



māhiki kālele
2012 YEAR OF FAITH 2013

**Prayers
for
Family Life**

**Office of Religious Education
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Prayers for Family Life

Learning objective: Present the joys and anxieties of family life to God in prayer

Mealtime is the most common time for family prayer. Most of these prayers can be used at mealtime to draw attention to various events in family life, but they can certainly be used in settings other than family meal as well.

Birth or Adoption of a Child

At the birth of Jesus, the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest." We give glory to you, God of life, who blesses us with this newest member of our family

(Name)_____. Stretch our hearts and help them grow in generosity as we welcome our brother/sister and son/daughter into our home. Bless the gifts that *(mention names of all family members other than the newest arrival)* will share with (Name) _____, and bless (Name) _____ as he/she

grows and shares his/her gifts with us. We pray in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Baptism Party

Today, the Christian community of

Parish shared the gift of eternal life through the sacrament of baptism with our son/daughter, _____.

We celebrate with joy and gratitude the great generosity of God who shares everything with us, including the spark of divine life. We ask God to bless our family and friends, especially _____'s Godparents, _____ and _____, with Christian virtue so that _____ will come to know and love God through our examples of Christian living every day. Send your Holy Spirit upon our son/daughter so that he/she will always walk in your love. We pray in the name of God the Faither, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

First Eucharist Party

Today, our son/daughter _____
experienced the summit of Christian initiation
by participating fully in the sacrament of
Eucharist for the first time. May this first time
be only the beginning of a constantly
deepening and widening experience of the
great mystery of the Body of Christ. We pray
that the power of this sacrament will fill
_____’s heart with love for God
and love for every person he/she meets each
day. Help _____ always
consume the sacred food of Eucharist with a
sense of reverence, and may his/her actions
help the world to discover peace and unity
among family, friends and even enemies. We
pray in the name of God the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Confirmation Party

Today, through the sacrament of confirmation, God has poured into the heart of our son/daughter _____ the great gifts of the Holy Spirit: the gift of wisdom, the gift of understanding, the gift of reverence, and the gift of wonder and awe in God's presence.

_____ has been growing in these gifts from the day of his/her baptism, and confirmation has brought these gifts into more intense focus. We pray that

_____ will continue to develop and appreciate each of the Holy Spirit's great gifts so that he/she will become a special man/woman of God. We pray in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Birthday

We thank you God for the gift of life and the passing of time that allows us to remember – enjoying the good memories and learning from the painful memories. Today is a day of joyful celebration as we honor the completion of another year in the life of

_____. We are grateful for the gifts that he/she brings to our family,

particularly the gift of _____

(each member of the family can name one gift or charism of the birthday boy/girl). We

pray that the gifts you have given

_____ will lead him/her to grow in wisdom and strength as he/she begins another year of life. Bless

_____ and all of us in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Family Vacation

We begin our family vacation with joy, excitement, and expectation. Let us be aware that we are creating memories that will last a lifetime. Lord God, you have new places and new adventures awaiting us, and we thank you for this opportunity to be together to laugh, to play and to deepen our love for one another, away from the routines that sometimes distract us from each other. Help us to receive all the gifts you give us during this vacation with gratitude and reverence. We pray in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Driver's License

Lord God, you need no transportation because you are everywhere all the time. But our world is not perfect, and we are sometime separated from those we love and the things we need, so you give us the gift of transportation to soften the gap between need and fulfillment. Today we celebrate that our son/daughter _____ has taken another step toward adult freedom by passing the driver's exam. May he/she always remember that with freedom comes great responsibility. We pray that _____ will use his/her transportation freedom wisely to get him/her to the people he/she loves and the things he/she needs. Keep the roads safe and his/her senses sharp whenever _____ drives. Protect him/her from distractions that could break his/her concentration and from underestimating the power of rapid transportation in cars. Make _____ aware that you ride with

him/her in all of his/her journeys until one day,
when you will transport him/her home with you
after the long journey of life. We pray in the
name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy
Spirit. Amen.

Death of a Pet

Today we mourn the loss of our beloved pet,
_____. We thank you,
God, for the opportunity we had to care for and
enjoy the gift of _____.

We ask you to hold the memory of
_____ in our minds and in
yours, so that these memories will bring us joy
and peace in the midst of our sadness. Help us
to extend the care we offered to
_____ to all your creatures so
that all creation will live in harmony. We pray
in the name of God the Father, the Son and the
Holy Spirit. Amen.

Illness

Lord God, you are the source of all healing.

Sickness has entered our home and touched
our son/daughter/mother/father,

_____ . We trust in your healing
power, both the power to heal our bodies and
our spirits. We ask you to empower

_____ 's body to overcome this
sickness and to restore the balance of health.

We ask for wisdom as we ponder the methods
we will use to assist his/her healing. And, for as
long as the sickness remains, give us the gift of
patience and hope so that our faith will remain
strong no matter what happens. We pray in the
name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy
Spirit. Amen.

