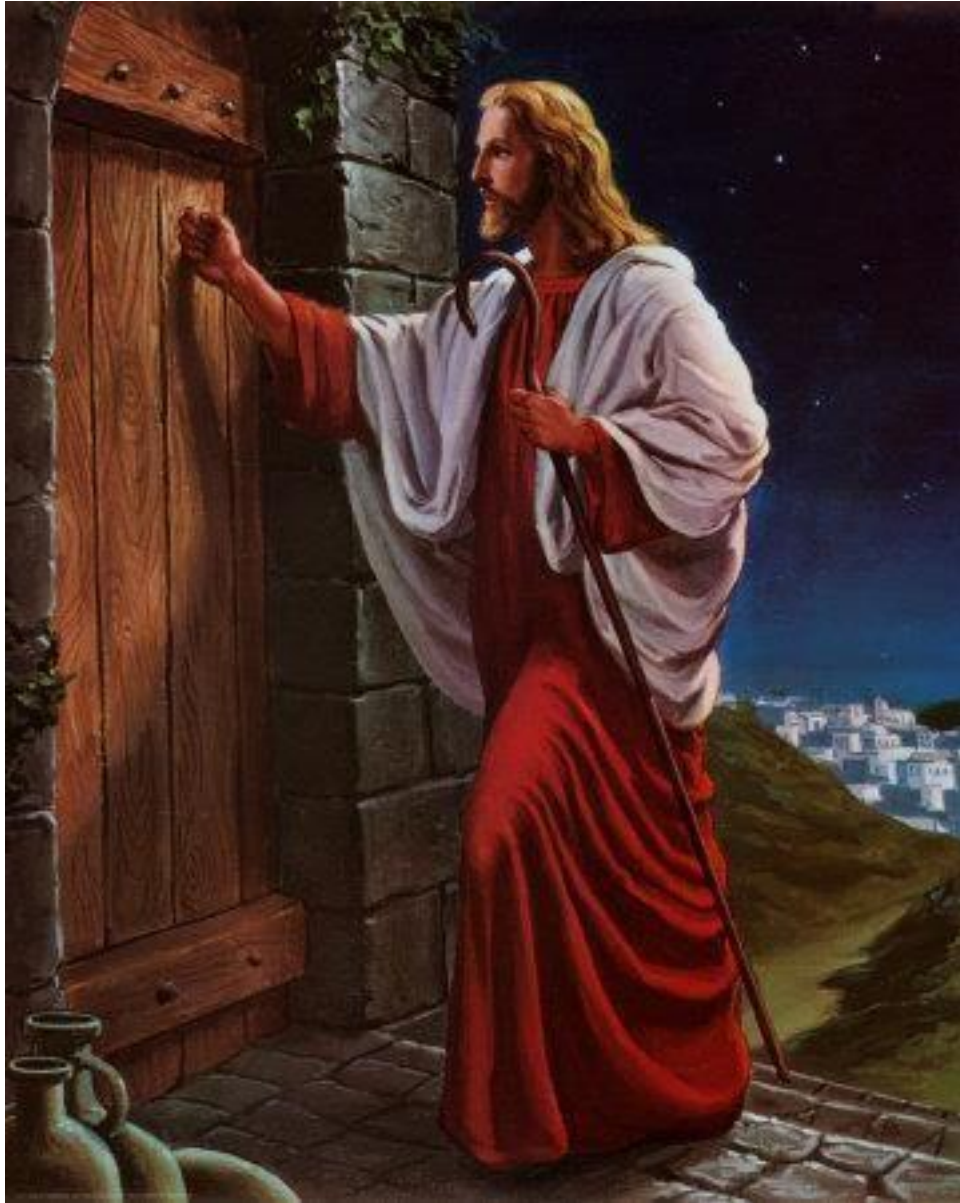


FAMILY PRAYER

In every home



“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go into his house and dine with him, and he with me.” (Rv 3: 20)

+Christian Lépine, archbishop of Montreal
2nd edition
March 25, 2020

A prayer corner in each home

The family is the basic unit of society and the cradle of life and faith; it is, in fact, the domestic church. Through personal and family prayer, the family is called to participate in God's plan of love, his plan for Creation and Salvation.

We are living through a pandemic crisis affecting all of humanity, which, by extension, affects all families as well. With physical distancing and home-confinement measures being implemented, there is an opportunity to rediscover prayer, providing a benefit to each person and each family as well.

This is why I am publishing a prayer booklet, to make it easier to pray, to read the Bible, to recite the rosary, whether alone, as a couple, as a family, with children and young people.

This booklet is called "**FAMILY PRAYER - in every home**," published on March 25, 2020, in honour of the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord.

I invite you to use it and distribute it. It is a free PDF document.

To facilitate prayer, designate a space in your home, "a prayer corner," in which you could put a painting, a statue or a crucifix, a Bible, a candle that can be lit during prayer time. Start with five minutes, gradually increasing prayer time to 20 minutes. During the first months, do not exceed 30 minutes, so as to allow yourself to become acquainted with the rhythm of prayer life.

