



St Mary's Cathedral, Sale

Infant Baptism Preparation Booklet

Resource for use in the Diocese of Sale



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***...I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed
you on the palms of my hands...*** Isaiah 49:15-16



Congratulations

The members of this parish community congratulate you on the birth of your child and welcome you to this preparation for their Baptism.

Bringing new life into the world is one of the greatest miracles of life. It brings with it so many joys and blessings. It also brings lots of hard work and many responsibilities. In a real way the work is only just beginning. Over the years you will care for this wonderful new life and help your child to grow and become a loving and kind person, able to find joy and bring joy to the world.

The love you have for your child is part of the love that God has for us. Just as you want your child to find love, happiness and peace, so does God. In fact, this is precisely why God entrusted you with this precious gift of new life.

In the sacrament of Baptism, God shows this love. Through this sacrament, your child will become, in a very special way, God's own child and part of the family of the Church.

This preparation which our parish family is offering you, has been written to help you think about the important step you are taking in having your child baptised. It is also meant to help you to reflect on the wonderful love that God wants to share with you and your child.

Let us pray together...

God of life and love,
we thank you for the new life
you have brought into this world through us.
You love each one of these little ones and you
want them to know and love you.
Pour out your blessing on us who have
answered your call in bringing our child to you.
We present them to you, loving God.
You know each one of them by name.
Strengthen us as we support them on their faith journey.
Amen



Sacraments in the Catholic Church

All creation and all of life is potentially sacramental; able to give us signs and symbols of God's love and grace. It is possible to see glimpses of the divine in everyday signs and symbols. These can lead us to reflect upon life's deeper realities and meaning.

In the Catholic tradition, seven definitive moments are recognised when God acts directly and powerfully in our lives. These are called sacraments.

Sacraments originate in the life and ministry of Jesus. Each is an occasion of the in-breaking of God into our lives, a powerful moment of divine presence and grace. Each celebrates a high point in the ongoing encounter between God and humanity, and the sacramentality of all life. Through the sacraments we can become more like Jesus and develop a closer relationship to God.

The Sacraments of Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion.

The Sacraments of Healing are Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick

The Sacraments of Service and Commitment are Marriage and Holy Orders.

For Reflection

Have you known something of God's presence and beauty through experiencing:

- The night sky (far away from city lights)?
- Sunrise or sunset? The ocean?
- Fire on a winter's night? Rain after the 'long dry'?
- Fresh flowing water? Fresh fruit on a summer's day?
- Loving and being loved by another person?
- The birth of a child?

To every baptised person, God says, "*You are my beloved son, or daughter; with you I am well pleased*" (Mark 1:11). The one baptised is called to be another Christ, or 'Christian'. Each baptised person shows the face of Christ to the world in a way that only they can.

The truth of our identity as baptised people (that is people full of the loving Spirit of God) is something that grows throughout life, moment by moment, with every decision that we make to become more or less like Jesus Christ.

Therefore, Baptism is not an event that is 'over and done with' when the rite is completed. It is not the end of the journey – it is only the beginning. Baptism is the first of the three sacraments which together we name as "Sacraments of Initiation". Baptism leads on to the celebration of the Eucharist, when we become full members of the Church and come forward with the rest of the community to share in the body and blood of the Lord, to be united through that sharing, and strengthened again to live as disciples. Then follows the sacrament of Confirmation, a deepening of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which helps us continue our journey as disciples.

General Information

The Baptism

The Baptism ceremony is made up of two parts: the Rite of Welcome and the Rite of Baptism. If your child's Baptism is not celebrated as part of the Mass, you will come to The Rite of Welcome, during which the parishioners welcome your child into the Church. The Rite of Welcome takes place during any Sunday Mass prior to the day of Baptism.

Candle

A candle is a symbol that reminds us that, even as we receive the light of Christ, we, in turn, become a light for the world. Your child's baptismal candle will be lit from the Paschal candle during the ceremony. The candle may also be used in your child's preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.

White Garment

The white garment is a lovely way of remembering your child's initiation into the Church family through the sacraments. The stole is a piece of white material, worn around the neck, that symbolises the child's continuing faith journey. During the journey each additional sacrament is added, so put it in a special place, ready for the next sacrament celebration.

