

IDEAS FOR MAKING GOD MORE REAL THROUGH PRAYER

By Julia Corbett, Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries

- If you are in the car together in the morning or before your child walks to the bus stop, pause for a minute to pray for God's blessing on the day and for the strength to follow His lead throughout the day.
- Pray together before important events, such as the start of a new grade, a game, a recital, an interview, or an exam.
- Try to say at least a short prayer before and/or after your meals together.
- Pray for God's protection and blessing before taking off on a trip. Or maybe even a short prayer every time you are driving somewhere together.
- When traveling long distance or walking somewhere together, make it a fun and faith nurturing family time, by taking turns noticing people, places and situations and offering them up to God in short prayers of thanksgiving or intercession. Ex. "thank you God for beautiful trees," "please bless the people who live in this community," etc.
- When you hear a siren or see an accident on the road, take a moment to pray for those involved in the situation.
- Before going to church on Sunday, pray together that God would open up your hearts for sincere worship and acceptance of His Word. Pray for God to touch, transform and encourage you in faith, as well as to give you the strength to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ today.
- When celebrating a family member's birthday, offer a special prayer of thanksgiving to God for creating them. Thank God for the ways God has blessed all of you through this person. Pray for the person's needs and for God's blessing on their life.
- If one of the family members is going away for several days (to a camp, on a business trip, etc.), gather in prayer for this person and for those who will miss them. Thank God for His presence with us when our loved ones are away.
- When enjoying your time outdoors, take a minute to praise God for the beauty of His creation.
- In your conversations with family members, where difficult issues are being discussed, be it conflict within the family, troubles at school, or other issues, pause together to offer these things to God in prayer. Pray for wisdom, love for one another, and the ability to trust God in leading you to a solution.
- When you celebrate good news or outstanding accomplishments, such as restored health, a good grade, a promotion, or a completed project, pause for a moment of praise and thanksgiving to God for helping you along the way.
- I've mentioned earlier that my husband and I found it helpful to engage in the spiritual practice of "examen." In the evening, we sit down together and discuss our past day, based on these two questions, "What parts of the day are you most thankful for?" and "For what parts are you least thankful?" These questions could be paraphrased as "When did you feel best or worst during the day?" or "When did you feel most/least alive today?" We try to think together and list as many moments as possible, and then take time to offer these moments to God in prayer. We thank God for both the joyful and the sad parts of the day and pray that God would help us resolve the difficulties that arose. This exercise is wonderful to practice after family dinner or as a part of a child's bedtime routine.