Start of the School Year

We stand at the beginning of the school year – a time to let go of the carefree days of summer vacation and a time to welcome the possibilities of new knowledge and new relationships. Lord God, help us dedicate ourselves each day to learning, kindness, gentleness, sharing, forgiving, and all the things we know we need to do in order to make school a good place to be. We pray in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Home-School Parent Prayer

Lord God, each new day brings new adventures and new learning experiences for my child(ren) and me. Your Holy Spirit gives us the gifts of wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Let me be an instrument in your hands as I seek to pass these gifts on to my child(ren) today. Help me to see your presence in everyone we meet and in everything that happens today, and give me the courage and the words to share your presence with my child(ren). I pray in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Stay-At-Home Parent Prayer

God, you are the perfect parent – always present to your children with love, patience and forgiveness. I am almost always present to my children, and I thank you for giving me the awesome responsibility of helping you mold the character and form the spirit of my, or rather our, child(ren). I also thank you for the people who support me and give me a break every once in a while. I accept your forgiveness of my failings of yesterday, and I acknowledge today as a new opportunity to form our child(ren) in the school of love. Open my eyes to see your presence in the adventures that come to me today as I interact with our child(ren), and give me the courage to seek out supportive relationships in my community to help me fulfill your will for me and for our child(ren). I pray for _____ in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Working-Parent Prayer

Lord God, my work has dignity because I share in your creative spirit and use my work to express my love for my family. Help me to find your guidance in the work that I do. Give me courage to make my work honest and beneficial for our community. Protect me from taking shortcuts in my work to make things easier on me at the expense of quality work. Also protect me from getting too wrapped up in my work and failing to be available for my spouse, my children, my friends, my community and myself. When I arrive home at the end of the day, remind me that who I am as a child of God is my first vocation; who I am as a spouse and as a parent is my second vocation; and what I do for a living is my third vocation. I pray in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Graduation

Today our son/daughter _____ received a diploma that signifies a lot of hard work and the grace of God's guidance. We celebrate this accomplishment and thank God for the gift of knowledge. Education is the process of gaining knowledge by exploring the many dimensions of God's creation. We pray that _____ will use his/her education wisely to make God's world a better place. Commencement means beginning, and today marks the beginning of a new phase of life. A part of _____ is dying away so that a new part can be born. May the death of these school years become the fertile ground of new and exciting possibilities for _____ 's future. We pray that _____ will courageously walk with God into the future in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Prayer of Silence for Parents

The final word of all prayer is silence. There is nothing that we could ever say in prayer to adequately express the profound experience of God in our lives. Karl Rahner, a great theologian, once said that with God we are always stuck between not being able to say something. God is so far beyond our understanding that we can never say anything that can capture the beauty and greatness of God, but we have to say something because our urge to know God is an unquenchable fire that burns in every human heart. We offer many verbal prayers such as the preceding ones to express in a small way what we experience of God in our lives. Ultimately, though, silence is where we find God in the most profound way because God is beyond all words.

The prayer of silence is simple. You have to do nothing more than be quiet and allow God to have a little uninterrupted time in your heart. As simple as it sounds, it does take a little practice to be quiet. We are so bombarded with noise, words and ideas that when we try to sit quietly for a moment, our minds continue to race for a while.

Sit quietly in a comfortable position, close your eyes and offer the quiet time such as “Jesus” or “love” or “prayer” to remind you that your intention is to give this quiet time to God. When distractions get the best of you, simply and gently say your chosen word to yourself again, and refocus your attention on God who dwells within you. It’s important to keep in mind that your goal is not to eliminate all the distractions your mind presents to you; rather, you are allowing them to remain, until the distractions overwhelm you again and then repeat your word gently and refocus.

A simple analogy might be helpful. Imagine you are talking to your spouse, and your children are making noise in the background. You hear your children, but you don't listen to the noise because you are focused on your spouse. If you were to start yelling at the children, that would take your attention away from your spouse. Usually you can just let the children be and stay focused on your spouse. The more you focus your attention on your spouse, the less you pay attention to your children, even though you can hear them all the time. Silent prayer is like that. Stay focused on God, who is silently present in your heart, even though you continue to hear the activity of your mind.

Regular practice of this form of prayer will infuse your life with a deep sense of God's presence in everything you do and in everyone you meet. The heart of Christianity is about loving God and loving neighbor. Allowing God's

presence to grow inside of you will slowly- but definitely-transform your life into a life of love.

For a more complete discussion and description of silent prayer, also known as centering prayer or contemplative prayer, see *Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel* by Thomas Keating (New York: Continuum, 1994).

