

Creating your own Family Litany



The problem with traditional prayers is that it is hard to make them your own. Praying aloud spontaneously is also difficult if you do not have much practice praying in this way. This is especially true for young people. One way you can help your children personalize their prayer life is to take a prayer form like a litany, which provides you with a general template and be creative within it. Kids are more likely to pray prayers they have helped to create.

Writing your own family litany is a fun, simple activity.

Step 1: Choose a theme (gratitude, forgiveness, freedom, relationships...)

Step 2: Brainstorm words or phrases that speak to the theme

Step 3: Come up with a simple response that is easy to remember or choose a simple phrase from Scripture.

Examples: We thank you Lord; Help us Jesus; Hear us O Lord; Be with us Lord; God's love is everlasting; I am with you always; Be not afraid; Answer me/us O Lord.

Step 4: Arrange the words or phrases you brainstormed into short petitions that go with your response.

Example: Leader: For the times we do not listen to each other

Response: Forgive us Lord

Leader: For the times we miss the opportunity to affirm one another

Response: Forgive us Lord

Step 5: Create an opening prayer: It can be a prayer you already know, a quote from Scripture, or a prayer you write yourself.

Examples: Common Prayers: Begin with the Sign of the Cross and an Our Father;

Scripture quote: (Feel free to amend the Scripture quote slightly to make into a prayer.) Keep the wording simple. If your children are young use one of the translations written for children. A wonderful translation is the **International**

Children's Bible (ICB), which you can access on line at www.biblegateway.com.

Using scripture passages is also a great way to help you and your children become more familiar with Scripture.

Example: Jesus, you told us

We are the Light of the world. May our light shine so all will know the goodness of our God. (based on Mt. 5 14, 17).

Step 6: Create a closing prayer. Again it can be a prayer you already know, a quote from Scripture that you amend or you can write your own.

Tip: If you choose to write your own prayer, it is often easier to start with a model text and adapt it. One great source of prayers is the Lectionary, the Church's prayer book used during the Mass. Lyrics from hymns are also a great resource and introduce music into your prayers, since the prayer can be recited or sung. You can access these and many other resources on the internet.