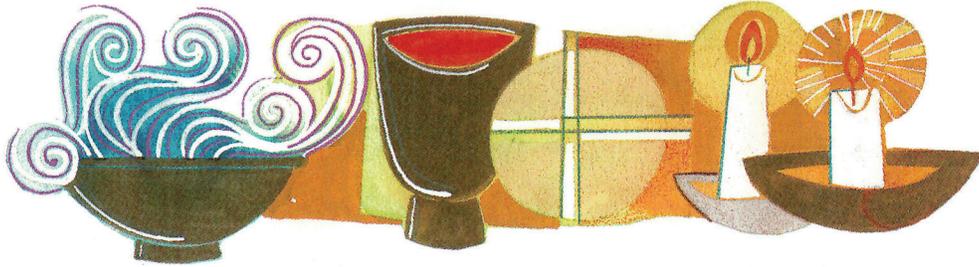


# Spirit of Prayer



1

**Before you begin**, please read the introduction on the right to yourself.

2

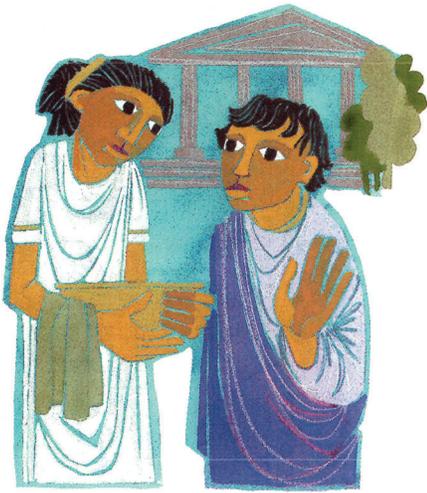
With the help of your child, prepare the meeting space. Pull out your Bible, light some candles, and add any other decoration you'd like to make the space beautiful.

Then begin with a prayer.

Prayer is a very important dimension of living as a Christian. Prayer is both private and communal. Within these two broad categories are a great variety of options. Prayer is our response to God's love in our lives. The communal prayer central to our Catholic beliefs is the sacrament we call the Eucharist.

3

**Getting started.** Discuss together: There's no right or wrong place to pray. In fact, you can pray anytime, anywhere! Is there someplace where it's easier for you to pray? Why? Is there somewhere where it's harder for you to pray? Why?



# 1

Have one family member read the text below out loud or take turns. Along the way, clarify anything your child might not understand.

**H**ow do you know someone is your friend? There are lots of ways to know, aren't there? A friend will smile at you when you meet, and a friend says good things about you to others. But one of the most important ways we know when we have a friend is also the most obvious: A friend wants to spend time with you.

The love God has for us is very special because God is always “spending time” with us. There is never a moment when we are not in God’s life. This sharing of God’s life, which we often call “grace,” is a gift to us. It’s a gift without any strings; that is, God gives grace freely.

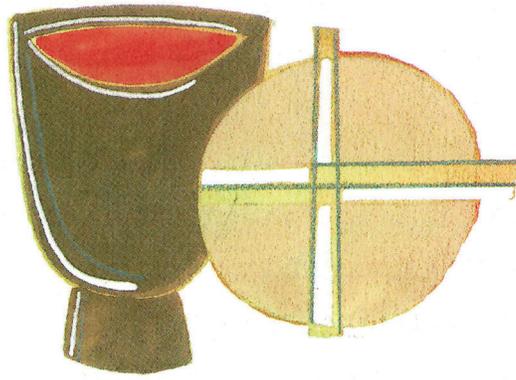
How then do we show we are grateful for this gift? How does God know that we, too, want to spend time together, that we want to be true friends?

We spend time with God when we pray.

Praying is our response to God’s love. Sometimes we thank God for all we have received. Other times we have problems or concerns, so we ask God for help. Prayer can grow so strong in us that we can’t help but talk to God and praise God for all that is. And sometimes we know we are lost, that we have gone wrong or done evil, and then our prayer rises from an aching heart that whispers, “I’m so sorry.”

Praying can be lots of different things. We can pray alone in our room or outside on a walk. We can use formal prayers that someone else has written or we can use our own words. We can even say nothing at all; we can just listen.

