

IDEAS FROM **making Faith Fun** BY AMY VIETS

Don't be bound by the traditional concept of what a family devotion looks like. Take a chance on something new and different. (p. 13)

Don't beat yourself up on the image of the "perfect family." Despite our best intentions, there will always come a time when we're too worn out to even consider how we might turn a bush day into a time of living faith. God knows, God understands, God loves, and God forgives. And we can get up the next day to try again, giving thanks to God for that grace. (p. 13)

Infant and Toddler (Up to age 3)

Peek a boo...just like always but add "Peek a boo! God loves you!" "Peek a boo! God loves me." (p. 26)

Simple songs to the tune of "Mary Had A Little Lamb"

Jesus loves and cares for me, Cares for me, Cares for me
Jesus loves and cares for me, every single day.

Let the children come to me, come to me, come to me
Let the children come to me, that's what Jesus said.

During meltdowns (especially parent and child melting down together!) try this:

"We're both having a hard time today. I'm going to ask God to help us." Then pray something short and sweet, "God, help me to be kind, and help (child's name) to be calm." The message will come through that it's good to ask God for help.

Diaper changing, touching body parts

"God made baby's tummy, God made baby's knee, God made baby's fingers and God made me!"

Bath time – retell the story of child's baptism, you became part of God's family the church, you are God's beloved child.

Bedtime prayers and grace before meals...never too soon to start!

Preschool (ages 3-5)

Driving – point out helpers (construction workers, first responders, crossing guards.) Say a quick thank you to God for all the people who are helping.

Shopping – make a habit of picking up something for the food collection at Saint Luke (Box is in the lobby). Talk with your child about helping others who need things.

Ouchies – surprise your child with two bandaids instead of one in the shape of a cross and remind them that Jesus loves us and helps all our ouchies feel better.

Add, "Yea....God!" to the end of any table grace to add some fun.

Kids like to share. Start teaching them about sharing money. Take three empty jars and mark them **Share**, **Save** and **Spend**. Help them divide up money into each jar. (Ex. Share 10%, Save 25%, Spend 65%)

Elementary school

Have fun with squirt toys or water balloons, reminding each other, "remember your baptism!"

At bedtime have kids pray for something they are thankful for, someone who needs help, something they want God's help with.

At the table set an empty place and talk about how Jesus is always with us.

Try the faith five: **share** highs and lows, **read** a bible verse or story, **talk** about how the verse or story connects with your highs and lows, **pray** for one another's highs and lows, **bless** each other (God bless you, God loves you, make the sign of the cross on the forehead, etc.)

ABCs of thankfulness: Each person takes a turn. "I'm thankful for *applesauce*," "I'm thankful for *baseball*," I'm thankful for *cake*."

Continue Share, Save Spend. Let your child see you give money to church. Encourage generosity.

Middle School

Say grace, silently or aloud, at restaurants. Talk about how it feels and what others might think or learn.

Make popcorn or other dish and leave off the salt. Talk about how it tastes, how salt makes things taste better. Jesus says his followers are the salt of earth. Ask your kids how they can make things better.

Nighttime notes: leave nighttime notes of encouragement on your child's pillow. Mention things you notice that make you proud. Include actions your child has taken that reflect Jesus' love. Leave no court that you are 100% on their side and look for great things from them.

Before your child heads out the door bless them: God is with you; Remember who you are and Whose you are; Make good choices, you are loved. Make the sign of the cross on their forehead.

Generosity: as you teach kids budgeting, continue with Share, Save and Spend. Encourage and reward giving to church and other charities. Use opportunities like Saint Luke's Gifts of Hope program. Choose what to support as a family, or give a grandchild an opportunity to choose a charity.

Teens and Young Adults

Keep up the faith five, table grace, and yes – nighttime notes (see above).

Ask your kids to give you a blessing.

Let your kids see you read the Bible, go to church, engage in service.

Do a service project together. Talk about how making the world a better place connects with choosing a college, a trade, or military service.

Volunteer for a youth trip, lock in or retreat.

Explain how you decide how much money to give to church and other charities. Show them how you give (offering plate, bank transfer, etc.) Encourage them to include giving in their budget.

All ages:

Worship regularly together. Talk about worship on the way home in the car.

For more resources, be sure to check out www.saintlukedevon.org/family

