

BLESSING & BREAKING OF BREAD

The starting point for a child's understanding of the Eucharist is the experience of gathering at the family meal table, blessing and breaking bread together, sharing life through the sharing of food.

Many families report that meals have become an 'eat and run' affair, and that rarely do they find the time to sit down together. This is understandable given the many pressures families are under. However why settle for this as the norm? Take control and make a serious investment of time and energy in the relational and spiritual quality of the home through the habit of shared meals.

If you enjoy something in this world without saying a blessing, it is as if you stole it.

- A saying from the Talmud



Ten meal ideas

1. Be decisive. Prioritising family meals may mean dropping something else from the calendar.
2. Be realistic. Work with what's possible.
3. Strive to make family meals a joy, not a 'duty'. Be creative. Pack a picnic. Fire up the barbie. Even a single candle or flower can brighten the table.
4. Choose a dinner theme: Maybe an 'Italian' night. Or 'Simply Bread' (plain bread, rice, water, and a conversation about families coping with poverty).
5. Treat the dining table as a sacred space. Find another place to stack the washing.
6. Pause for 'grace' before eating. Instil a daily sense of gratitude for the Creator's blessings.
7. Choose an uplifting table topic: "One good thing about my day was..."
8. Include an empty chair or place-setting as a symbol that you are remembering an absent loved one.
9. Extend hospitality. Welcome someone to your table.
10. Be patient. No meal is perfect. That's OK! God is with us, in all our efforts. Try hard, but in a flexible way that respects your unique household.