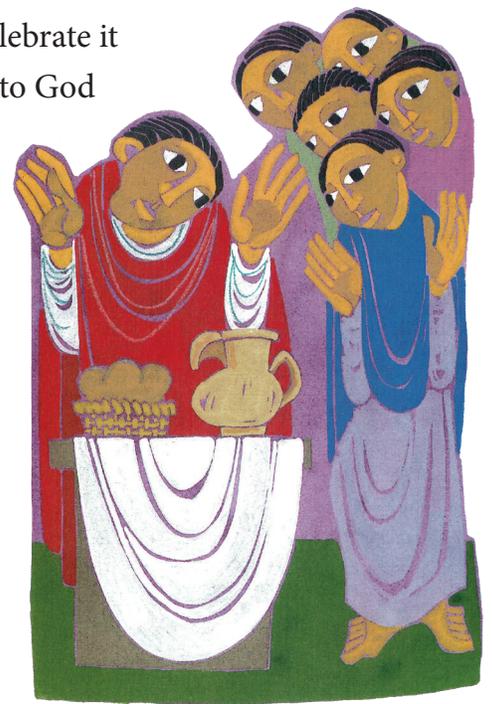
We can pray together with others. There are lots of times when we pray with our family, our classmates, our Church. The most special of these



community prayers is Eucharist. Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments. We celebrate the Eucharist in memory of Jesus. During the Eucharist, at the hands of the priest, Jesus forever offers his sacrifice to God the Father for us. The priest takes bread and wine, just as Jesus did with his disciples, and asks God's Spirit to come and make them into the Body and Blood of Jesus. By coming forward to receive Communion, we can become part of the Body of Jesus.

This prayer is so important that we gather every week to celebrate it together. The Sacrament of the Eucharist is a pleasing sacrifice to God and our food for life in Jesus.

Prayer is important and there are many ways to pray. Do you have a favorite way to spend time with God? Ask the Holy Spirit to be your helper each time you pray. You may be surprised at how happy God is to be your true friend.



## 2

Now discuss the reading with your child. Use the following or other questions:

1. Out of all the different ways of praying described here, which do you like the best? Why?
2. Do you ever pray on your own? When?

1

Have your child start their activity on the next page. They should start by reading the description in the palm of the hand, then have them read each numbered step in order.

Then read your next step below.

2

**Just for you:** The Sacrament of the Eucharist nourishes our relationship with God. There are many different ways to spend time with God in prayer.

There are many ways to pray, but all of them require intention and awareness. We choose to spend time with God. Learning formal prayers helps us pray with others and to pray when our own words fail us.

Spontaneous prayer, aloud or silent, can open our deepest needs to God's care. Praying in community, especially at the Sunday Eucharist, helps us remember that we are part of a family and can help carry us through times of doubt or confusion. Whatever the type, prayer places us firmly in God's presence.

# Five-Finger Prayer

4

Our ring finger is our weakest finger. Pray for those who need the most help, such as those who are sick, poor, or vulnerable. Write down some people you want to pray for.

5

On your smallest finger, pray for your own needs, especially for growth of your mind, body, and spirit. Write down something you want to ask God for below.

3

Our tall finger reminds us to pray for leaders and people in authority, such as political leaders, government workers, and police. Write down some leaders below.

2

Using your pointer finger, pray for people who point the way, such as teachers, church leaders, and other role models. Thank God that these people can guide us. Write the names of one or more people on the pointer finger.

1

Your thumb is closest to you. Pray for people who are close to you, like your friends and family. Also thank God that they are in your life. Write names of one or more people close to you on the thumb above.

One way to pray is to ask God for help. This form of prayer is called *petition*.

The Five-Finger prayer is an easy way to make this kind of prayer. Touch each finger as you pray, using them to remind you of who to pray for.

# Jesus as Our Model of Prayer

1

In Scripture we see that Jesus prayed in many different ways. Look up the Scripture readings on the next page to see some examples.

2

On the next page, list the ways you notice Jesus praying in the left column. In the right column list the ways you can use Jesus as a model for your own prayer.

*Jesus prayed by*

*We can do this by*

**Matthew 3:13-17**

**Matthew 6:5-15**

**Matthew 14:22-24**

**Mark 1:35-37**

**Mark 6:41-44**

**Luke 4:14-21**

**Luke 22:39-46**

**Luke 22:34**

# Your Prayer Notebook

1

Many prayer books and spiritual resources are available in libraries and bookstores. Start a small notebook with your favorite prayers in it. Ask for a tour of your church so you can see up close the building where the community gathers.



## Closing Ritual

2

Eucharist uses the important symbols of bread and wine, which become the Body and Blood of Christ. Place some snack to share between you. Then say whatever form of grace before meals you wish. As you eat, talk about how Jesus ate with his friends, too. Close with the doxology, on the right.

Through Jesus, with Jesus, and in Jesus,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, forever and ever.  
Amen.

