

BEING A CHRISTIAN PARENT



A RESOURCE FOR
NEW PARENTS AND FOR
PARENTS BRINGING THEIR
CHILDREN FOR BAPTISM

GOD CHOSE YOU!

What a tremendous responsibility and opportunity you have as a parent. God has entrusted you with your child. Your number one responsibility is to ensure that your child knows Jesus. Through you, through your faith and through your example, your child will come to know the grace and love that the heavenly Father has for him or her through Jesus.

How your child comes to know God as a loving and caring God is related to your baby's experiences with you as God's spokesperson in your child's life.

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This responsibility is not fulfilled during a one-time event. Deuteronomy 6 impresses upon parents this responsibility:

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (DEUT. 6:6-7).

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In other words, you should always be talking about your faith with your child and living it out in your life.



Routines are important. Morning routines, meal routines and bedtime routines can help us develop healthy habits. Including spiritual elements into our routines helps the faith development of our children and keeps us talking about faith with them. Praying before meals, reading a Bible story as the last book before bed, and singing a Christian hymn or song as part of the bedtime routine are all examples of spiritual routines.

DAILY PRAYER AND BLESSING

As a parent, one responsibility that you have is teaching your children to pray. Here is a way to do this:

1. Every night, after your children have had their bath, are in their jammies or are swaddled for the night, pray the Lord's Prayer over them. As they get older, you can help them fold their hands and later have them repeat the words of the prayer after you say it, a few words at a time.
2. Pray or sing a children's prayer over them. Here are two examples:
 - a. Jesus, Savior, wash away All that has been wrong today; Help me ev'ry day to be Good and gentle, more like Thee. Amen. (LSB 887:2)
 - b. Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep; if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen.
3. Finally, end your time in prayer by blessing them. Remind them of God's love for them and that you love them as well. Here is an example of a blessing you could speak over your kids every night: "You are God's child. Jesus loves you, and I love you." If there is anything we desire for our kids to know each day it is this: God's love for them and our love as parents for them. Additionally, you can trace a cross on their forehead with your finger as you give this blessing, reminding them of their Baptism where they were marked with the cross of Jesus on their forehead and their heart.



FAITH IS CAUGHT AS WELL AS TAUGHT

Teaching your children to pray is an awesome experience, but it's not the only time to talk about God or faith. Use everyday moments throughout the day to talk with them about Jesus. Here are a few examples:

- **While driving in the car.** Tell them how thankful you are that God has blessed your family with a vehicle. You have the ability to go different places, get to work, go to church and to run errands because God has blessed you with a car.
- **While changing diapers.** Share with them how fascinated you are with how God made us. We eat, and through the food, we get the nutrients (stuff) to help our bodies grow. The stuff we don't need passes out as waste so that it doesn't harm our body. God made us with awesome bodies.
- **When your family is playing together.** Share with them how much you as a family love each other, but then say that God loves us even more. He loved us so much that He sent Jesus to die for our sins. We are so loved by God.

These are just examples of how you can take everyday moments and relate them to God or faith. This is what it means to talk about what God has done for us.

When they are verbal, you can begin to introduce simple thanksgiving prayers before the time of blessing. Talk about one thing they are thankful for before praying and then help them pray for that. For example, if they are thankful for going to the park that day, have them repeat after you: "Dear God," *Dear God*, "thank You," *thank You*, "for the park," *for the park*. "Amen" *Amen*.

After they have mastered thanksgiving prayers and don't need the repetition model, introduce a prayer that asks God for something. This would go after the thanksgiving prayer and before the blessing. A simple formula could be: "Dear God, please help..." Encourage them not only to pray for things that help them, but for other people as well.

Be sure to model your own prayers of thanksgiving and asking (supplication). You can do this by praying youngest to oldest or by developing your own pattern, but it is an excellent opportunity for everyone in the household to pray together.

GOD'S GRACE

As parents, none of us get it 100% correct, but we, too, are forgiven and loved by God. The grace given in Baptism through the death and resurrection of Jesus is for us, because of our Baptisms, as well. We are forgiven, renewed and empowered to be the parents God desires us to be, so that the children He entrusts to us can make it back home to their heavenly Father.



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