



At-Home Worship Practices

Creating sacred space in the home

1. The word “sacred” conveys a sense of being set apart or dedicated or consecrated, so the first task is to think about a location in your home where you and/or your family can gather that is free from distraction and that can be marked in some way. This can be the dinner table, a converted attic, a corner of a room, a window seat or the living room. Spreading a blanket like you would at a picnic, hanging a screen or using a partition may help establish this as a place for solitude or for special gathering. Placing pillows on the floor can also help designate a space. Sacred pictures, framed scripture verses or other religious art may be used effectively in creating this space. To really step it up a notch, use fabric gel pens or something similar and have the family create sacred symbols on cloth squares that can then be quilted together. (Historically people often gathered around a fire for storytelling and sacred ritual, so you might also consider a firepit, fireplace or another source of warmth in the home.)
2. Consider building an altar using a table or desk or other small piece of furniture. A simple covering of special fabric can beautify a surface as an altar, or if you follow a church calendar the color of the covering can also be changed to fit with the liturgical season and used as teaching tool. Think about the kind of sacred objects and/or resources that you might want to bring to this altar – a candle to light to signify the presence of God, a special Bible that you or the family could use to mark special passages, devotional material that you may want to read together, essential oils or scents that could be associated with encountering God, communion elements if it fits your faith tradition, earthy objects that connect you to creation. Alternatively, some families have created a faith chest where they can stow away objects when not in use. (This can be especially personal if the faith chest was built by a grandparent in such a way that it becomes an heirloom for future generations.)
3. As setting a proper tone is important for sacred space, think about how you might utilize music and singing in sacred space. Are there family members with musical gifts that could be utilized? What songs could a family learn and sing together that would be especially formational?
4. Throughout the Scriptures, faith is often increased through remembering. Use a journal or index cards to record prayer requests that allow you to look back at the way God has answered the prayers that you and the family have prayed for yourselves and for others.
5. Determine when in a given day or week you will set apart time to be in this sacred space by yourself or with your family. Striking a balance between structure and flexibility is especially important in our complicated lives. You want to avoid a legalistic imposition on the one hand, but recognize on the other hand that spiritual dispositions are hard to sustain without some regular, continuous practice. Imposing a practice like this on others against their will or in such a way that it disrupts what was an important flow to their life will likely not be received well. Rely on the quality of your relationship to have conversation about why this is important and seek input on how you might practice this together as a family.