hear?", "What words stood out for you?" (you may want to read it again), "Jesus prayed these words, and now we can pray them, too." At bedtime, you can begin simply by praying the Lord's Prayer together, with the invitation, "Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us..."