

A time for family reconciliation

Gather together

This simple ritual is offered for celebration by the whole family.

It is recommended that the ritual take place at the family dining table and that the rite be followed by a family meal.

Focusing on penance and repentance, it particularly lends itself to being used on a Friday, but of course can be used – in the form presented – on any day and at any time.

The rite will have particular resonance for Catholic/Christian members, as it uses Christian Scripture and prayers. However, the central action – of admitting fault, failing, or struggle, and asking for forgiveness, patience or understanding – is equally accessible (and challenging?) to all family members.

Some families will like to make the ‘time for family reconciliation’ part of their weekly routine. Others might like to use it monthly. It is strongly recommended that it is used at least during Advent and Lent, so it might serve as preparation for Catholic family members to proceed also to celebration of the Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation.

Light a candle

This action marks the formal beginning of the time of prayer.

If it is something all present are comfortable with, the lighting of the candle might be accompanied by making the Sign of the Cross and saying the words ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’.

The candle be of any sort and any size. However, you might like to consider having a candle you can use regularly for this family prayer

Opening Prayer (said by a parent)

O God, the lighting of this candle, reminds of the gift of love and life we receive from you.

In our time together today

may Christ our Saviour

warm our hearts and brighten our way.

Help us to bring love and healing

to where in our world

there is hurt and darkness.

Amen.

Gospel parable

Choose a favourite parable and read it either from your bible, or from the booklet supplied.

The parable can be read by anyone who is willing and able.

A parent then invites every one to spend a minute or two in quiet, reflecting on the parable, considering what strikes them.

Gospel sharing

At the end of the silence invite people to share what has struck them – if they wish to share. Do not force people to say anything but do be ready to model the sharing yourself.

Each family member is invited to say one thing that ‘speaks to them’ in the parable.

For example if you have used the parable of the Sower and the seed’ responses might be such as

- *“I wonder how the sower feels about the seed that has gone to waste.”*
- *“How proud the seed that grows into strong plants must feel.”*
- *“How sad for the seed that just shrivels up”*

Try to avoid the sharing of what has struck people becoming a discussion.

Confession

Each family member is invited to share one thing from the past week (or month etc) that they are sorry about.

Introduce the time of reflection with the following words.

**Lord Jesus,
in the words of scripture
you help us
to know and trust in the love of God.**

**Help us now to remember
some way we have been
less than loving this week.**

**Help us to say sorry,
and help us
to help each other grow in love.**

Encourage people to use the opportunity, but again, do not force it. Do, though set a good example.

To avoid long and painful pauses, you might just explain people are invited to speak in turn around the table – either to say they have nothing to share, or to share what it is they are sorry about.

For example:

- *“I’m sorry that I forgot to do ‘x’ when I said I would”.*
- *“I’m sorry that I lost my temper with you on Tuesday.”*
- *“I’m sorry for fighting with my sister/brother.”*

Prayer of hope (best said by a parent?)

You might want to say a word of comfort or encouragement before the Prayer of Hope. All our celebrations of reconciliation are more about the healing and love that is shared than they are about, just, the things we have got wrong.

**May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins
and bring us to ever-lasting life.**

Kyrie (may be led by anyone)

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Final Prayer (said by a child)

**We give you thanks, O God,
for this time together.
May we never forget your love for us.
Each day help our family
to live love at home
and wherever we are.**

**We make our prayer
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

After the Rite

Sharing a meal together after the rite can help bring things mentioned into easy conversation when that is helpful or needed.

It can also help demonstrate that forgiveness is real, and love strong.

A TIME FOR FAMILY RECONCILIATION - a rite shared with families preparing for first celebration of the Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation, and for the first reception of Holy Communion in the parish of St Nicholas parish, Boldmere.

Our Parish is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity No. 234216

Rite © 2021, Allen Morris. Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.