

A morning prayer*

I begin this day with gratitude for the gift of life.
Asking for

God's strength to direct me.

God's power to sustain me.

God's wisdom to guide me.

God's vision to light my way.

I acknowledge my limitations before you, O God
and trust that

Your ear is listening to me,

Your hand is upholding me,

Your shield is protecting me from every evil

Now and Forever.

Amen.

(adapted from St. Patrick's Breastplate prayer)

An Evening Prayer*

At the close of this day, Lord, we give you thanks
and praise for all good things.

We rest beneath the blanket of your love and
protection, trusting in your power and presence
with us. Grant us restful sleep and guard us from
every evil. We entrust ourselves to you Father,
Son and Holy Spirit God now and forever.
Amen.

*Composed by Mary Jo Pedersen



The following resources are available to you and your
parish from the Family Life Office.

Sharing the Faith With Your Child 0-6, Phyllis Chandler and
Joan Burney

Sharing the Faith With Your Child 7-4, Mary Jo Pedersen and
Joan Burney

*More Than Meets the Eye, Finding God in the Creases and
Folds of Family Life*, Pedersen-Wasikowski-Greisen

Raising Faith-Filled Kids, Tom McGrath

Making God Visible, Parenting Young Children, Kathleen
O'Connell Chesto

The Book of New Family Traditions, Meg Cox

Let's Say Grace: Mealtime Prayers, Robert Hamma

Prayers for Parents, Renee Bartowski

Faith and Fest in Family: Family Prayers and Activities, Family
Life Office

Reminders of God: Altars for Personal and Family Devotion,
Anne F. Grizzle

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TEACHING
CHILDREN ABOUT
THE CIRCLE OF
GRACE AT HOME



Family Life Office Resources for
Parents

Your home is the first place your child will experience the security and protection of God's love for him. And YOU are the first persons to communicate this profound truth of God's circle of grace to your child.

From the moment of birth, a child can know deep down inside if he is loved and secure. Your child experiences a circle of grace from the gentle way his parents and caregivers hold him, how they respond to his needs when he cries and reassure him when he is afraid or in danger. God provides his love and care for your child through your nurturing care for him. At your child's baptism, you were given a candle and asked to be a "light" to your child...shining the light of Christ's love and presence on him. When you are a loving and responsible parent, your child learns about the circle of grace from you as you communicate God's love to him through your faithful care and protection.

Here are a few ideas to assist you in teaching your child that he is God's precious creation and that he is never outside the circle of His love and grace.

Creating Sacred Space in your Home: "Bidden or not bidden, God is present"

Place sacramentals in your home to remind yourself and your children that God is present all the time whether or not we are attentive to Him. Sacramentals (a cross or crucifix, pictures or statues of Mary, Jesus or the saints, a rosary, medal or scapular, or other religious art) are objects that remind us of our faith. Placing the scriptures in a prominent place with a candle nearby is a way of acknowledging God's presence in His holy word. Or create a home altar with a symbol of Christ, a candle and objects that remind you of God's gracious presence all around you in nature, in photos of loved ones, or in mementos of happy times together.

Praying Together Daily

Gather whoever is at home at meal times or bed time and ask God's blessing on your family. Pray when someone is sick, sad or anxious. Pray when you have something to celebrate. Have a book of family prayers at home to help you remember to pray daily. In your prayer, acknowledge God's presence with you, ask for what you need and give thanks for your blessings. Prayer is a dialogue with God in which we are reassured by His power and presence in our lives.

Establishing Family Traditions and Rituals

Simple family traditions and rituals help children have a sense of security and belonging that enhances their understanding of the circle of grace. Traditions act like glue holding families together. Some traditions are seasonal (snow sledding, raking leaves, bike riding, or camping in the back yard). Others occur in the rhythms of everyday (signing each child with the sign of the cross on the forehead as they leave the house, good-night prayers or story readings, notes in sack lunches on special days or Friday night pizza and a movie). Families who wrap their lives in ritual and tradition teach children that God's grace surrounds them in the ordinary moments of their lives as well as at special times.

Teaching Your Child about the Circle of Grace that Surrounds Him/Her

Your words teach your child about God's protection and comfort. Use words to remind your child that God is with her, watching over her day and night. When she is afraid or anxious, remind her that she is never alone. Assure her that she is wonderfully



made by God...just as she is; short, tall, freckled or plain.

Your actions teach too. Show respect for your child by allowing him age-appropriate privacy, not teasing him about his body, setting rules about bullying and name-calling, setting boundaries at home so that mutual respect is learned and practiced everyday in ordinary ways.

Your attitudes will communicate to your child in profound ways. An attitude of openness and acceptance of your child's dreams and fears is important to establish the sense of trust she needs to tell you what she is feeling. She needs to know that she can tell you anything and that you will listen and accept her feelings without retribution.

Prayers for Parents

You are part of the circle of grace which surrounds your child. Your love for your child communicates God's love and care. These prayers may help you deepen your participation in God's ever-expanding circle of love for your child.

A Prayer of Confidence in God's Love*

"I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence and nothing still to come, nor any power.....will be able to come between us and the love of God, known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord". Romans: 8:37-39

Loving God whose circle of grace surrounds us now and into eternity, we thank and praise you for your steadfast love and protection. By the power of your Holy Spirit open our eyes to your presence each day as we feed and cloth, nurture and instruct our children in Your ways. We offer this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.