In the booklet you will find prayers, but also instructions regarding how to pursue prayer, how to recite the rosary and how to meditate with the Bible. I invite you to share your experiences by sending them to the following email address: espacedialogue@diocesemontreal.org

Pope Francis never ceases to encourage us to pray: "How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons." (Blessing given Urbi and Orbi: "A time of choosing", March 27, 2020)

COVID-19 affects all of humanity in one way or another. Let us take the time to rediscover the importance of prayer in our personal and family lives. Let us open our hearts to God present with us and to his work of salvation. Let us learn, with the help of Jesus Christ, how to grow in solidarity with our families and our society.

May God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, fill you with his Light, keep you in his Love and protect you!

+Christian Lépine

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This booklet is the fruit of various experiences of pastoral ministry with families, input from parish pastoral teams and collaboration with the diocesan communications office.

I particularly wish to thank all the faithful parishioners of Saint-André Apôtre, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, Saint-Joseph-de-Mont-Royal, Notre-Dame-des-Champs and Purification de la Bienheureuse-Vierge-Marie, where I ministered and met many families. Among the many couples who contributed to the preparation and development of this booklet are Permanent Deacon Jean Lavigne and his wife, Mrs. Pierrette Lavigne, Mr. Denis Galipeau and his wife, Mrs. Jacinthe Bernèche, all members of the “Société du Christ Seigneur.”

The Société du Christ Seigneur through its various groups – faith and life fraternities, its living-stone teams, the Mater-Christi stars and the Love and Life teams (couples) – has much experience with family spirituality, which is reflected in the family prayer guidelines for couples and for children of different ages, as well as in the choice of prayers found in this booklet. You can visit their website leunis.org.

I thank the Centre International de l’Oraison, in Troussures, France, where I studied and learned of many resources regarding learning how to pray and prayer accompaniment. This centre, founded by Fr. Henri Caffarel, is now called “Écoles d’Oraison” and can be accessed at ecole-oraison.org.

This booklet is intended to be a simple, accessible resource. It is not complete but wants to encourage the desire to pray: individually, as a couple and as a family. May it serve to awaken and develop a thirst for God within our being.

+Christian Lépine

SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father (right hand on the forehead)
And of the Son (right hand on the chest)
And of the Holy- (right hand on the left shoulder)
Spirit (right hand on the right shoulder)
Amen (hands together)



STANDARD PRAYERS

OUR FATHER

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,
Forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those
Who trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with thee,
Blessed art thou among women
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

Grace and peace be with you from "**Him who is and who was and who is to come**", and from the seven Spirits (**Holy Spirit**) before his throne, and from **Jesus Christ**, the faithful witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and ruler of the kings of the earth.
He who loves us and has washed us from our sins by his blood, He has made of us a kingdom, priests, for his God and **Father**; to him therefore be **glory** and power **forever. Amen.**
(Rv 1: 4-6)

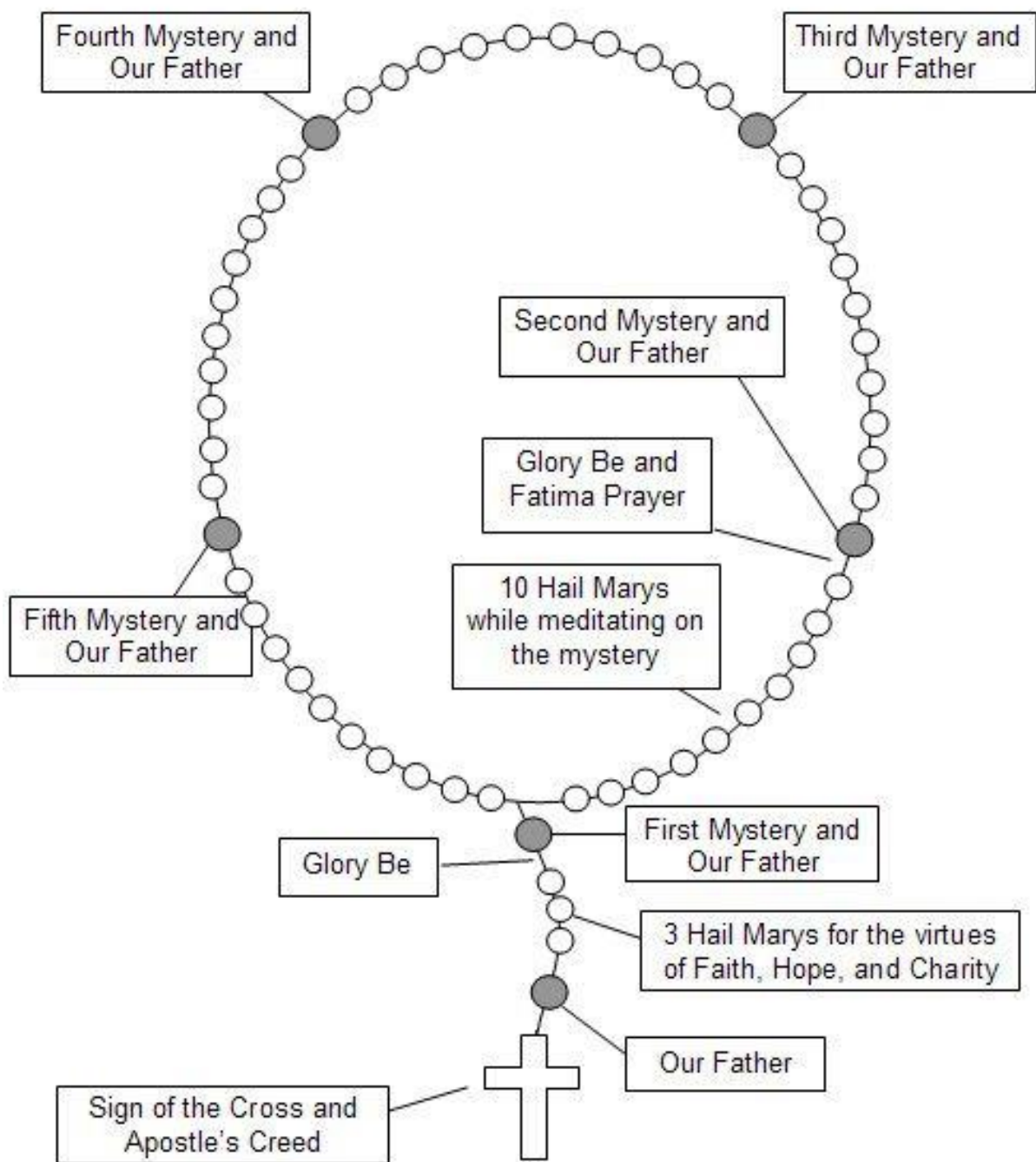
THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell; on the third day
he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and is seated
at the right hand of God the Father almighty,
from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and life everlasting.
Amen.