Cost of Baptism.

As a sacrament of the Church, no charge is made for the celebration of Baptism. However, it is customary to make a donation to the parish, which helps to cover administration costs and your child's certificate. A donation envelope will be sent to you in your letter confirming your child's Baptism details.

External Parish Baptisms

If you don't live within this parish but would like to have your child baptised here, it is a requirement that you notify your local parish of your plans, and get a letter from their office, addressed to this parish, giving permission to celebrate the Baptism.

Can we have our child baptised if we are not married, or were married outside the Church, or if I am a single parent?

Your child is always welcome to Baptism, given a commitment to raising him/her according to the Catholic faith, and we welcome your entire family to our parish community. The Church recognises that, for whatever the reason, people will make choices in life that lead them in many different directions. The fact that you are here, demonstrates that God is at work in your life.

Reflection on Baptism

Having your child baptised is a wonderful thing to do. But sometimes we do it just because it is the ‘done thing’. Take some time and reflect on your own relationship with God and what you want for your child. Just as your child will grow up with your facial features, or mannerisms so, too, will they grow up influenced by your faith, which is why we ask you to reflect on your own faith and the part it plays in your life. Some questions you might like to think about are:

- 1. What do I already know about Baptism?
- 2. Why do I want my child to be baptised?
- 3. What do I expect from the Church and the Church community?
- 4. How will I nurture the faith in my family?

Baptism is about belonging

At birth you celebrated your child’s life and gathered them into your family. In Baptism we celebrate your child’s life in Christ and gather them into the family of the Church. Baptism connects us to Jesus, who shows us the way to God and brings us to be part of a great family of faith, the Church. A relationship with God that endures throughout your child’s life... and beyond. The water of Baptism draws your child to God, through a relationship with Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection: Reasons why we chose Baptism for our child

There are lots of reasons why people have their child baptised.
What are some of yours?

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Reflection: What are your hopes and dreams for your child?

List some of the hopes and dreams you have for your child. By bringing your child to Baptism, one hope would be to bring the child up in the Catholic faith.

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One of the first things asked of you will be the question,
“WHAT NAME HAVE YOU GIVEN YOUR CHILD?”

Our names are important, they are how the world knows us. In God’s eyes, no person is just a number. Each one is precious, with a personal story. God calls each of us by name. Your child is not just ‘any’ child. This child is your child, the one whom you love and call by name. Created in God’s image and the fruit of your love.

You chose your child’s name for a reason.

Reflection on your child’s name

Take a moment to write why you chose your child’s name and why it was special to you.

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Reflection on your commitment

The Rite of Welcome also says that “...*you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith*”, making you the first teachers in the ways of the faith.

- (A) You are making a commitment. What are the ways in which you will do this? Think about how it was passed on to you.

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- (B) How will you show your child to love God and your neighbour? Who is your neighbour? How can this be done?

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The Role of the Parents



Parents, you are the first and most influential educators, because you know and love your child more than any other person. What happens in your home has the most significant and lasting effect. When a child is baptised, the parents have responsibility for nurturing the life and practice of the faith for their child by their good example, just as they look after the child's wellbeing and growth in every other way. The

Church recognises parents as the first educators in faith for their children. Parents teach their children and show them what is important in life. From parents, children learn that they are loved and never alone. They learn that they are accompanied and loved by God, who is there to meet them in prayer.

Initiation

How often have you been welcomed and 'initiated' into a new community? When have you made someone else welcome? Baptism makes us "*members one of another*," says St Paul in the Letter to the Ephesians 4:25. Baptism also makes us part of the Christian community in the Catholic Church, sharing in the life of the Church and her mission. Full initiation is completed with First Communion and Confirmation.

Mission

The baptised person joins a community with a mission. It has work to do. Every member is called to follow Christ, to be active as a member who truly belongs to the Christian community. The Body of Christ is not complete if anyone is missing. All belong and have their part to play.

All the baptised are called to share their gifts, and to strive to become all they are called by God to be. All are called to service, to speak up against injustice, to side with the poor and the oppressed, to stand for truth and goodness, to love as Jesus loved and to worship God in Jesus as a regular part of their lives. Each does all that they can to promote and enable all that is "*true, good and beautiful in the human community*" (Gaudium et Spes, 1965, para. 76).

