

### 9) Instilling the sense of God and gratitude for His benefits

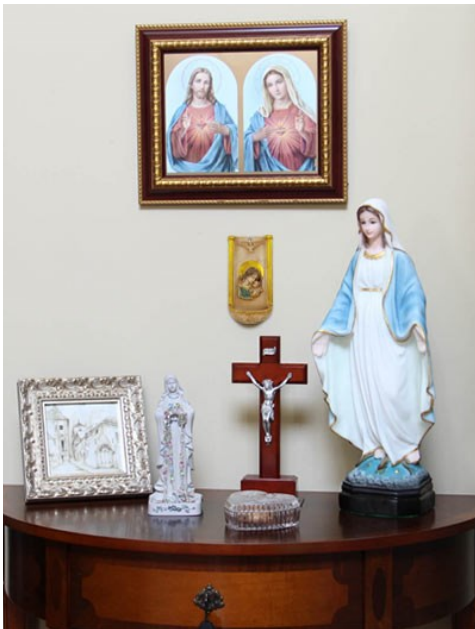
A family meal should always begin and end with grace, blessing and thanking God for what He has given us. The idea that we owe the daily bounty to God is a crucial concept to instill in children, the concept of gratitude and religion.

### 10) A great place to learn the art of conversation

Besides all the above benefits and things to do at the family table, there is also the added benefit that while sitting around and enjoying a meal (minus electronic devices) we also learn to take notice of others and interact. This is a prime opportunity to develop the art of conversation.

## Family Prayer Together

1. Create Family Altar– On a night stand or table in the living room, place a bible, a candle, a rosary, a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and above the table place a crucifix on the wall.
2. Every night ask the family gather in the living room at a regular time.
3. Light the candle a few minutes before you begin.
4. Turn off the television, phones, I pads, video games, etc..
5. Read a short paragraph from a Gospel from the Bible.
6. Persons may comment on what the scripture means to them--by what they believe inspires them. What does this scripture mean to me? What is God saying to us as a family?
7. Each person can mention one petition and/or something to be thankful.
8. Start out by praying an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be. In a month, move up to a decade of the Rosary, and then two or three months later pray the Rosary daily together as a family.



## Family Tips...

### One Family Meal a Day: 10 Powerful Benefits



For many families these days, holding one meal a day together is a challenge. But the time and effort is well worth the investment because the interest pays. In our fast paced world, gathering the family around a well set table once a day is a dwindling practice. Yet this practice holds a secret that yields incalculable benefits. It is very beneficial to pray before and after meals.

*BEFORE MEALS: "Bless us O Lord and these, thy gifts, which we are about to receive, through Christ our Lord. Amen"*

*AFTER MEALS: "We give Thee, thanks almighty for all thy benefits, which we have received, through Christ O Lord. Amen. May the Divine Assistance always remain with us, and may the souls of the faithful departed, through the Mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen."*

*One each: Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be...*

Here are ten reasons why to eat together as a family.

#### 1) Creating the sense of Family

When we talk about the "sense of family", what do we mean, exactly? The "sense of family" is the sense of oneness, the sense of belonging to a unique family in which each member is uniquely valued. We feel that we are all made of the same stuff, members of the same body. So we defend our own as we defend our own limbs.

A daily family meal tremendously enhances this sense of family. And *the sense of belonging* is the best psychological/emotional help you can give a human being.

#### 2) A chance to talk, to listen, to bond

Family meal time is the best of quality time. It is a time when, after all are served and appetites are appeased, parents have a chance to calmly converse with their children, listening and talking about the things that are important to them. This interest promotes trust, respect and family

bonding. It will also provide the opportunity for parents to show their concern and to inquire into what may be troubling their children. Only God knows how many problems are avoided in a family who shares a meal a day. Good food has the power to satisfy, calm and relax. These are the times when joy is promoted, trust is nurtured and growth is supported.

### **3) Appreciation, Confidence and Decorum**

Little by little, children will begin to feel more appreciated because of the fact that mom and, sometimes dad, go through the trouble and effort of cooking a homemade meal for them—everyday.

They will complain about this or that, *I hate vegetables*, and that sort of thing, but as they grow older, in a subtle, imperceptible way, drop by drop, day by day, they will develop a deep sense of self-worth, directly linked to their parents' daily dedication to their well-being.

A young priest was recently asked in an interview who was the person that influenced his vocation the most; he said: *“My mother. Though not particularly religious, she never failed to serve our family. I wanted to serve others like she served us.”*

Another important part of this is a well set table.

When a friend invites you out it is a treat. But when you arrive and realize the meeting place is a fine restaurant, with the best of china and service, you feel indeed valued in friendship.

In the same way, in a family, children who are treated to a daily well-prepared-meal on a well-set-table, begin to feel that they are worth it. This is a key point in children's formation. Confidence and decorum learned not from a book but through daily habit generates secure men and women capable of navigating any social situation. They will have the inner self-assurance needed to face the world confidently and not be engulfed by it.

### **4) A time for instruction**

Few places are better for instruction than the family table. The table is a place where parents can instruct their children in what we call Christian Civilization. A good way to begin are good manners. No better place than the dinner table:

*“Susan that is not the way you hold your fork.”*

*“Thomas, say please when you ask for the salt.”*

And so on.

### **5) Discipline**

As children grow older, they must be taught to control their animal appetite:

- To wait until all are served or not to pile a huge amount of food on their plate. If they are really hungry, to go for seconds but not all at once.
- To use a napkin and not the table cloth, shirt sleeves or arms to wipe their mouths.
- To sit up straight and not stick their faces into their food.

For a child to learn to wait until the last one is served to begin on their dessert is equal to a Masters in self-discipline. Later in life, if they can discipline themselves, they will be able to discipline others. The reverse is not possible.

The lack of self-discipline in the early years, is perhaps the main cause of later-date criminals.

### **6) Instilling a sense of order**

Another important benefit from the One Meal a Day is a sense of order. This will help children and the family to organize their day. Meal is a set time and it is important to strive to keep the schedule. This will not only help the sense of order in their young minds but also a sense of consistency, stability and accountability. It is something they can always depend on.

### **7) Good taste in food**

I once commented to my mother that three brothers who are my friends, are very good cooks. My mother's reply was: *“I know their mother and she cooks very well. They grew up knowing what good food tastes like, so they strive in their adult lives to duplicate it.”*

### **8) Eating healthy**

A family meal a day is a way to ensure that the family enjoys not only good food but healthy food. A healthy meal goes a long way to keep people healthy and to avoid medical bills. And in this world of fast food and preservatives, this is crucial. The meal is therefore a benefit for soul and body.

A meal a day will also help children not to raid the fridge or snack all day. With one sure daily meal, mom can establish a few rules as to resisting the easy carbs in between meals.