The Rosary



The Mysteries of the Rosary

The JOYFUL MYSTERIES

1st Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation

(Luke 1:26-28)

Lk 1:26. the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,

27. to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28. He went in and said to her: "Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you."

2nd Joyful Mystery: The Visitation

(Luke 1:41-45)

Lk 1:41. Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42. She gave a loud cry and said: "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

45. "Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

3rd Joyful Mystery: The Nativity

(Luke 2:10-11)

Lk 2:10. But the angel said: "Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people.

11. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

4th Joyful Mystery: The Presentation in the Temple

(Luke 2:29-32)

Lk 2:29. Now, Master, you are letting your servant go in peace as you promised;

30. for my eyes have seen the salvation

31. which you have made ready in the sight of the nations;

32. a light of revelation for the Gentiles and glory for your people Israel.

5th Joyful Mystery: The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

(Luke 2:49-51)

Lk 2:49. He replied: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

50. But they did not understand what he meant.

51. He went down with them then and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart.

The Mysteries of the Rosary

The LUMINIOUS MYSTERIES

1st Mystery: The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan

(Matthew 3.13-17)

Mt 3:17. And suddenly there was a voice from heaven: "This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him."

2nd Mystery: The Wedding Feast at Cana

(John 2.1-12)

Jn 2:5. His mother said to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you."

3rd Mystery: Jesus' Proclamation of the Coming of the Kingdom of God with the call to conversion. *(Mark 1:15)*

Mk 1:15. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel."

4th Mystery: The Transfiguration

(Luke 9:28-36)

Lk 9:35. And a voice came from the cloud saying: "This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him."

5th Mystery: The Institution of the Eucharist

(Luke 22:19-20)

Then he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying: "This is my body given for you (Lk 22:19a)

do this in remembrance of me." (Lk 22:19b)

He did the same with the cup after supper, and said: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you." (Lk 22:20)

The Mysteries of the Rosary

The SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

1st Mystery: The Agony in the Garden

(Matthew 26:36, Mark 14:32-46, Luke 22:39-48, John 18:1-8)

Mt 26:39. And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. "My Father," he said, "if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it."

2nd Mystery: The Scourging at the Pillar

(Matthew 27:26, Mark 15:15, John 19:1)

Mt 27:26. ...After having Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

3rd Mystery: The Crowning With Thorns

(Matthew 27:27-30, Mark 15:16-20, Luke 18:37, John 19:2-15)

Mt 27:29. ...and having twisted some thorns into a crown, they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying: "Hail, king of the Jews!"

4th Mystery: The Carrying of the Cross

(Matthew 27:31-33, Mark 15:20-22, Luke 23:26-32, John 19:16-17)

Jn 19:16. So at that Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. They then took charge of Jesus,

17. and carrying his own cross, he went out to the Place of the Skull or, as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.

