

## Ideas for goals-Prayer

St. Christopher School is working to expand the prayer practices of our students. This is a goal of our school. Here is a way you can help with that at home. While some children aren't comfortable with making up their own prayers, you might want to start a sentence for them and have them finish it. For example, "God, thank you for...", "Our family is happy that You created...", or "We ask for Your blessing on \_\_\_\_\_ because..."

With young children, leading by example is a good way to get them away from rote prayers (which do have a place in family prayers). Bedtime prayer is a wonderful opportunity for a child to form their own "talking" to God, but it will not be easy to get started if this is not something they are use to. Hence, you own efforts will be excellent modeling for them. This is an important part of many parent's "parent time." You can learn a lot about your children during bedtime prayer.

All of creation is a sign of God's love. Take a walk outdoors. Look at all the wonderful things that God has created. Talk about what these things tell about God. Write a thank you prayer to God for all the gifts of creation. Begin with: Thank you, God, for\_\_\_\_\_.

Have a prayer center at home. Cover a table with an attractive cloth that matches the color of the liturgical season. Place a crucifix in the center of the table. Place a candle on the surface of the table as a sign of the light of faith. Light the candle only during prayer service. Place an open Bible on the table. Place a plant or other objects in the prayer center to symbolize the liturgical season.

Ask each family member to share a favorite song that praises God. Choose one that you can all sing together. Sing it at dinnertime.

Look up and read together gospel parables on forgiveness, such as the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7), the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), or the prodigal son (Luke15:11-32) Act these out and have the children create cartoon panels to illustrate them.

To help the children understand Easter as a season verses a day, create a basket of prayers. Obtain an Easter basket and several plastic Easter eggs. Write out a prayer or psalm that focuses on Easter themes of life and praise, and place a different one in each egg. Place eggs in a colorful Easter basket. Every few days (like after dinner), open an egg and read/discuss your prayer together as a family.

Visit [faithfirst.com](http://faithfirst.com) for ideas to use at home. Faithfirst.com has seasonal prayers for the family as well as weekly gospel reflections. This is a great tool for families to use to spark interesting discussions.

The prayers of petition or intercession are two of the five traditional forms of Christian prayer. Reinforce your children's use of these prayers. Here is a suggestion: Create a prayer box. Place a stack of paper and pencils nearby. Invite your children to print on a slip of paper the name of a person or to draw a picture of the person they would like to pray for. During the day/week take a moment and invite your children to quietly pray for all the people whose names or pictures have been placed in the box.