

DEVOTIONS

Think about devotions as a continuation of our community's worship. The following basic pattern could be one way of forming your household's devotions. Adapt as necessary. **NOTE:** be aware of the total length of this devotional time. For many households, 15 minutes might be about the maximum amount of time for this, but that could grow with households with older children or just adults.

GATHERING

- ✚ **Gathering Ritual:** Consider some way to open this time of worship. Light a candle, sing a short song, or have a moment of silent breathing to relax.
- ✚ **Prayer of the Week:** A prayer is printed that ties in with the first Sunday's reading that can move with you throughout the week. Use it in devotions or any other time!

CARING CONVERSATION

- ✚ Take a moment to check in with each other or to use the questions included in this section. In households with smaller children, this can just be a time to ask a concrete question about their day. **The main point is to be on the look-out for opportunities to move your household's talk from the surface toward intimacy.**

DAILY BIBLE READING

- ✚ Read aloud from the DAILY BIBLE READING from the front of each insert. What do you want to remember from this reading? Even just a brief conversation about the reading might be meaningful.

PRAY TOGETHER

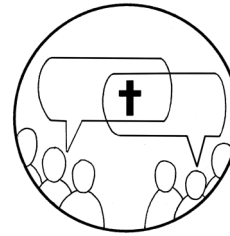
- ✚ Use the included weekly suggestion on how to pray together, or find a different way to pray.

CLOSING

- ✚ **Closing Ritual:** Consider a way to close your time together. Extinguish a candle if you lit one to begin, give hugs or handshakes, or anything else you would like.
- ✚ **Rituals and Traditions: A Blessing to Share:** A blessing can be a powerful ritual that reminds us of God's promises and presence, both through the words, as well as the touch that we share. This can be used as a "good-bye." It could be used as a bed-time blessing. Be creative in the way you bless and are blessed by the people in your life.

The "Four Key Faith Practices"—Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals & Traditions—are a framework developed by the Rev. Dr. David Anderson of Milestones Ministry and used by permission from Vibrant Faith Ministries, Bloomington, MN (www.vibrantfaith.org). For more information about the Four Keys, go to <http://milestonesministry.org/>.

INTRODUCTION



Sharing GOD'S STORY @ home

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THIS?

THAT is a great question. In this brief introduction, you will find some suggestions for putting this resource into practice in and with your household. Probably the two most important factors to make household devotions part of your daily faith practice are: **grace and flexibility.** "Grace" is the word we use to describe the reality that God is loving and forgiving, whether we succeed or fail. **When you feel like you have "failed" in doing devotions, GOD loves you and forgives you, so you should, too!** Likewise, when it comes to how you do devotions, **be flexible and try different ways of using this.** Will morning time or evening be better for your household? Maybe you'll need to do this in shifts, depending on work and school schedules? How will younger or older kids relate to this material? What if your household doesn't include any kids? Be creative in adapting this material so that it matches your household. **This resource is a foundation from which to build your household's practice of faith!** Enjoy!

Each week's resource will include these items:

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK—Each week, you will find a brief Scripture verse from the Sunday's reading. Use it in your devotions time or copy it and stick it to a bathroom mirror. Or, do anything else that works for you.

MEALTIME PRAYER—Use this to begin or end one or all of your meals, perhaps with the Scripture Verse.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS—Each week, you will find in this space daily readings from the Bible. Those reading will seek to do one of two things. Either, it will fill in the gaps between this Sunday's and next Sunday's stories. Or, it will dig into a theme from on the Sundays' stories—for example, "bread."

If your household includes younger children, use a child-friendly Bible like the Spark! Picture Bible (Augsburg Fortress) or The Jesus Storybook Bible (Zondervan). The Children's Illustrated Bible (New Leaf Press) is a good Bible for young readers that also includes nice illustrations and explanations. Often, you might find that the children's Bible you are using may not include the very story assigned for the DAILY BIBLE READINGS. Read to your kids anyway. Just pick a story!

SERVICE CHALLENGE—SERVICE is how we enact God's great love for the entire world. Each week there will be a small challenge that will encourage your household to act out love for each other or the community.