5th Mystery: The Crucifixion and Death

(Matthew 27:34-61, Mark 15:23-47, Luke 23:33-56, John 19:18-42)

Mt 27:46. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice: "Eli, eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

The Mysteries of the Rosary

The GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

1st Mystery: The Resurrection

(Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-18, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-28)

- Lk 24:2. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb,
- 3. but on entering they could not find the body of the Lord Jesus.
- 4. As they stood there puzzled about this, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side.
- 5. Terrified, the women bowed their heads to the ground. But the two said to them: "Why look among the dead for someone who is alive?"
- 6. He is not here; he has risen..."

2nd Mystery: The Ascension

(Luke 24:39-53, Mark 16:19-20, Acts 1:6-9)

- Luke 24:50. Then he took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and raising his hands, he blessed them.
- 51. Now as he blessed them, he withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven.
- 52. They worshiped him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy;
- 53. and they were continually in the Temple praising God.

3rd Mystery: The Descent of the Holy Spirit

(Acts 1:14 - 2:47)

- Acts 2:1. When Pentecost day came round, they had all met together,
- 2. when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting;
- 3. and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them.
- 4. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves.

4th Mystery: The Assumption

Judith 13:18. May you be blessed, my daughter, by God Most High, beyond all women on earth.

5th Mystery: The Coronation of Mary

Rv 12:1. Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, robed with the sun, standing on the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

PRAYING PERSONALLY, AS A COUPLE OR AS A FAMILY WITH THE BIBLE

+Christian Lépine

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- The prayer time may last from 10 to 20 minutes; it includes three parts.
- If possible, each person should have a copy of the chosen biblical passage.
- It is best to have a prayer leader to guide the prayer session in a discreet manner.

I – LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD

- + Make the sign of the cross. Slowly read the passage out loud.
- Time of silence (1/3 of the prayer time).
- Silently meditate on the Word of God.
 - If the passage presents particular difficulties, ...do not stop ... God can speak to us through a single word that might evoke a feeling or generate an insight.
 - Allow the Word of God to resonate within you; it should not merely remain at the intellectual or emotional level.

Allow God's Word to resonate within you at the deepest level.

Contemplate it slowly, pausing in silence.

Allow it to pervade your being before reacting.

II – LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD, THROUGH OTHERS

- Continue in an atmosphere of attentive silence.
- Each person has a chance to speak:
 - when they want,
 - simply and without commentary from others,
 - about something that touches them: a sentence, an expression, or a word from the passage that was read,
 - comprising, in essence, a shared meditation.

Each person listens attentively, allowing the words that are expressed to resonate within them.

- Comments:
 - This is a time of contemplation, and each person is free to speak or remain silent.
 - Here, silence is a type of prayer. The Holy Spirit works in the depths of the heart, and silence expresses our desire and trusting consent.
 - Sometimes, you might feel drawn to reread a passage that struck you in a particularly strong way.
 - Other times, you might not feel inspired by the passage that was chosen, ...

III – LISTENING GENERATES RESPONSE

- The Word that was spoken evokes a response, inviting us:
 - To give thanks, to adore, to offer up
 - To seek insight, strength
 - To ask for forgiveness
 - To intercede...

The responses that spring up, inspired by the passage, are shared:

- Spontaneously, without concern about a proper order; freely, ...
- Allowing for a silent pause between each response.

Conclude the prayer session by reciting the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, ending with the + Sign of the Cross.

FAMILY PRAYER WITH 2-5 YEAR OLDS

Each person stops whatever they are doing and prepares his or her heart to encounter Jesus as a family.

- *There are simple ways to engage the interest of children. For example, helping a child to light a candle, alternating turns each time. Another child can be responsible for bringing the Bible when it is time for a reading. Allow little ones to enjoy admiring the beautiful light of the candle. At the end, children usually like to blow out the candle.*
- *You may also choose to bring something to offer to Jesus: a flower, a gift, a drawing, an object or image that your little ones like.*

SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

PLACE YOURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Take a brief moment of silence to place yourselves in God's presence.

You can name those whom you want to encounter during your prayer time: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, God the Father...

READ THE WORD OF GOD

Tell the story of Jesus' life using a picture book, drawing your children's attention to the images, and from there, focus on Jesus:

- Let your children speak about what they see and what they think.
- Let your children observe Jesus' expressions and actions:
 - Does he seem happy or sad; is he smiling or crying?
 - Where is he walking to...?
 - What did he do to heal the person?
 - What miracle did he perform and why is it a miracle?

Also, look at the faces of the people who are with Jesus:

- What are they doing?
- How do they express themselves?
- When Jesus prays, what does he say to his Father?
- What does he say to those around him?

MAKE THE CONNECTION WITH FAMILY LIFE

Taking your inspiration from the biblical passage that was just read and contemplated, pray to Jesus in your own words, making a connection between the life of Jesus and your family: *the people who are in your lives, those who work to care for people, those who need help.*

PRAY FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FOR THE WORLD

Offer prayers for yourselves, your friends and people you know.

PRAY TO MARY

Say a loving word to Mary and the Hail Mary.

