



Setting Up a Prayer Table in Your Home

In the atrium the prayer table is where we gather for prayer at the end of our time together. It is where we bring our thoughts and prayers and share in a communal time of prayer before going home.



During their time in the atrium, the children can prepare the prayer table ready for communal prayer at the end of the session. This activity includes: laying the cloth for the colour of the season on the table, adding a prayer card, candles, a snuffer, a sacred image either in the form of a statue or a picture or both. They can also decorate the prayer table further by adding flowers. The older children get very creative here using pebbles, theme cards, and other images from around the atrium for decoration. The Bible goes onto the prayer table in the centre on a special stand or small cushion.

In the atrium, a child can also use this space for personal reflective prayer. They can go there at any time and sit in silence, choose and read from a variety of psalm cards or other prayer cards, sing songs to themselves or even read from the Bible.

Setting up the prayer corner is a very popular work and it is a place where children can find a way to connect with God.

At the end of the session we sing songs, have some moments of silent prayer, prayers of thanksgiving or petition, or spontaneous prayer. We also have some beautiful blessing songs that we can use to finish our time together.

How to set up a prayer table in your home

The table - You may already have a prayer table but if not, this is your chance to get creative and ideally use what you have around the house. There are so many ways to do this. Here are a few options:

- Have a designated child size table in a living or family room or wherever works for you to be used by the whole family
- Each child could have a small table or shelf by their bed
- Use your coffee table and set it up for times of family prayer and allow your child to set it up at any time during the day
- A fold up table that can be set up easily as needed at any time of day



Wherever you situate your family prayer table make sure there is a place to sit; a cushion, small chair or even a bed. It also needs to be where a child can access it whenever they want and lastly, where it is accessible for the whole family to use together.

If purchasing furniture for the prayer table, look in second-hand shops for sturdy, yet easy-to-move pieces. For the youngest child, you will want a low table that is around 40 to 50cm in height. A

low table will allow the child to prepare the prayer space, thus taking ownership of his or her environment and prayer.

Near each table you need a shelf, basket or small cupboard for placing necessary items for setting up your prayer table or rearranging it each day as the children desire. For example: you could use a closed in shelf area under the TV, which is easily accessible to the children to set up the coffee table for family prayer. How and when you do this will be unique and individual to every family.

A cloth or a selection of cloths - If you can find something in the shades of the liturgical colours this would be ideal. However, if this is not available do not let this stop you. Just some lovely cloths will do, perhaps ones that you can change for the differing seasons. If you are going with the liturgical colours you will need:

- Purple for preparation -the seasons of Lent and Advent
- White (or gold) for celebration especially for Easter and Christmas
- Green for ordinary time
- Red for Pentecost

Start with purple for Lent and then have a beautiful white or gold cloth ready for Easter. Gradually build up your selection as we go through the year. You could use any pieces of material, table runners, large napkins or whatever you have available or whatever you can find easily.

A Bible - See 'Enthronement of the Bible' Parent Resource for more on this.

If your family does not have a Bible, you may want to purchase one, but which translation? There are so many to choose from! Rather than purchasing a children's Bible that may paraphrase sacred Scripture, it is preferable that the child hear the same translation that they would hear at Sunday Liturgy or what they would hear at the atrium. Good options are the Jerusalem or the New Revised Standard Version. However, if you have a Bible at home by all means use that.

Other Articles you will need

- A few candles for the child to choose from
- A candle snuffer if you have one - A great joy for the children is to snuff candles
- Small statues, icons or sacred images - You can print images from the internet if you don't have them at home
- Prayer Cards - See Making Prayer Cards Parent Resource for more on this
- Song Sheets - You can ask your children to teach you some atrium songs and write them up together as a family activity



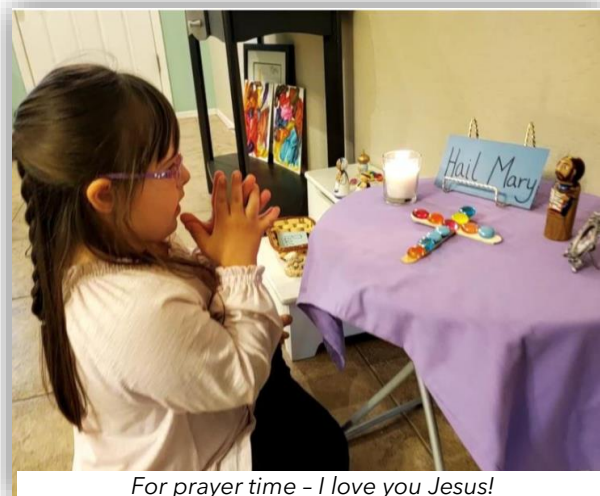
Items gathered for a home prayer table

Half the fun is having a variety so that the children can pick and choose to decorate the prayer table as they feel led. Every day it could be different. However, don't have too many choices on the shelf at once but rather theme it with the seasons and rotate as needed. You could also have a small variety of rocks and other natural items, like shells. This is an opportunity to go for a walk around your neighbourhood to collect treasures. Another option is to have a few small vases for the children to arrange flowers from your garden for the prayer table.

Prayer time as a family can be very simple. Begin with singing some favourite songs, followed by a short time of silence, thanksgiving prayers (especially with younger children - under 6's), intercessory prayers (with the older children - 6 and up) and finish with a farewell or blessing. If you have older children (6 and up) discuss with them what elements they would like to include for prayer time. This way you are developing your unique family prayer tradition.



Setting up...



For prayer time - I love you Jesus!

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