

Family Rituals and Traditions



- Patterns of behavior that occur on a routine basis and communicate meaning in life.
- Often convey family histories and values.
- Have power to speak faith, comfort and encouragement.
- May occur on a daily, weekly or seasonal basis.

How does our family create meaning through our rituals and traditions?

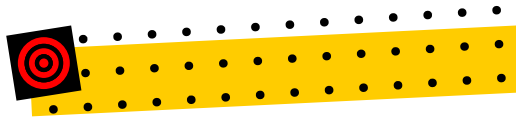
- Observe the seasons of the church year at home—through Lenten disciplines that help focus response to God's great love shown in Christ; focus on Advent as a time of waiting for Christ's coming; Christmas traditions that place Jesus at the center of the celebration.

- Use moments in family life as occasions to recall God as the source of all comfort, joy and hope; birthdays, baptismal anniversaries, Confirmation, first driver's license, retirements, graduations, children leaving home, weddings, anniversaries, memorials of various losses.
- Come up with a greeting to use at the beginning and ending of each day that acknowledges God's presence with one another while apart.
- Find a way to give thanks to God together for all the gifts of each day.

Four Keys to Nurturing Faith in the Home

► Families sharing and growing in faith together....

▶ The Four Keys



Caring Conversation

- Expresses interest in each other's joys and hurts, concerns and dreams, values and faith.
- Requires time to be available to listen and to speak.



Where is the "holy ground" of our family's life?

- What are the places and times where memorable, intimate dialogue takes place? In the car; at the dinner table; at bedtime; vacation time; while doing chores together?
- Claim these times and places as precious God-given ground where faith conversations can happen and find your way back there often.



Family Devotional Life

- Experiencing God's presence through God's word.
- Connects the generations with faith, hope and love found in Christ.
- Is a discipline that needs to be entered into deliberately and consciously.



Where do we begin?

- Find a time that works in your family schedule on a fairly regular basis—breakfast, dinner or bedtime might be a good place to start.
- Begin with a table grace—give God thanks for the things around you.
- Read Bible stories together, share thoughts and questions. Use a children's Bible appropriate for your children's ages.
- Use devotional books and resources appropriate for your children's ages.
- Silent meditation—on a walk, by candlelight.
- Use hymns, liturgies and prayers from worship services.

Family Service

- Jesus calls us in our baptism to serve our neighbor. Because God first loved us, we share that love with others.
- Serving gives life meaning and value, and reminds us of God's gifts to us.
- Serving others together has a lifelong impact on children, especially as stories of serving are retold through the years.



How can our family serve others?

- Look for needs around you and talk about how your family can care for others: rake a neighbor's leaves, run an errand, visit a homebound friend, prepare and take a meal to someone who is ill or grieving.
- Volunteer together at a local pantry or shelter. Help at a community event or fundraiser.
- Research and contribute to a charity chosen by the whole family.