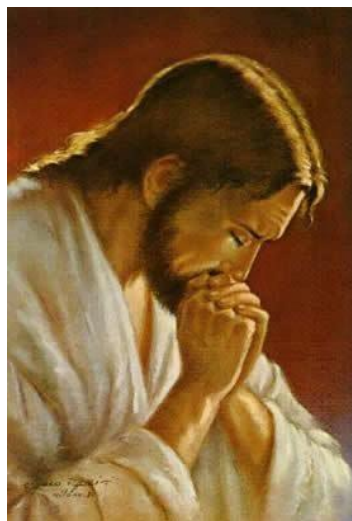
PRAISE THE BLESSED TRINITY

Say "thank you" to God, clapping your hands and singing: "Glory to you Lord... Glory to you Jesus... Glory to you, Spirit of Love!"
You can make up your own tune. You can also say the Glory Be.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

End with the Sign of the Cross, explaining that you are saying "Good day" or "Goodnight" to Jesus who "wants to live in our hearts and to bless us."

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



FAMILY PRAYER WITH 6-9 YEAR OLDS

Each person stops everything they are doing and prepares his or her heart to encounter Jesus as a family.

Children can light a candle, taking turns each time. One child can be responsible for bringing the Bible when it is time to share a reading. Another can choose the biblical passage that will be read, either alone or with help.

It is a good opportunity to offer something to Jesus: a test from school, a personal project, a holy picture or statue they particularly like.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

PLACE YOURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Take a brief moment of silence to place yourselves in God's presence. Each person can tell Jesus how much they love him in their own words.

You can name all the beautiful things that God has created, things you have noticed and admired, used, received, and say "thank you" to Jesus, name the people with whom you spend time.

OUR FATHER

Recite the Our Father together (*or sing it accompanied to clapping hands or interpretive hand gestures*).

READ THE WORD OF GOD

Read a short Gospel passage, telling it like a story. Then, each person retells the story, as they understood it.

You can ask questions to emphasize what Jesus did, what he said, how he behaved (with gentleness, praying to his Father...)

MAKE THE CONNECTION WITH FAMILY LIFE

Encourage everyone to speak to Jesus in his or her own words, asking him to help them love their siblings, their mother and father, to

give thanks for the members of their family who have helped them, those with whom they play, those with whom they work ...
(Review the events of the day, offer up the special objects that were brought, and ask why they are being offered to Jesus). Pray naturally, don't be shy, knowing that Jesus hears all prayers, loves each person, and wants each person to be happy.

PRAY FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FOR THE WORLD

Offer prayers for yourselves, your friends, and people you know who are struggling.

PRAY TO MARY

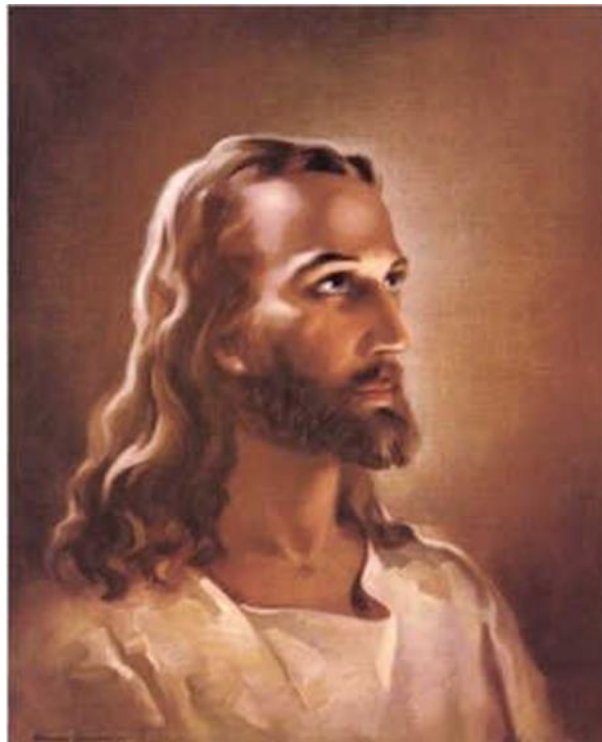
Say the Hail Mary together.

PRAISE THE BLESSED TRINITY

Say the Glory Be together.

These two prayers could be said while making a circle, holding hands.

Ask God for his blessing, to learn to think of him often ***so that we do not leave him alone.*** Make the Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



FAMILY PRAYER WITH 9 YEAR OLDS AND OVER

Each person stops everything they are doing and prepares his or her heart to encounter Jesus as a family. Together, you can plan a simple ritual to help prepare for this time of prayer, inviting each of the children to be responsible for a particular task.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PLACE YOURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Take a brief moment of silence to place yourselves in God's presence.

"Jesus, we believe in you and we believe that you are present in each of our hearts.

We thank you for all that you are: Love, Peace, Joy..."

Or any other spontaneous prayer.

OUR FATHER

Recite the Our Father together (*or sing it, if you prefer*).

READ THE WORD OF GOD

Read a short Gospel passage.

Then, ask each person to consider what part of the passage spoke to them in a special way and to share it with those present.

Take a brief moment of silence between each person's sharing, maintaining a relaxed atmosphere.

