

FAITH@HOME

May, 2017

For: Individuals, Families, and Friends of
St. James United Church of Christ (Havertown, PA)

We can develop and own our faith when we do the following four key actions: **TALK, PRAY, RITUALIZE, AND REACH OUT.** Given the research behind this proven focus, we as a church will be providing at the end of each month an activity in each of these areas, which we hope you will try (at least one, maybe two or three, or even all four) during the month.

Devotions: Prayer and the Bible

Smartphone Prayers (Ages 4+)

Materials: Mobile phone with at least 15 minutes of battery life remaining.



Have everyone in the family come together with their mobile phones. If the children do not have phones, then you can use one phone per family. You can do all three steps below or just one or two.

1. First, have everyone pick 3 photos from their mobile camera, and then silently pray for each person, situation or place represented in the photos.
2. Next, you could go to your last three text messages and pray for the persons who sent them.
3. Last, you can go to your favorite social media site and spend a moment praying for three people who come up on your feed.
4. After each step you can say, "Amen" to end the time of silent prayer or wait to say "Amen" till you have completed all your praying. In addition, you could set a time for each step (ex. for 1-2 minutes), so everyone knows when to begin and end silent prayer.

Rituals and Traditions

Gratitude Café (Age 4+)

Materials: Beverages, pencils or pens, blank paper



1. Make a special beverage for each family member (one they will really like or have chosen), and gather together. Outside can be a nice option, weather and space permitting.
2. Begin, by saying, *"There are many things for which we can be thankful: the air we breathe, the home we live in, the clothes we wear. Let's each take a moment and write down some of things we are thankful for. Let's try to each write down five things, and then we will share them."*
3. Once everyone has shared, close by saying, *"God, we are thankful for all these blessings. Amen."*

Some may need prompting, especially at first. Ask leading questions:
*"Are you thankful for any material blessing of this past week?
Thankful for anything special we have done as a family? Thankful for any lessons you have learned?"*

Think about holding a gratitude café not just once, but on a regular basis, whether that be weekly or monthly at a set time. If the café moment needs to be cancelled for some reason, make an effort to reschedule within a day or two.

Service

One Random Act (Age 4+)

Materials: Money (\$1-?)



1. Begin with this prayer, "Kind and generous God. I/We know you care for me/us and for all humankind. Some of us have more resources than others but this is not a measure of your love. Use my hands and willingness to care for another human being today who is in need. Amen."
2. Go to a thrift shop or dollar store. Why, because this is where people who are poor often shop. Wander around the store looking not only for things you might need but also notice who else is shopping there. Pick out someone who looks like they may have less income than you do and is ready to buy something.
3. Go to the cashier, pay for your item, and then quietly tell the cashier you are paying, \$1, \$5, or whatever, toward what your beneficiary will buy. Leave the store. Be grateful that you have the money to treat another person.

OR

You may tape money on a parking meter, or pay some money towards someone's lay away at Walmart, or leave a gift card somewhere so someone else can find it, or another random act you think up all on your own.

Caring Conversation About Faith

"My Name" (Age 4+)

Materials: Book of baby names, or electronic device with access to the internet.



1. Start with the following prayer: *"God, you have called us each by name. Bless us in our conversations today. Amen."*
2. Look up the meaning of each family member's name in a book of baby names or through an internet website (such as babynames.com).
3. Read aloud these Bible passages, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David." (Luke 1:31-32)
4. Share when you chose the name of your child. How long did it take to settle on the name? Why did you choose that particular name(s) for your child(ren)? Who did you share the names with first?
5. If there is a biblical connection to your child's name, try to find the passage in the Bible where it occurs (do a Google search "(name) in the Bible" and they should then list where in the Bible it can be found).
6. If you have children, share with them how you got your name, if you know the story behind your name.
7. End by reading, "See what kind of love God has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." (1 John 3:1)
8. If your child has been baptized, share what it felt like to you to have your child become a "child of God". What was the day like? Who was present? How did you celebrate?