Godparents

It is a great honour to be asked to be a godparent. When you ask someone to take on this responsibility, you are inviting that person to share in the life of your family in a very special and important way.

When you are thinking about the people you want to choose to be godparents, there are some important questions to ask, but they could all be summed up in one basic question: What is a godparent?

And the answer is simply that a godparent is someone who represents the family of the Church, which is welcoming this child as a new member.

Because the godparents represent the family of the Church, they should be:

- A fully initiated Catholic
- Over 16 years old
- Practising members of the Catholic Church.

Because the godparents are meant to be an example to their godchild, they should be able to show, by the quality of their lives, what it means to be a member of the Church community and be people who are prepared to pray for their godchild.

A godparent is meant to be a friend and support for you in helping your child to grow as a child of God. Because of this, the godparents should be able to take an active interest in your child's life and particularly in his/her growth in faith.

While there must be **at least one** godparent who is a fully initiated Catholic, some families may wish to invite another family or friend to be a 'witness' to the Baptism.



Godparents: Some Frequently Asked Questions

Is the godparent expected to be someone who attends Church every Sunday?

Although the bottom-line answer is no, it makes good sense if they do. After all, you are asking this person to assist you in bringing up your child in the practice of the Catholic faith. The Church reasonably expects parents and godparents to help the child “*lead a Christian life in harmony with Baptism*” (Canon 872).

How many godparents can/should there be?

Church law only requires one godparent; however, two tends to be the norm. According to Church teaching, and despite some individual parish allowances, there really ought to be no more than two.

What sex should the godparent be?

You are free to choose a male or a female; the godparent need not be the same sex as the child.

Godparent or Witness?

One of the requirements under Church Law for godparents is that they have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. The Catholic Church sees the godparent as more than a concerned relative or friend who encourages Christian behaviour. The godparent will represent the Catholic Community into which the child is being baptised. While it is ideal that the parents select Catholic godparents, the Church requires that only one godparent be Catholic. A person from another faith tradition may serve as a ‘witness’ to the ceremony, as long as a Catholic godparent is also present.

Can the same godparents have responsibility for more than one child, even in the same family?

Yes. As long as they take seriously their responsibility and intention to help the children grow in faith, godparents may accept several children, just as parents may.

Does the godparent have to come from the family?

No, not at all – the Church’s concern is to have someone help raise the child in the faith and represent the Church. Consequently, sometimes the best godparent is not a family member at all, but someone from your parish Church.

Can someone who lives far away be a godparent?

Yes – and many such godparents make a heroic effort to remain connected with their godchildren. Obviously, the distance puts them at a disadvantage for living the role in its fullest sense since someone who has regular contact with the child can ordinarily have a deeper impact on and lend more significance to the role.

Can someone serve as godparent by proxy?

Yes, this custom continues to be honoured. The original idea was that if godparents could not attend the Baptism ceremony, they would send a proxy (someone to stand in the place of the absent godparent).

Can the godparent's names be changed on the Baptism registry?

If your relationship with your child's godparent(s) fades or sours after your child is baptised, you cannot have the record changed at the parish office. Baptism records cannot be changed. Those names remain an official part of the Baptism registry of the parish, and they will appear on the baptismal certificate every time you need to provide one – so make your choice wisely.



The Rite of Welcome

If the Baptism is not celebrated during a parish Mass, parents are asked to attend a weekend Mass prior to the Baptism, so they may be welcomed to the parish.

Please advise the parish office as to which Mass you will attend.

The Rite of Welcome takes place during a weekend Mass prior to the child's Baptism. During the Rite of Welcome, your child is welcomed into the Church community.

Commentator: Father/Deacon, I present to you, and to the assembled community, the families who are presenting their child as a candidate for Baptism.
(Names of the parents are read and families move to the Church sanctuary)

Celebrant: What name have you given your child?

Parents: Answer with your child's name.

Celebrant: And what do you ask of God's Church for (child's name)?

Parents: Baptism

Celebrant: You have asked to have your child baptised. In doing so, you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/ her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?

Parents: We do.