Then, remain attentive to what Jesus wants to say to you today through his Word, personally and as a family.

RESPONDING TO JESUS

Speak to Jesus in your own words: thank him and ask him for help or for forgiveness, depending on what is in your heart. Pray naturally, don't be shy, knowing that Jesus hears your prayers, loves you very much and wants you to be happy.

PRAY FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FOR THE WORLD

Pray for your family, friends, and people you know who have specific needs.

You may want to include some prayers from the following section devoted to prayers.

PRAY TO MARY

Say the Hail Mary together.

PRAISE THE BLESSED TRINITY

Say the Glory Be together.

Ask God for his blessing to learn to think of him often, so that he is not ignored. Make the Sign of the Cross.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



PRAYERS FOR 3-5 YEAR OLDS

MY LORD, MY FRIEND

You are always near me;
I trust in you.
Please, help me because...
(*Pray in your own words*)

I pray for the people I know
(*name them*)
Bless them, protect them, and help them
to love you more and more. Amen.

JESUS, YOU ARE WONDERFUL!

Lord Jesus,
You have worked wonders for me:
Nature: the sun, the flowers, water and wind...
You have given me my family, (*name the members of your family*)
My friends (*name them*).

Your creation is beautiful and it is made in your image.
I love you and thank you for your love.

Teach me to be like you,
The joy of God our Father.
Jesus, you are wonderful!

YOU ARE IN MY HEART

Lord Jesus, you are in my heart
And you give me your life.
I adore you and thank you.

Lord Jesus, you are my guide
And my friend;
I love you and trust in you.
Make me faithful to your Word.

PRAYERS FOR 6-9 YEAR OLDS

FAMILY CONSECRATION

Heart of Jesus, You who consecrated yourself to the Father
Out of love for us,
Through your Spirit, we want to consecrate ourselves to You,
Out of love for You.
We offer You our lives and our family,
our home and our work,
And even our smallest actions.
To You, we consecrate our suffering and our joy,
So that your Love will always live in us. Amen.

JESUS, YOUR WORD ENLIGHTENS MY LIFE

Like a lamp lighting my home, your Word enlightens my life.
Like a lighthouse guiding the sailor, your light guides my steps.
Like the sun awakening the day, your words awaken happiness.
Like a fire dancing in the night, your love makes my heart dance.
We welcome your Light, we welcome your Word, Lord
And we want to be like you; to love each other as you love us.

PRAYER TO MARY

Mary, Mother of all children,
Fill my heart with your love for Jesus.
Help me to understand God's Word more fully
So that I can always love better, always love more.
Like a good mother,
Take me by the hand and lead me to Jesus. Amen.

YOU ARE SO GOOD!

Jesus, we praise you because you help us.
You are the best of friends.
You never abandon us
And you forgive the naughty things we do.
You are always there in difficult times.
We want to grow to be more like you. Amen.

FORGIVE US!

Father in heaven,
Forgive us for disturbing the peace in the house
When we get angry or fight.
Help us to find what needs to be said
To repair any harm we have done.
Forgive us when we argue too much.
Help us to smile more.
Help us to forgive others
And help others to forgive us.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN 9 YEARS-PLUS

PRAYER TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

Our Father who art in heaven,
You have given us the Holy Family of Nazareth
As an example.

Help us, loving Father,
To make our family a New Nazareth, where joy and peace reign.
Make it deeply contemplative,
Thoroughly Eucharistic, and vibrant with joy.
Help us to remain united in joy and suffering
Through family prayer.

Teach us to recognize Jesus
In each member of our family,
Especially those who suffer and those who are hurt.
May the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus
Make our hearts gentle and humble like yours.

Help us to fulfil our family mission with holiness,
That we may love one another
As God loves us each day,
That we will forgive each other's faults
As you forgive our sins.

Loving Father, help us to welcome whatever you give us
With a big smile.
Immaculate Heart of Mary, cause of our joy,
Pray for us.

St. Joseph, protector of families,
Pray for us.

FAMILY CONSECRATION

Heart of Jesus, You who consecrated yourself to the Father
Out of love for us,

Through your Spirit, we want to consecrate ourselves to You,
Out of love for You.

We offer You our lives and our family,
Our home and our work,
And even our smallest actions.

To You, we consecrate our suffering and our joy,
So that your Love will always live in us. Amen.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph, spouse of Mary
Teach us to look upon Mary
As you looked upon her, with the same respect,
With the same admiration, with the same love!

You, who grew to understand the quality of her soul,
And continually experienced new joys,
Help us to contemplate the Virgin Mary,
To continue discovering her incomparable perfection (...)

Knowing that her gentleness and kindness permeated your home in
Nazareth,
Help us to see these once again
In Mary's face as she leans toward us;
Help us to believe in her inexhaustible goodness (...)
That our hearts and our minds may always remain true and pure,
So that we may enter into communion
With the heart and mind of the Immaculate Virgin. Amen.

INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is discord, unity.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love with all my soul.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

(Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi)

ENWRAPED IN YOUR BEAUTY, LORD

Lord,
In the silence of this new day,
I come to ask
For peace, wisdom and strength.

Today, I want to look at the world
With eyes full of love,
To be patient, understanding, gentle and wise.
To look beyond appearances, seeing your children
As you yourself see them,
So as to see only the good in everyone.

Close my ears to all slander,
Guard my tongue from all malice.
Let only thoughts that bless
Remain in my heart and mind,
Making me so kind and joyful,
That all who come near me
Feel your presence.

Enwrap me in your beauty, Lord,
So that daylong I may reveal you. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR COUPLES

YOU ARE THE SOURCE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You have called us to establish a home together.
You are the source of our love;
Give us the grace to fill our home
With the same love with which you love us.
Illuminate our home with the light of your Word.
Make it welcoming with the warmth of your goodness
That is living in us,
For all those who come to warm themselves here.

With the help of your grace,
Teach us to help each other advance
In doing your will out of a desire to serve,
To submit all of our projects to your will,
And to welcome unforeseen events and obstacles
As an invitation to trust in you
Whatever the circumstances.
Teach us to rejoice in our joys,
As well as in your providential circumstances
That lead us to take new paths:
Paths of faith, charity and self-giving.
And through your grace, help us to lead the children that you have
entrusted to us directly to you.

Lord, you who are Love, we love you
And we thank you for our love. Amen.

WE PRAY FOR THEM

In your name, Father,
And by the grace that you have given to us
Of being a mother and a father,
Bless our children.

In your name, O Christ,
You who are the Son, and our big brother,
Grant that our children may always love you
As we love you today.

In your name, Spirit of Love,
You who enlightens hearts
And strengthens the weak,
Guide our children,
In all circumstances of life.

For them, and in their names, we pray to you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Keep us united in your Love.
We consecrate ourselves to you, loving God,
And we ask you to bless us in turn.
Amen.

PRAYER OF SAINT JOHN-PAUL II FOR FAMILIES

Lord God, from You every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. Father, You are love and life.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, born of woman, and through the Holy Spirit, the fountain of divine charity, grant that every family on earth may become for each successive generation a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that your grace may guide the thoughts and actions of husbands and wives for the good of their families and of all the families in the world.

Grant that the young may find in the family solid support for their human dignity and for their growth in truth and love.

Grant that love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage, may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out her worldwide mission in the family and through the family.

We ask this of You, Who are life, truth and love with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HERE ARE OUR CHILDREN, THEY BELONG TO YOU

Lord Jesus, it was your Will to entrust us with children.

We thank you for trusting us.
We thank you for each one of them,
For all that you have given to them,
And for the joy that you have given to us.

We ask for all the light and all the love that we need
To help them become the capable men and women of tomorrow,
Who will make a world that is more just, more fraternal,
Respectful of family life,
Always giving the best of themselves,
And witnessing to your strength when they are weak.

Strengthen our faith
That we may be witnesses
Of your abiding presence for them.
May they become, by your grace, the saints
You need to touch the hearts of humankind.
Amen.

READING THE WORD OF GOD

The Church “earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, (...) to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures, the ‘excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus’.” (Phil. 3, 8), “for ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” (St. Jerome) – *Dei Verbum*, Vatican Council II. Christians are invited to put the Word of God at the centre of their lives. “For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them, and the force and power in the Word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life.” (Vatican Council II)

How to read the Bible?

People can sometimes be intimidated by the Bible. One can start by simply reading a short passage each day. The Church’s liturgy, with its daily readings for the Mass, offers a coherent reading plan. Once a passage is chosen, read it through one time. You will encounter the mystery of the Word of God. The Lord is present, and he has come to speak to you. You can pray: “I believe, Lord, that you want us to meet here. That your Spirit will open my heart to your Word.”

Then, re-read the passage, noting all of the details that are described: the people, the actions, the words. Imagine the scene. You can also ask questions. “Why this viewpoint, why that word? What does this reveal about you, Lord?” Remember that God is Love, Truth, Beauty and Unity. God reveals himself and speaks to us both about himself and about ourselves.

How to understand the Bible?

Certain passages may speak to you clearly; others may seem foreign or even strange. If you take the time to re-read the passage several times, “scrutinizing the Scriptures,” adopting a humble, open attitude, God will speak to you, one way or another. Perhaps not right away. St. Thérèse of Lisieux showed real determination and perseverance in her desire to know the Lord. She always managed to learn something. The Holy Spirit enlightens hearts that are open and humble.

Are Bible courses necessary for understanding the Word of God?

Bible study facilitates understanding the literal meaning of the texts, by studying their literary and historical context, and studying the meaning of the words. The Church encourages such studies while emphasizing that the Bible is the Word of God. A better understanding of the literal meaning can help to deepen the spiritual meaning of the Word, its moral appeal, and message of hope. Now, let us listen to the Word of God!

How to pray with the Bible?

