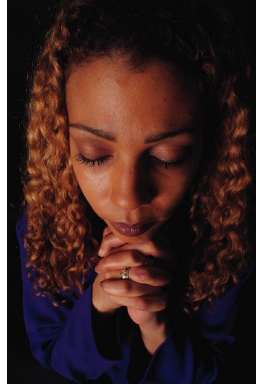


Resources for Prayer

Retreats

- ◆ Marianist Retreat House in Cape May Point, NJ for couples, 2-parent- and single-parent-families and individuals <http://capemaymarianists.org/>
- ◆ Marriage Encounter – weekend retreat for married couples <http://www.wvme.org/>
- ◆ Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston, PA w/retreats, spiritual direction and “online Spirituality” www.fscaston.org



Shopping Online

- * <http://www.stjudeshop.com>: religious objects, artwork, jewelry, gifts
- * www.printeryhouse.org: artwork, gifts and stationery
- * <http://store.pastoralplanning.com>: Twenty-Third Publications – books and prayer guides – Choose “By Age and Audience”
- * www.ltp.org: Liturgical Training Press – books and prayer guides

Books

- ◆ Catholic Customs and Traditions, G. Dues
- ◆ Celebrating Saints and Seasons, J. Hunt
- ◆ Living the Mass: How One Hour a Week Can Change Your Life, Grassi & Paprocki
- ◆ Open Mind Open Heart, T. Keating (on contemplative prayer/meditation)
- ◆ Prayers & Rituals for the Home, K. Hendricks
- ◆ The Cloister Walk, K. Norris
- ◆ The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality, R. Rolheiser
- ◆ 365 Saints: Your Daily Guide to the Wisdom & Wonder of Their Lives, W. Koenig-Bricker

Prayers

- * How to pray the Rosary: www.usccb.org—Choose “Prayers and Devotions”
- * Prayers before and after meals & the Act of Contrition: <http://www.catholicity.com/prayer/prayers.html>
- * Three Minute Retreats: www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer
- * Pray As You Go: <http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/>
- * Prayer online: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html>
- * Vibrant Faith at Home: prayer and education in Catholic Christianity for individuals, couples & families at all stages www.vibrantfaithathome.org
- * Give Us This Day (print or app), a short reflection on daily scripture www.giveusthisday.org

Interfaith or Intrafaith Couples

- ◇ Don't let your differences be a reason for you to leave God and religion out of your home! God has chosen for you to be together so there must be something God wants you to learn from each other.
- ◇ Check out www.sandiego.edu/interchurch for discussion starters and recommendations for many aspects of combining your faith lives.
- ◇ Wherever the two of you are, there is God in your love. Be aware of your holiness. Capitalize on it!



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(December 2017)

PreCana Day
of Reflection

Prayer in Married Life



A Resource
for Married Couples

How to Use Prayer in Your Marriage

Why Pray?

We all need God on a daily basis to love our spouse and everyone else, not because there is something wrong with us but because we finite humans have trouble loving as much as is needed on a day-to-day basis. If we picture our love as filling a bucket and we ladle the love out to others, it is easy to think of days when our buckets run dry. God, on the other hand, is a bottomless well of love. When we pray, we open ourselves to let God's love flow through us to others.



As an Individual

Prayer doesn't have to be fancy, just honest and regular. Here are some formats that have helped others:

The Examen: Each night, look back over the day to examine how God was present. Five steps: 1) Ask God to be with you as you pray. 2) Think about for what or whom you are grateful in your day—big or small. 3) Review the day, trying to see where God was present—helping you, challenging you, loving you or asking you to reach to others. 4) Ask forgiveness for any failings. 5) Ask for God's grace to be a holy person the next day. Be specific about what you will need for particular parts of the day.

Meditation: Find a totally quiet place and set a timer for ten minutes. Sit comfortably but up straight. Pay attention to your breathe going in and out. Let your mind be emptied of all thoughts and feelings. When they arise—and they will—do not hold on to them; rather, let them go. You may find it helpful to repeat 1-2 words, like "Savior" or "Holy One," for focus.

Liturgy of the Hours: For over thirteen centuries, Catholics have stopped at regular times throughout the day to pray the psalms.

a way to keep bringing back your attention to God, whom you want to keep as the center of your life. You can adapt the full Liturgy of the Hours to pray it only in the morning and at night. A simplified version is recommended in the bibliography.

The Rosary: Many people find the repetition of this prayer—you say the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be over in a pattern—to be calming. Many like the connection to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our spiritual mother: we invite Mary to ask God with us for our needs.

Pray w/ the Bible: One way to do this is ask God to direct your prayers, read a passage from the Bible and then ask 4 questions, pausing between each for a few minutes to listen for an answer: What does the text say? What does it say to me? What do I want to say to God about this text? What difference will this text make in my life?

A second way is to read the passage once and see what word jumps out at you. Read it again and listen for the phrase that jumps out at you. Thirdly, read it again and listen for the sentence that stands out most.

Another way is to read a gospel passage and imagine yourself in the scene. Envision what you see, feel, hear, smell &/or taste. Become part of the story.

As a Couple/Family

Attend Mass weekly: This is the best place for Catholic Christians to meet God. To get more out of it, try the following: 1) Quiz each other on what the readings were and what they were about. 2) Summarize and discuss the homily on the car ride home or at dinner. 3) Each family member tells about something/one you heard/saw that helped you reach God. 4) Volunteer for a ministry at mass. 5) Sing. 6) Take a class or read a book to understand why we do the same thing every week.



Family Rosary: Pray all five decades or just one together every

day or on the first Saturday of each month or every day in May &/or October, months dedicated to Mary. (Great for road trips!)

The Family Examen: Each night before the earliest bedtime, gather together. Appoint a prayer leader, who asks each person what they are thankful for; pray a thank you prayer together. Then the leader asks everyone to think about any sinful behavior and the group says an Act of Contrition. Then the leader asks each person whom they would like to bless. End with the sign of the cross.

Thank you, dear God, for the beautiful day,
for home and for care and for happy play.
Thank you for rest when the day is done,
and love that takes care of us, everyone.

Grace before/after Meals: See bibliography for 2 old favorites!



Special Prayers for the Church

Seasons: For Advent you can say a special prayer before supper and light an Advent wreath, use an Advent calendar or a Jesse tree.

For Christmas, bless the tree and the crib; bake Jesus a birthday cake and sing. There are traditions for each holy day; buy a book or ask your grandparents for ideas.

Religious Artwork: Have a crucifix, statue, icon or Christian saying in every room of your house.

Prayer Corner: Establish a place in your home and change it with the Church calendar.

Give Thanks Everyday: An attitude of gratitude makes a world of difference because it keeps your attention on what is working—and on where God is! Sharing this with each other makes everyone feel loved!

Spontaneous Prayers: Stop in the middle of a difficult time and pray aloud for God to help you all. Stop in the middle of a happy situation and thank God aloud for blessing all of you. Whenever you say good-bye, say, "God be with you!"