

The Praying



Diocese of Winona-Rochester

Family

THE PRAYING FAMILY

Creating a space to intentionally pray together

The Christian family is the first place of education in prayer. Based on the sacrament of marriage, the family is the "domestic church" where God's children learn to pray "as the Church" and to persevere in prayer. For young children, in particular, daily family prayer is the first witness of the Church's living memory as awakened patiently by the Holy Spirit.

-The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2685)

The "little oratory," according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2691) is a place where the Christian family can go to foster "prayer in common." This prayer space or "prayer corner" is considered a favorable place for prayer. This space might include a Bible, icons, rosaries, candles, or any other religious objects that help point us heavenward in our thoughts in gaze.



A Catholic home is a place where prayer and faith are fostered. Having a space where family members can go alone or as an entire family can be an incredibly fruitful and useful tool in teaching the foundations of our faith, how to pray, and creating a life-long relationship with God.

This pack was created to help families create this intentional space. We've included interactive ways to pray during the Advent and Christmas season that weave familiar and unfamiliar traditions together: The O Antiphons and the Christmas Creche (Nativity Scene). If your family has a crucifix, candle, or other holy statues or images, we also encourage placing them in your prayer space.

We hope your family enjoys developing some new Advent and Christmas traditions together!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books

- *The Little Oratory: A Beginner's Guide to Praying in the Home* By David Clayton
- *Theology of Home: Finding the Eternal in the Everyday* by Carrie Gress, Noelle Mering and Megan Schrieber
- *Theology of Home II: The Spiritual Art of Homemaking* by Carrie Gress and Noelle Mering
- *Frame "A Family Prayer" and/or "Prayer Before a Crucifix."*

Add to Your Prayer Space

- *Lovely Lady Linens* - Linens inspired by the Catholic Faith (www.lovelyladylinens.com)
- Holy water from your local parish. You can use this to begin your prayer together and bless your home.

Like this Prayer Pack? Get more!

- Catholic All Year provides Liturgical Season boxes, family prayer materials, and more: <https://catholicallyear.com/shop/>
- Subscribe for Faith in a Year box memberships through Catholic Family Crate: <https://catholicfamilycrate.com/>



What's in your BOX

O ANTIPHONS CARD

The Roman Catholic Church has been singing the O Antiphons (most commonly heard in "O Come, O Come Emmanuel") for many years. The theology of the O Antiphons uses ancient Biblical imagery from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament to proclaim the coming of Christ. Their repeated use of the word "Come" embodies the longing of all for the Divine Messiah. (from usccb.org/prayers/o-antiphons-advent)

CREATE-YOUR-OWN CRECHE

The word "Creche" is French for "Nativity Scene" and oftentimes refers mostly to baby Jesus in the manger. Using the O Antiphons to "build" your creche, your family will color, cut, and tape it on the wall in your prayer space.

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL CARD

Many are overly familiar with the hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," but few know that is based off the O Antiphons. Our hope is that singing this hymn as a family can help bring a new awareness to the longing for Jesus Christ at Christmas. It can also be found on the Advent Spotify Playlist (below).

ADVENT SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

Enjoy listening to our our Advent Spotify Playlist as a family during the Advent season as opposed to more popular Christmas music.

Advent is a special liturgical season that prepares us for the coming of Jesus Christ in a new way each Christmas. Our hope is this playlist will help refocus your hearts on the true meaning of Advent and Christmas.

Scan the QR code to the right with your smart phone to go to the Spotify playlist or search "The Praying Family - Advent."



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION SHEET

Use the New Year's Resolution sheet to help your family brainstorm and decide on some ways you would like to grow this coming year. Entrust these intentions and desires to the Blessed Virgin Mary during prayer on Jan. 1, which is the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

HOLY WATER AND BAPTISMAL PROMISES

At Mass before you begin your prayer time, bring the holy water bottle provided and fill it with your parish's holy water. Use this holy water during your family prayer, especially during the renewal of your family's Baptismal promises on Jan. 8.



How to PRAY

PLANNING YOUR PRAYER TIME

So, what now? We recommend you pick a day and time that work best for your family to pray at least once a week together (preferably Sunday). Once you have established a day and time, try your best to guard this time, keeping it sacred and set aside for family prayer. If you have a conflict one week with your prayer day, plan a different day and time to pray as a family for that week, and keep it protected from other plans steering your prayer time off course.

HOW LONG SHOULD WE PRAY?

Each family will require different needs, and certain prayers take more time than others. Commit as a family to a length of time in prayer and try your best to keep it consistent each week. The "sweet spot" is about 10-20 minutes of prayer together. If you have small children, 10 minutes may be the maximum time to hold their attention. You know your family best! Below is a suggested format for organizing family prayer that you may adapt to best fit your family's needs.

PROPOSED PRAYER SCHEDULE: ADVENT

Begin with the sign of the cross with holy water, asking your family members to remember they are in the Holy Presence of God.

Begin by singing and/or playing as a family "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" using the card provided and/or Spotify playlist.

Color and cut the first item of your creche (follow instructions on O Antiphons card) while reading the appropriate O Antiphon. Tape your creche item to the wall in your prayer space. The creche will continue to build throughout your prayer sessions.

Advent is also a time to perform an act of penance. Discuss one way your family can offer something up as a gift to Jesus in the coming week. At next week's prayer time, draw a picture of your gift to Jesus and place it in your creche display.

To close your prayer time, ask your family if they have intentions they would like the whole family to prayer for. Invite them to share those out loud, and close with a Glory Be.

*If you have older children, invite them to take turns leading your prayer time.





How to PRAY

PROPOSED PRAYER SCHEDULE: NEW YEAR'S DAY

Begin with the sign of the cross with holy water, asking your family members to remember they are in the Holy Presence of God.

Begin by singing and/or playing as a family a Christmas Hymn of your choosing.

Remind your family that today is not only New Year's Day, but also the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Ask your family what it means to them that Mary is their heavenly mother, and invite them to share their thoughts out loud.

Since New Year's Day is typically a time to make New Year's resolutions, you can use the provided planning sheet to brainstorm ways your family would like to grow in the upcoming year. Post the sheet in your prayer space as a reminder of your resolutions.

To close your prayer time, entrust your family resolutions to Mary by praying a Marian prayer, such as the Hail Mary, Hail, Holy Queen, or a decade of the Rosary.

**Note: For the next prayer session, make sure your holy water bottle is filled.*

PROPOSED PRAYER SCHEDULE: JAN. 8

Begin with the sign of the cross with holy water, asking your family members to remember they are in the Holy Presence of God.

Begin by singing and/or playing as a family a Christmas Hymn of your choosing.

Let your family know that the end of the Christmas season is on The Baptism of the Lord, which is today. We are called to remember our own Baptism as our birth into the Catholic Church.

Get out your family calendar. Locate and log every family member's Baptism date (this may take a bit of work in advance to find the dates ahead of time). Throughout the year, you can celebrate each member's Baptism day as the special day they became a Christian Catholic and an adopted child of God!

For your children, tell them what made their Baptism day so special in your eyes. Using your holy water, sign each child on the forehead. Together as a family, renew your Baptismal promises using the provided card.

Close your prayer time with an Our Father.



FAMILY NEW YEAR

Resolutions Planning Sheet



Year

We want to be...

We want to help...

We want to learn...

We want to go...

Renewal of BAPTISMAL Promises

Do you reject Satan? I DO!

And all his works? I DO!

And all his empty promises? I DO!

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth? I DO!

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? I DO!

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? I DO!

God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever. AMEN!