

International Day of the Family

We Graciously Remember

This ritual is best celebrated in a room of the house that is the usual family gathering place for the family. For example the family room or in the kitchen. Make the atmosphere as relaxing as possible.

Prior To The Gathering

Place on the floor or on a table photographs of the family at different phases of each persons life (include photos of your own childhood), and flashcards with words (or pictures for the younger children) describing such emotions as fun, happy, sad, joyful, exciting, etc.

Ritual

Invite the family to sit around as you usually would for a family gathering. Invite them to view the photos that have been placed on the floor or table.

Ask one member at a time to select a photo and share their special memory of the event: For example:

- Where the photo was taken.
- Why the photo was taken.
- Who else is present in the photo.

When they have completed the telling of the story behind the photo, ask them to choose a word card (or picture) that describes the emotions stirred looking at the photo today.

Share why this/these emotion(s) have been stirred.

Encourage other members to build on the memory of each photo selected.

As the story behind each photo is shared, begin to create a collage with the photos and words either on a corkboard or a piece of cardboard.

After all selected photos and words have been placed on the corkboard or card, name the collage and decorate it.

When this is nearing completion, introduce some gentle music and invite the family to be still and listen to the emotions within that have been stirred by the photos on the collage. Within this stillness lead the family into a reflective prayer. For example:

Light a candle for each family member present and absent around the collage and place the bowl of water on the setting.

Parent Lord God, creator of all,
Thank you for the gift of our family.
Bless us and keep us constantly in your care.

All: Thank you loving God for the gift of our family.

Parent Lord God we thank you for the uniqueness of each member of
our family. Bless us and help us to appreciate the gifts you
have so generously bestowed on us.

All: Thank you loving God for the gift of our family.

Invite the children to share their prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of their family. For example:

Dear Lord, thank you for the time we share together.

Dear Lord, thank you for the love and care we receive.

Dear Lord, thank you for the stories we shared.

Dear Lord, thank you for the special memories we hold close to
our hearts.

Conclude each prayer with the response; Thank you loving God for the gift of our family.

Conclude the prayer by taking the bowl and dipping your thumb in the water and making a sign of the cross on the person next to you while saying, "You are a gift to our family." Pass the bowl around allowing each member to do the same.

Place the collage in a visible part of the home. Use it to initiate conversation with your children during the week. New memories may be remembered and shared!

You will need:

Family Photographs

Flashcards

Craft pieces such as ribbons, coloured paper, beads, coloured string
(whatever you have in your cupboard)

Scissors

Glue

Reflective music –

A candle for each member of the family (present and absent)

A bowl of water