



Introducing Family Time A Guide for Parents

Each week, your child will bring home a page from his or her preschool book. On this page, look for the summary of the lesson found under the title Family Time. In addition to the lesson summary, Family Time includes notes about children's faith development, a Scripture passage and prayer for you and your family to share together, and a list of suggested activities to help you make connections between the faith themes taught in the preschool program and your child's everyday experiences. Sharing these activities together can be opportunities to enrich your own faith as you help your child grow in his or her faith.

Each Family Time page also includes a special opportunity to help you make faith connections, using a common family activity: reading books together. The model is simple and easy to use. The final item listed under the heading Do lists a suggested storybook, a discussion starter, and a prayer suggestion such as this one found in Chapter 1 of *God Made Me*:

Read to your child *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers. After a moment of quiet, encourage your child to identify sounds he or she heard. Thank God for giving us ears and good things to hear.

Prepare in advance by obtaining a copy of the suggested book. If the storybook suggested is unavailable, visit www.loyolapress.com/preschool for additional storybook suggestions chosen to connect with the themes taught in the preschool lesson. Of course, you can also use a storybook you have readily available. The information provided on the Family Time page can guide you to choose a book that connects with the faith theme of the preschool lesson.

Choose a time during the day that best suits your family's schedule. You might consider incorporating this into your child's bedtime routine. At whatever time you choose, find a quiet, comfortable place and enjoy reading the storybook with your child.

When you finish the story, take a few minutes to talk about it, using the discussion starter provided on the Family Time page. This gives you an opportunity to connect the story with the faith theme your child learned in preschool. Also, educators tell us that talking about what is read helps children develop good reading comprehension.

Finally, share a moment of prayer together. Begin by inviting your child to share with you a moment of quiet. Developing the practice and habit of quiet is a wonderful gift we can share with young children and is a gift we can also give ourselves. When ready, continue to pray using the prayer starter suggested on the Family Time page. You may wish to pray in your own words and invite your child to pray spontaneously as well. You might conclude your prayer by tracing the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead in blessing or by helping your child to pray the Sign of the Cross.

Once you are familiar with the pattern, you can use the prayer model with other books you read to your child and create your own discussion and prayer. Establishing daily prayer rituals will reap benefits, both now and also in the years ahead. Young children's eagerness to please and to be part of family activities makes these years the ideal time to introduce and establish important rituals. In the years ahead, it will be your child who returns the gift to you by recalling these daily rituals and insisting on their importance to your family life.

May you enjoy many opportunities to share faith together with your child.