

We Help Families Pray: A Family Rosary eBook for Advent



The Gift of Prayer

Family prayer invites God into family homes and hearts as the most powerful force in heaven or on earth. It is making time for family prayer that unites the family in unbreakable bonds of love, peace, trust, and joy. Father Peyton summed it up well when he often said, “The family that prays together stays together.”

Advent is a time for prayerful, patient preparation and not simply a countdown to Christmas. Young kids eagerly mark the days until they receive their gifts while their parents count down the days until the (often crazy) holiday rush is over. But in truth, Advent is so much more than any of that. It is an expectant time of hope, peace, joy, and love. A time for us to prepare our hearts and homes for the coming of our Lord. It is a time to remember the most important gifts given to us by God—His Son as our Savior and the ability to connect with Him in prayer.

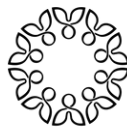
Prayer is one of the greatest gifts imaginable. Prayer is the Christian’s anchor in tumultuous times. It is vital to building a relationship with our Lord. Venerable Patrick Peyton points out its significance, saying of prayer, “The friendship of God is the greatest gift a human being can get... and the greatest gift that you can give back to a God that gives you His friendship is adoration of that dear God.” By praying to God, we adore Him in all His majesty through humbly coming before Him, and giving back all that we can.

The gift of prayer draws us into the life of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and is the perfect preparation for Christmas. We pray you and your family rediscover the true treasures of the Advent season with the gift of prayer!

A Little History

Venerable Patrick Peyton began his ministry in 1942 with the goal of building family unity through daily prayer of the Rosary. Inspired by his own father who had a deep appreciation for family prayer, praying the Rosary became the foundation for the life of Father Peyton (1909-92).

We at Family Rosary are ever so grateful Father Peyton’s family instilled in him the importance of family prayer. Now it can be part of your family’s tradition so you can fulfill Father Peyton’s vision, “The Family That Prays Together Stays Together.”



Family Rosary

HOLY CROSS
FAMILY MINISTRIES

The family that prays together stays together.

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Praying Together as a Family

In our loud, energetic, young rambunctious family, we do pray together! My husband and I are definitely a work in progress with our parenting, home ownership and overall being responsible adults, but there are a few routines we have in place that allow us to lead and encourage prayer.

One of the consistent routines we have as a family is sitting around our table and eating dinner together. At the beginning of our last meal of the day, we pray three prayers:

- Grace Before Meals
- Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, we ask you to bless our family prayer and
- The Spiritual Adoption Prayer

Since we consistently have our family sitting at the table in the evening, it's the perfect time to pray with children who hardly ever stay still. Sometimes after dinner, we ask each child to state 5 things they are thankful for – which I believe is an informal prayer to Our Lord. Most of the time, our youngest children just name the people sitting at the table. It's quite beautiful!

Our nighttime routine with prayers has changed a couple times since we became parents. When all our children went to bed at the same time, we would have the three of them, along with us, stand and face the crucifix we have hung over our front door. We'd pray the Now I lay me down to sleep prayer and an Our Father and ask the Lord to bless many family members by name.

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Praying Together as a Family

If I'm being totally honest here, that part of our prayer routine has become a little relaxed. However, my husband blesses each child before they go to bed at night. It's a short prayer that he made up, and it starts, "God bless and protect my son (daughter) keep him good, safe and holy.

One more opportunity we use for family prayer is a long car ride. This summer, we took several day trips and on our way to our destination, we would pray the Rosary. Our children somewhat participated, but my husband and I think it was a fantastic way to start a fun family day. It really brought us peace.

All of this is done around our consistent attendance at Sunday Mass. Our children know that going to Mass is something we do every week. Although they may not be celebrating on the way, the routine and structure of this on our schedule is quite a blessing to all of us. Praying together as a family is probably the easiest way to plant the seed of faith. I highly recommend it!



Amy Brooks is a Catholic author, speaker and business owner. Find out more about Amy at catholicinfluencers.com

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Including Family Prayer in Advent

Advent is a time of preparation, and one of the central figures in the Advent story is John the Baptist. Imagine those who heard the words of John the Baptist, as he rambled around prophesying that the Messiah was on His way.

