

Taking Time to Praise God

Greetings in the summer season!

When I think of summer, I think of fabulous foods. Watermelon sliced thick and seeds to spit. Burgers sizzling on the grill. Juicy, seasonal tomatoes waiting to compete with ketchup as a condiment. Shucked corn (Silver Queen from New Jersey where I grew up!) boiled quick or roasted a la Minnesota (my new home) on a campfire grate.

Summer is a great time to expand your family's use of prayer in everyday life. Gratitude is a great starting point. If you don't already, start saying a table grace, such as our beloved "Bless us, O Lord." Try saying it more frequently, such as before breakfast or lunch, or when you

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are eating out. If you already recite grace, try something more spontaneous. Can each person share one thing they are grateful for this day—an activity, a food, a person? Can we praise God



for his amazing works? Lines from the psalms offer an entry point: "Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let *all* the trees of the forest *sing* for joy!" (Psalm 96:12) Amen! Learn a fun sung grace like Johnny Appleseed! Singing praise in our family can help us become more comfortable with singing our praises in the sanctuary.

How about bedtime? Without school mornings looming, we can relax and spend a little more time ending our day in prayer together. This might be a great time to learn, "Now I lay me down to sleep," the Hail Mary, or another traditional prayer. Try adding a simple litany after your prayer: "God bless Grandma, God Bless Rover," and more. Offer prayers of petition: "Who needs our prayers right now?" This spontaneous offering of our needs to God reminds us of the Prayer of the Faithful from the Sunday Eucharist.

In this summer time, our families can practice living more fully Paul's exhortation: "in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God" (Philippians 4:6).