

Banquet Table @ HOME

April 26 - May 1 Alleluia!

In Sunday's Gospel, we hear that Jesus broke bread with the strangers who were traveling to Emmaus, "And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him.." The gospel message of Eucharist continues each day this week as Jesus speaks of the Bread of Life. (See USCCB link below for daily readings). The family dinner table is a time to continue being eucharistic as we bless our meal and give thanks to the Lord, share stories, and nourish ourselves. It is also a time to serve one another. Being eucharist to others can also be a family project to help others in need. Donate food and/or supplies that are needed at your local food pantry. As a family, do a simple blessing over the food and pray for those who will be receiving it.

If table prayer is new to you and your family, here are some tips:

- 1. Make it normal.** As a start, an adult may speak the prayer, and then over time invite others to add a prayer. Like anything, this will take time, but with repeated practice, it will become more comfortable.
- 2. Give thanks.** Expressing gratitude to God, day in and day out, is the surest way to remind ourselves that we are infinitely loved.
- 3. Pray for others.** Praying for God to heal or protect someone specific helps the family hold that person in mind.
- 4. Pray for strength and guidance.** Praying that we use our gifts to help others.

Praying out loud, especially from the heart, helps children and adults learn that prayer doesn't have to be perfect to be worthy of God. On the other hand, traditional prayers offer a chance for connection.

(Taylor, Gary, *Praying Before Meals*. <Buidfaith.org> April 10, 2015.)

Make a centerpiece for the dinner table: Children in the family can take turns designing the centerpiece. It might incorporate signs of the season from nature or church.

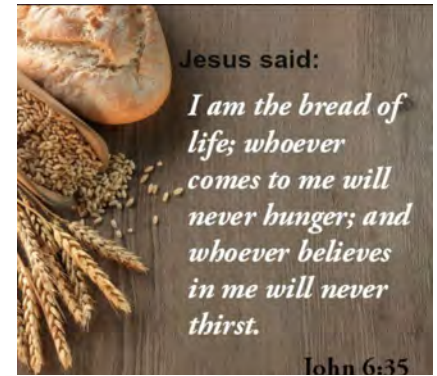
Pray together: As a family, hold hands and thank God for the food and those who prepared it. Give each person a chance to share something from her or his day — God's heart print.

Dinner by candlelight: Celebrate the Light of Christ by lighting a dinner candle during the blessing and keep the candle burning during the meal. In addition, think about using candles, low light, and soft music as these elements slow the pace and exert a calming effect.

Let's get talking: Decorate paper placemats for each family member - the placemats could be filled with conversation starting questions created by each family member. Of course these placemats could be decorated to representation of each family member.

Links for More Ideas and Activities

- USCCB.org : Daily Readings
- TheCatholicSpirit.com : Taste and See: the Eucharist as a Meal (Catholic News Service, Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis)
- Beliefnet.com : 5 Great and Quick Prayers Before Meals (the traditional blessing is included here)
- Teachingcatholickids.com - Eat Family Meals Together (the fun way) - article with ideas
- Ahaparenting.com - 230 Conversation starter for family discussions
- fussfreeflavors.com - Emergency no Yeast Bread - convert the grams and milliliters. The family can practice their math skills.



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.



Grace After Meals

We give thee thanks for all thy benefits, Almighty God, who live and reign for ever.
Amen



Thanks to the Catechetical Leaders in the Diocese of Syracuse
for sharing these great ideas for families!
Our website RCfaithquest.syrdio.org has many ideas for this holy season!