Many of them, seeing him in his camel hair coat and eating grasshoppers might have thought he was out of his mind. And truthfully, when he was out in the desert proclaiming the coming of the Messiah, he would have been surrounded by many people who were the outcasts and marginalized of society, cast into the desert because they were not allowed in the city. But John the Baptist also had many followers who thought that he, John, was the Messiah. The physical desert in which we find John the Baptist reflects our own personal deserts, the places where we go to hide from our transgressions, our shame, our hurts, and even quite often, our God.

Advent gives us an opportunity to come out of the desert. As a new Church year is upon us, we hear echoed over and over again, “Prepare the way of the Lord!” We want to invite Jesus into the desert of our hearts, and one of my favorite activities is a candlelight Advent prayer service. I like to read the Sunday Scriptures accompanied by music from the Taize community.

These refrains remind us of the coming of the Lord. This prayer service is best done at dusk, as the light fades, and the only light is from the candles on the Advent wreath. As the weeks of Advent progress, there are more candles lit on the wreath, and the light grows stronger, as the time of the arrival of the Light of the World grows nearer. Come, Lord Jesus, come!



Deacon Tim Booker is the Director of Faith Life and Ministry for the Catholic Tri-Parishes of Brockton. He and his wife Colleen, and their two daughters reside in Abington, MA.

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Making the Family Rosary Possible

We knew we should be saying the Rosary. Why did it seem impossible? We had the stash of child-friendly plastic beads and the white prayer candle from the grocery store. Evening would come and we were too tired or frantic to light the candle or dig out the beads. The whole Rosary seemed too long to manage with the messy exhaustion of our family life.

Our Lady, of course, gave us the nudge we needed. One morning a couple years ago on the ride to school, as my kids were up to their usual antics in the back seat, I opened my mouth ready to lose my temper. Instead the “Our Father” came spilling out. I was intentionally loud— an exaggerated prayer to invoke some patience.

To my surprise, we muddled through a whole decade, almost by accident. I had always assumed travel prayer was just for subdued, Von Trapp-style families. But I became so motivated by the four whole minutes of relative peace that we stuck with it in the following weeks. Eventually, I thought why not get eight whole minutes of peace? Two decades! Months later we were able to squeeze in two more on the way home. I couldn't believe how easy it was to stick with it when it was tied to our morning routine.

My husband started praying his decades on his work commute as well. So by evening, our family had completed four decades. This got us so close to the daily finish line that my husband and I finally gave ourselves permission to let go of the ideal setting. For that last family decade before bed, there aren't always candles, and usually no beads get pulled out. We are just showing up in prayer with our sometimes unruly preschoolers and occasionally distracted teenagers. After all, Jesus loves to meet us in the faithful practice of our vocation, even if it means hanging out in a messy minivan.



Katie Klements lives with her husband Bill and five children in MA; she is passionate about Catholic family culture and the pro-life movement.

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Beyond Insta-Christmas

As early as August, society sells red, green, and gold holiday decor. Nevertheless, it's time for Christian families to recultivate the expectant eagerness the weeks leading up to Christmas can bring. Interestingly, the commencement of the Liturgical Calendar isn't marked by some big celebration, but rather 4 weeks of waiting. In the age of "instaculture," waiting is still relevant. No one really likes to wait, but life presents us with it anyway. There is traffic that delays, lengthy checkout lines, and dates penciled in advanced into our calendars. Perhaps there is a lesson to be learned in pausing. Postponement provides a space for preparation. Thus, Mother Church invites us to ADVENTure through the season instead of rushing to it and through it.

Despite a culture aglow with lights, the buzz of busy shoppers, and North Pole pop-ups, how can you set your home apart? In our family, we hold off on Christmas decorations, cultivating a different tone. We've built a family tradition of featuring our advent wreath. At the dinner table, the green boughs remind us to bow to God, turning to him in prayer.

Perhaps our favorite tradition is the Jesse Tree, which depicts Jesus' ancestors in Scripture. We use bare branches to fill a vase. From there, we hang paper ornaments prepared by the children. Each day, the children take turns placing one Biblical symbol, and we read a prepared Bible verse. This practice allows us to recall the symbols of Jesus throughout Scripture. When the pink candle is lit for Gaudete Sunday (the third Sunday of Advent), we buy our tree. On Christmas Eve, we finally adorn it for our soon-to-be-born Savior, Jesus! While trees land on curbs, after an insta-Christmas, we are just kicking off the twelve days of festivities!