(The celebrant addresses the godparents, if they are present)

Celebrant: Godparents, do you thankfully accept this honour? Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?

Godparents: We are.

(The celebrant will then address the parishioners)

Celebrant: Parishioners, are you prepared to welcome this child (child's name) into our community and to support them as they grow in faith?

Community: We are.

Celebrant: (Child's name) the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Saviour by the Sign of the Cross. I now trace the cross on your forehead and invite your parents (and godparents) to do the same.

All: Amen



Tracing the Sign of the Cross by the celebrant, the parents, the godparents and parishioners.



The Rite of Baptism

Welcome by the Celebrant

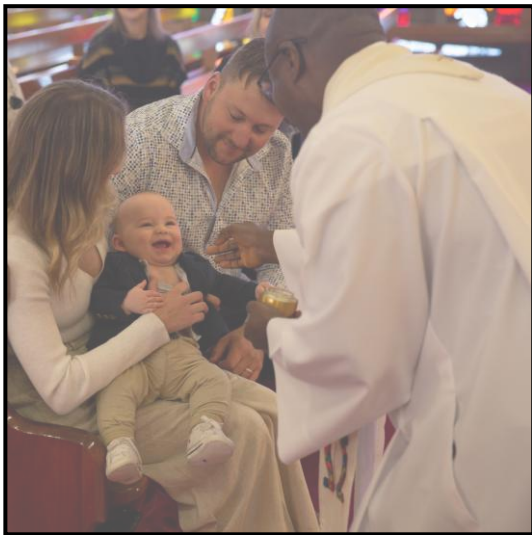
Celebration of God's Word: Scripture is always proclaimed at a Baptism. In the proclamation of the Word, Jesus is present amongst us and is calling us to be disciples. We are reminded that the Christian story is a living story, carrying on throughout the generations and continues through each baptised person.

Homily (Celebrant)

Prayer of the Faithful: as a community, we pray for the child and their family.

Invocation of the Saints: this prayer reminds us that the Church is more than those who gather physically with us. It includes those who have gone before us and continue to inspire us.

Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens



The Prayer of Exorcism asks that God free your child from original sin. It asks for help and protection in the struggle against evil that takes place in every human life. *"Almighty God, you sent your only Son into this world to rescue us from the slavery of sin and to give us the freedom that only your sons and daughters enjoy. As we pray now for this child, who will have to face the world with all its temptations... and you send your Holy Spirit to guide them and watch over them at every step in life's journey."*

The anointing with the Oil of Catechumens is a sign that God will give your child the strength to overcome life's temptations and difficulties.

Prayer over the Water

The water used to baptise your child will be blessed by the celebrant, highlighting the power of water to cleanse and sustain life.



Renunciation of Sin and the Profession of Faith

The celebrant asks the parents and godparents to state the promises which were made at their own Baptism. These are:

Celebrant: Do you reject Satan?

Parents & Godparents: **I do**

Father: And all his works?

Parents & Godparents: **I do**

Father: And all his empty promises?

Parents & Godparents: **I do**

Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Parents & godparents: **I do**

Celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Parents & godparents: **I do**

Celebrant: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Parents & godparents: **I do**

Celebrant: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

Rite of Baptism/the Pouring of Water: The pivotal moment of Baptism



The celebrant will invite your family to the baptismal font and your child will be baptised with holy water and the following words said by the celebrant:

“(Child’s name), I baptise you in the name of the Father, (water is poured over the child’s head) and of the Son, (water is again poured over the child’s head), and of the Holy Spirit” (water is poured over the child’s head for a third time).

Anointing with Chrism

The Oil of Chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balsam (sweet-smelling ointment) and is rubbed on the crown of your child's head, as a symbol of their sharing in the life of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King. This anointing is a sign that God is calling your child to become like Jesus Christ and, in time, to share in his work.



Clothing with the White Garment

In Baptism your child becomes a new creation. They are clothed in Christ and wrapped in God's love. The baptismal garment is a sign of the new life of Resurrection and reminds us that we have great dignity as the children of God.



The Presentation of the Candle

We pray that Christ will be your child's guide, lighting the path and showing the way. Lit from the Paschal candle, the baptismal candle is a symbol of Jesus who is the light of the world, our light. You are entrusted to nurture the light of faith which has been given to your child in Baptism.