The Word of God will naturally lead you to prayer. It will become easy to contemplate God, to glorify Him, to adore Him, because you will have discovered Him. Sometimes, it may take the form of making an inner decision, or of a renewed resolve to be a more committed disciple of Jesus Christ, and to bear better witness to Him in all aspects of your life.

WORSHIPING GOD

LISTENING TO HIS SILENCE

+Christian Lépine

Called to worship Jesus Christ

How to worship? There is a way that is sure to help; a path that acknowledges that *the Holy Spirit is the master of prayer* for each and every person, a way to learn to be open to God's promptings.

It is by going from reading the Word of God to silence, through meditation on the Word.

You don't have to force yourself to be silent. You can put aside a time for prayer at home (each day); you can visit an adoration chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is present (each week) and, depending on what you feel called to do, you can embrace this quiet time to practise some of the following: *slowly reading the Word of God*, or slowly reading of the Word *with silent pauses*, or slowly *meditating* on the Word with silent pauses.

In the presence of God

Just taking the time to put yourself in the presence of God, in the midst of your busy schedule, is already a prayer, whatever the content of the encounter. It is *telling God that you want to pray*, to learn to pray, to speak to him, listen to him, to adore him.

Holy Spirit teach me how to worship

Worship, like all forms of prayer, is the Holy Spirit working within us. So at the beginning of your prayer time, it is good to ask the Holy Spirit to teach you how to pray and to worship.

Read the Word of God

The Bible is the Word of God; therefore, God is already present. Reading the Bible is telling God, in essence, that you accept his invitation to meet him heart to heart. "*Because He speaks, I want to listen to Him.*"

Punctuated with silence

After some time of continuous reading, you may feel the need to pause in silence, to catch your breath so to speak, before continuing. It is a good idea to start doing so intentionally -- make it stress free -- pausing

to place yourself back in the presence of God, as an act of awareness that through Scripture, God is speaking to you.

Meditating on the Word

After some time of continuous reading, with silent pauses, you may have spontaneously re-read one passage or another that spoke to you. It might be a whole chapter, a paragraph, a sentence or even a word that caught your attention. At the beginning, it is best not to read more than one chapter at a time but rather to re-read a passage slowly, with silent pauses. That way, you can “digest” the Word, taking it into yourself, meditating on it so as to assimilate and live it.

In a given chapter, you might re-read the passages that touched you the most three or four times, keeping a short time of silence (a few seconds or more) between readings.

Persevering in prayer

It is important to allow yourself to be guided by the desire for silence. It is a desire that the Holy Spirit inspires and helps us to fulfill. It is not about trying to progress, but to persevere in prayer by putting yourself in God’s presence each day. When slowly reading and re-reading the Word of God, with silent pauses, the moments of silence may vary but, in general, they will be more and more frequent and for longer and longer periods.

Listening to God’s silence

Prayer – kneeling, being silent, 15 minutes or an hour – is not a performance; it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The way to be open to this gift that the Spirit wants to give you, is to want it, fervently, with all your heart, to beg for it, and to trust that through your struggles and efforts, the Holy Spirit will teach you how to worship.

Meditating on Holy Scripture leads to silence, because the Supreme Word of God is Silence: *the Silence of Jesus Christ dead on the Cross, the Silence of Jesus Christ Resurrected*. The Word incarnate was made silent by sinful humanity that rejected him and nailed him to the Cross, because the sinner cannot bear the presence of God and does not want to hear him. The Crucified One is resurrected in the profound silence of the Merciful and All Powerful Love of the Holy Trinity.

Worshiping becomes listening to the Silence of God, contemplating the Pascal Mystery: meditation, contemplation and adoration of the mystery of Jesus Christ Crucified and Resurrected, through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Universal prayer

Eternal Father you gave us your only Son through a family, by the “yes” of the Virgin Mary and the generosity of Joseph. With deep faith we pray to you, that peace and justice grow in the world, that beauty and unity reign in our families, and that love and truth live in the Church.

R/ Lord, God of the universe, hear us

“Jesus’ parents brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord” (pause). Let us pray that all families discover the richness of the Sunday Eucharist and find joy and peace by trustingly presenting themselves to the Lord.

“My eyes have seen your salvation” (pause). Let us pray that those who are going through moments of trial and suffering may believe that God is present at the very heart of their difficulties and may experience the redemptive love of Christ the Lord.

“A light to the nations” (pause). Let us pray that the Church may be a sign of your Kingdom throughout the world, that the faithful may be full of discernment and love, justice and peace, and that all may proclaim the Gospel with humility and courage, patience and gentleness.

“Anna gave glory to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting deliverance” (pause). Let us pray that our Christian community welcomes your Word, is transformed by it, and gives witness to it in daily life.

“The child grew and became strong, full of wisdom and the grace of God was with him” (pause). Let us pray that children, young people and families encounter Jesus Christ who is ALIVE, that homes may become prayerful places and a source of life and love in all hearts.

Eternal Father, hear our prayers. By the gift of your Son, heal us of anything that is preventing us from offering our lives to you in response to your Love. By the Holy Spirit help us to grow in faith and hope. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R/ Amen.