Find more from Catholic speaker, author, wife, and mom
Jennessa Terraccino at www.femmeorfaux.com

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Fostering a Missionary Heart at Home

As a new mom, I was naive as to what prayer would be like with kids. I quickly realized that I could not just add kids to what my personal prayer life already entailed; it would be impossible for little ones to pay attention that long and would be above their heads.

When I could not get toddlers to sit still for a whole rosary, this made me feel like I was doing something wrong and like I was not a good Catholic parent. Praying with kids might feel overwhelming at times but if it makes us feel like we are doing it wrong, then that is not in the spirit of prayer, which is being united with God through communicating with Him. It needs to be practical for our state in life.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us “parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith, prayer, and all the virtues. They have the duty to provide as far as possible for the physical and spiritual needs of their children” (CCC 2252). We can modify our personal prayer to make it appropriate for their ages, attention spans, and any special needs they may have. It is ok if little ones squirm or do another quiet activity during family prayer.

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Fostering a Missionary Heart at Home

With all that being said, here is one of my favorite ways to pray as a family:

We go through some of the main types of prayer in a spontaneous way.

1. PRAISE: First, acknowledge God's presence and starting with yourself, go around and have each person praise God, by either saying a name of God, an attribute of God—think God you are good, Holy is your name Lord, etc. You can also do this simultaneously.
2. THANK: Each person thanks God for various blessings in their lives.
3. ASK: Petition the Lord for a need of the families, help with a particular situation, or intercede for someone else.
4. CONTEMPLATE: Have a moment of silence and ask the kids to try to hear what the Holy Spirit may want to say to them.

This can be short or long, can be simple or go deep when the occasion arises. You also do not have to go through each type of prayer 1 by 1, rather each person can just pray once. This type of prayer is a wonderful way to help your kids foster a personal relationship with the Lord. Each time you do a different type of prayer with your children, explain it and occasionally re-explain it. Lead by example by being vulnerable yourself. Tell them there is no right way and that they are just talking to God and sharing their hearts. Encourage them to use these types of prayers on their own, in bed at night or anywhere they have quiet time or nothing to do.

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Fostering a Missionary Heart at Home

Making prayer practical will help make prayer a habit for your family. Here are some of the simple ways we pray with our kids and now they remind us to do them:

- Bless yourselves when passing a Catholic Church.
- Pray a “Hail Mary” when passing an accident.
- Teach quick prayers:
 - “Jesus, I trust in you.”
 - “Come, Holy Spirit.”
 - “Lord, I need you.”
 - “Thy will be done.”
 - “All for you, Jesus.”, etc.
- Trace a cross on their foreheads before bed and say, “May the Lord bless you and protect you.”
- Breakdown the “Our Father” line by line.
- Have someone read the Gospel reading on the way to Mass.
- For the rosary, start with one decade and add another over time. Try using rosary toys like “pop it” rosaries to help with fidgeting. Pray an intention at each Hail Mary.

Remember that there is no right way to pray as a family—it will be chaotic at times, there will be interruptions, and sometimes things will arise that cause us to end family prayer time before we intended it to be over. However, if we keep it positive and are not forceful about it, praying as a family will be a powerful experience that will bless our children for the rest of their lives.



Anna Albert lives as a missionary along with her husband and 5 children aged 11 and under.

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Keep an eye on:

Family Rosary@ familyrosary.org

Catholic Mom@ catholicmom.com

Museum of Family Prayer@ museumoffamilyprayer.com

and on our Facebook and Instagram sites too!

#WeHelpFamiliesPray #PrayTogetherNow #FamilyPrayer



Bringing Families Together In Prayer

We hope the time you've spent reflecting with this material has been enriching. Continue to pray with your family every day, wherever you are.

For additional online resources for family prayer including additional e-books, inspiring blogs, and the mobile Rosary App, please visit our website at FamilyRosary.org.

This e-book and all our resources represent a culmination of Father Peyton's passion for family unity through prayer. We hope our services will enhance your family's prayer life, particularly by remembering Father Peyton's famous words, *"The family that prays together stays together."*