The Prayer over the Ears and Mouth

The celebrant touches the mouth and ears of the newly baptised person saying: "ephphatha", praying that they will listen to the teaching of Christ, respond to it and proclaim God's love for all.

"The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father."

(‘ephphatha’ pronounced ‘ef-a-tha’ an Aramaic word meaning ‘Be open’)

The Lord's Prayer

Together you will say the prayer of God's family - the family to which your child now belongs. Focus on these important words:

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.*

Thy Kingdom come.

*Thy will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen*

Final Blessing

The celebrant will pray a blessing for the parents and all who have joined in this joyful welcoming of a new Christian into the Catholic Church. We pray that you will be blessed, and that God will give you every gift you need for the great vocation of being a parent.



Prayer of the Faithful

(Choose one or write your own)

- a) That (child's name) will grow in his/her understanding and appreciation of the Catholic tradition and be supported in his/her faith journey by his/her parents and godparents. Lord, hear us.
- b) That (child's name) will come to know Jesus through the example of his/her parents and godparents and through participation in the life of his/her parish. Lord, hear us.
- c) That (child's name) will follow the teachings of Jesus and be his face, voice and hands to others. Lord, hear us.
- d) That (child's name) will know and experience the love, forgiveness and mercy of God and share this with others. Lord, hear us.
- e) *Prayer written by the parents. Here is a guide for writing your own.*

Writing a Prayer of the Faithful for your child

1. Call God by name (e.g., Gracious God, Creator God, Loving Father)
2. Write a sentence about God (e.g., You always hear our prayers, You created our beautiful world, You love us unconditionally)
3. Share your dreams for your child, for yourselves and your family (e.g., We pray that our beautiful daughter Ruby will grow up to know you, feel close to you and always feel confident that she is loved and supported on her life journey).
4. End your prayer with *Lord, hear us.*

Example:

Loving God,

The love you have for our family is so wonderful. We ask that you bless our treasured son Alex on this special day. May he be surrounded by your love as he grows in knowledge and wisdom. May he always be mindful of his baptismal call to make the world a better place. Lord, hear us.

Our Child's Prayer

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Lord, hear us

Symbols of Baptism

The Sign of the Cross

This is the mark of Christians leading us into the full story of the Paschal Mystery – the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus. Parents and godparents trace the cross as a sign that we are claimed by God who has created us, and who came among us in Jesus, and who continues to journey with us in the Spirit, and who will welcome us home in the life to come.

Water

Water is life giving, thirst quenching, cleansing, powerful, healing and enables growth. Nothing grows without water. It washes, purifies and sustains. Jesus gave new meaning to the symbol of water. He is the source of living water, the One through whom a blind man finds healing in the Pool of Siloam. He washes his disciples' feet as an example of love and service. At Baptism, water is used to indicate that the baptised person is washed clean and is now fully filled with the life-changing and powerful presence of the resurrected Jesus.

Oil

The Jewish people, Jesus' ancestors, used oil to consecrate altars and to anoint Kings, Priests and Prophets. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit of God: "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have endowed him with my spirit that he may bring true justice to the nations..." (Is 42:1-4 & Lk 4:16-19).

The Oil of Chrism is olive oil mixed with sweet smelling oil, blessed in the Cathedral during Holy Week.

During the baptismal rite, there are two moments of anointing with oil, the first at the beginning of the Baptism and the second immediately after the water is poured. The anointed one is blessed and strengthened to begin the new and challenging life of a Christian. They are anointed as; a Priest, able to worship God and pray for others; a Prophet, able to speak and to bear witness to God's truth; a King, able to lead others—through word and deed— and to use their talents to bring about God's kingdom (or reign) of justice, peace, truth and love

White Garment

The white garment received by the newly baptised, is a sign of purity and newness, a symbol of transformation in the Risen Christ. The newly baptised person 'has put on Christ'.

Baptismal Candle

Fire is a source of warmth and light. God's love warms us and it is difficult to find our way without light. Fire symbolised God's presence in the Old Testament stories (Exodus 3:5 and Numbers 9:16). Jesus is the Light of the World and our light in darkness (John 1:5 & 8:12). Fire symbolises the coming of the Spirit in the Pentecost story (Acts 2:3). The baptismal candle is lit from the Paschal Candle and is a symbol of the Risen Christ and the life of Jesus Christ that will shine in the new Christian. You may wish to mark the anniversary of your child's Baptism each year with a special celebration during which you light the candle.

