

Celebrating Rituals at Home

March 1, 2012

Kenora, Ontario

Dear sacramental preparation household,

We think our home is a pretty typical one—our children are busy with activities, we juggle careers and parenting, and leading our children in prayer is a new experience for us.

We hope these tips and ideas will help you to relax and allow the Holy Spirit to take over; after all, prayer is a gift!

Tip 1

Respect the fact that you are praying in your home, not in a formal church context. What's important is NOT getting the ritual executed perfectly, but providing your family with an opportunity to pray together. Complete with interruptions for potty break, wiggling toddlers, and all the fun realities of being family!

Tip 2

Relax and trust the people who have written the rituals for your use. Trust that they are giving you the best tools and resources to be a good nurturer of faith with your family.

Tip 3

Find a familiar time and place to pray the rituals. For our household, our “altar” or prayer space is usually our kitchen table. That's where we gather best. The best time for us is often before or after a meal. Sometimes we are even still in our pajamas after sharing breakfast on Saturday!

Tip 4

The prayer services ask you to use a variety of items—bowl of water, cross, and so on. There is no need to rush out and purchase these items, simply use what you have available. Crosses can be made from tying two twigs together, a towel or pillowcase can serve as a prayer cloth, and so on.

Celebrating Rituals at Home (continued)

Tip 5

Invite the children to share in the preparation and leadership of the ritual. Even young children can help in gathering the supplies and setting things out. Some days they are joyful at being given an opportunity to help out, other days they simply want to participate, and some days even participation is hard work!

Tip 6

Let humor surface as it needs to. Joy is as much a part of prayer as solemn adoration is.

Tip 7

Help your children (and yourselves!) be comfortable with moments of silence. Pause to allow the experience to speak as you pray, instead of rushing through it to get it “done.”

Tip 8

Celebrate that your attempt to pray is prayer. You are trying to create a time and space for your family to have an experience of the holy, and that is all God asks us to do.

Tip 9

Invite the whole family. It is not just the candidate preparing to celebrate the Sacraments, but the whole household. Think for a minute about reconciliation—is it not with their siblings and parents that most children will need to be reconciled?

Tip 10

Relax and enjoy the bumpy road of parenting, including the sharing of faith with your children. All is gift!!

May your journey toward and beyond first celebration of these Sacraments be blessed with joy, laughter, moments of the awareness of God in your home, and may these prayers and rituals create warm and life-giving memories for the ones you love and hope to offer the best to.

Peace in Christ,

Our Sunday Visitor Family