

Simple Spiritual Practices for Households of Faith



- **Prayer** - Pray aloud using printed prayers or your own spontaneous prayers. Pray out of the Bible, using the Book of Psalms, which is a book full of prayers. Prayers of praise and prayers of thanksgiving teach gratitude. Prayers of concern teach about care and sources of strength in hard times. Prayers in silence teach respect; exuberant prayer teaches passion and joy. Prayer binds!
- **Sacred Texts** - Some families make daily or weekly scripture reading a part of their lives. Purchase a Children's Bible so that you may read to your children or older children may read aloud at bedtime. Use devotionals, simple one-pagers to read each day for your own spiritual enrichment.
- **Meals** - Eat meals together. Light a candle as a reminder of God's light. Give the children chores in the meal's preparation and cleanup. Say a prayer, enjoy the food and cherish the company. Meals are sacred.
- **Service** - Acts of service teach children to care for others. The greatest mission of faith itself is to serve a hurting world. Some examples are: take meals to the elderly, pay a visit to a homebound neighbor, make a card for a family member or friend who needs cheering up.
- **Talk of God** - Help children see the sacred possibilities of everyday living. Talk about what you believe, what your convictions are about life and death, suffering and joy, or love and care. Seize the opportunity to capitalize on "unexpected teachable moments." You may not always have the answer. It is okay to say, "I'm not sure. What do you think?"
- **Celebration** - Have visible Christian items in your households. Some examples are a Bible, Cross, Nativity, faith-related pictures hung in children's bedrooms. Keep holidays rooted in their religious significance. Rituals and traditions, rooted in a playful side of life, are often some of the most meaningful times in a family's life. Some examples are: play catch after work, have special meals on certain nights, create individual times with each child, visit a special place every year.
- **Building on Strengths** - A major principle in education is one helpful to family life and religious practice. The principle is this: build on strengths. Religious practice in home life is easier if a child grows up with it from the start. Examples of this would be if your family eats meals regularly, perhaps mealtime would be a good time to start with a prayer. Find ways to live out your faith at home that fits in with your families interests. You are not alone in parenting, include God on the team.
- **Explore Resources** - Investigate Christian web-sites such as our diocesan web-site www.eriebcd.org and www.eriebcd.org/religiouseducation.html [Parent Section] or www.faithfirst.com or your own parish web-site. Visit Christian bookstores, talk to others about what works for them in their pursuits of family faith formation.