Passing on the Faith

FAITH IS CAUGHT, NOT TAUGHT

“Worry not that your children don’t listen to you. Worry that they watch you.”

Perhaps the most effective way to ensure that your children develop a healthy faith life is to let them experience your own living faith. When we neglect our own spiritual development, our ‘lamp on the stand’ can easily be tarnished. For the light of our faith to shine for our children, we need to trim the wick and polish it up.

In Baptism, God is sharing God’s life with your child in a very special way. As a parent you are called to journey in faith with your child.

In the parish, you see and meet people doing great things, like visiting the sick and dying, feeding the poor, teaching others. These people are role models in our community.

Your Faith: A Hobby or a Lifestyle?

When parents were asked what helped them to pass on the faith to their children, a recurring theme was the necessity of making their faith commitment more than just a hobby for one hour on a Sunday. To give our children a life-long love for Jesus and his Church, we need to integrate the practice of our faith into our daily lives.

How will you do this?



Some Ideas for Keeping the Light of Christ Burning

MEALTIME PRAYER

Write a family mealtime prayer together thanking God for the food you are about to share and praying for those in need of our support. Perhaps go around the table and share a 'high', 'low' or 'interesting part' of the day and then bring this to prayer, either thanking God for the 'high' points or asking God to help you in those 'low' points.

CELEBRATE FEAST DAYS

A great way to connect with the Communion of Saints is to celebrate their Feast Days. Identify a saint for each family member—it may be their Confirmation name, or one of their Christian names. Find out about your saints and what they did. Mark their Feast Day by retelling the story of their life and making a fuss of their namesake in your family. For more info. www.catholic.org/saints

BEDTIME BLESSING

When children snuggle into bed, give them a hug and a blessing such as: "Sleep well and may God bless you" or "Father bless this precious child of yours, who you love so much. Help him to grow to know and love your son Jesus. Send your spirit of peace upon him so that he will sleep peacefully and awaken refreshed in the morning." (Trace a sign of the cross on their forehead)

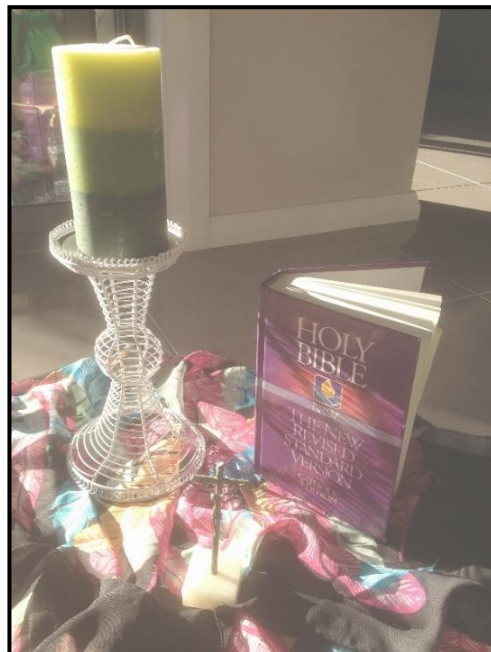
SOME OTHER IDEAS

1. When you put your child to bed, trace the sign of the cross on your child's forehead and say "Goodnight, God bless."
2. Have a crucifix, holy picture or statue in your home.
3. Take your child to Mass.
4. Teach your child right from wrong.
5. Teach your child to share.
6. Listen to your child.
7. Tell your child stories about Jesus.
8. Help your child say, "I'm sorry".
9. Say morning & night prayers with your child.
10. Show your child how to be a good friend.
11. Comfort your child when things go wrong.
12. Say a prayer of thanksgiving together before meals.
13. Set up a Christmas nativity scene and talk about the Christmas story.
14. Talk about God's wonderful creation.
15. Learn about the saints.
16. Celebrate family traditions and special occasions.

Faith and the Family

PRAYER SPACE: A PLACE FOR PRAYER

Create a small prayer space in a corner of your family room. You could place on it a crucifix, bible, candle, an image of Mary, and an aspect of nature. Change the colour of the cloth to match the liturgical season, purple for Advent & Lent, red for Good Friday and Pentecost, white for Christmas and Easter, green for Ordinary Time.



BE CONFIDENT

Our values are forged in us by the daily witness of caring and commitment in the home— ‘warts and all’. In fact, it is the fact that we are not perfect but always trying to be aware of others in our families that we become examples of the ‘extraordinary in the ordinary’. That is more than we can learn in any university course or book.

MEALTIMES: Family Memories, Faith Memories

We eat not just to nourish our bodies but also our relationships. We ‘feed’ each other spending time together, listening to each other’s stories, saying a prayer of thanksgiving, sharing mealtime tasks. It is a major liturgy of the ‘domestic Church’.

LEARNING TO CARE FOR OTHERS

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and service are the rule.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church para. 2223).

Prayers to Learn at Home

The best prayers are those that come from the heart. But there are times when we find it difficult to pray and it is then that we need the help of a prayer that we have learned 'by heart' or prayers which others have written. Here are some to get you started.

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father,
Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your
womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray
for us sinners,
now, and at the hour of our
death.
Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to
the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is
now, and ever shall be, world
without end.
Amen.

Act of Sorrow

O my God, I am very sorry that
I have sinned against you,
because you are so good, and with
your help, I will try not to sin
again.

Morning Prayer

Thankyou God, for loving me.
Thank you for my family.
Help me to learn more each day,
and to be kind at work and play.
Amen

Night Prayer

God of goodness,
we thank you for the gift of this
day.
We thank you for our family and
friends.
We pray that you will bless us and
keep us safe as we sleep.

Prayer for our Family

Lord Jesus, bless our family,
in the highs and lows of our lives.
Give us wisdom, strength,
and courage when life is difficult.
May we be thankful and joyful
when things go well.
May your Spirit fill us with love and
peace, so that we may be positive
examples to each other.
Amen.



Mealttime Prayer

For this meal we are about to
share, we thank you, God, and ask
your blessing on those who
prepared it for us.
Amen

Birthday Blessing (for a girl)

Creator God,
You made us in your own image
and likeness.
We thank you for _____
who today celebrates her birthday.
Bless her today and always.
May she continue to grow closer
to you each day of her life.
May she have a wonderful birthday
and always appreciate those who
love her.
Amen.

Birthday Blessing (for a boy)

Loving God,
You know each of us by name.
We thank you for _____ who
today celebrates his birthday.
Bless him with your love and
friendship,
that he will grow in wisdom,
knowledge and grace.
May he have a wonderful birthday
and always appreciate those
around him.
Amen

Parents' Prayer

Creator God, you are the giver of all life, human and divine.

May you bless us,
for we are the first teachers of our children in the ways of faith.
May we be the best of teachers, giving witness to the faith
by what we say and do,
in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Amen



Prayer for Families

Loving God,
We thank you for the gift of families.
We ask your blessing on all families today and always.
Be with us in our daily life together.
Be our guide in times of challenge.
Be our strength in times of difficulty.
Be our joy in times of delight.
Help our families to grow stronger in your love
and show us how to love one another as you have loved us.
May we welcome Jesus as the unseen guest in our home.
May we be His voice and hands, respecting and caring for those we meet.
May we look to the example of Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
as we strive to be the best family that we can be.
Amen.

Final Prayer

Loving God Creator of all,

Bless and strengthen our child as our family prepares for their Baptism.

They are your gift to us, and your gift to the world.

Through our love and care may they always know how precious they are to you,

And how much you delight in them.

May the light of Christ be a light to all our children.

May the water of Baptism continually fill them with your life.

Help them to grow in strength to be able to choose what is good and true.

May they grow up surrounded by people who love them and who love you.

Send your Holy Spirit, to wrap them and all children in love,

to protect them from harm and fill them with peace.

Amen.



Images: <https://www.pngegg.com/en/search?q=free+download>

With thanks to those who are featured in the photos.

Nihil Obstat
Very Rev. Dr C Forbes
30 January 2025



Imprimatur
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Bishop of Sale