



## TENDING THE GARDEN



*Over this past year we have shared ideas about planting seeds of faith, growing deep roots of faith, and branching out in faith.*

In this edition we are sharing ideas about maintaining faith through daily practices, and seeing the fruits of faith in outward expressions.

One such expression of the Spirit is the fruit of thankfulness. Thankfulness is an attitude, an attribute, even a worldview that flows from our faith.

A truly grateful person recognises and appreciates what they have as coming from God, rather than complaining about what they do not have. But thankfulness isn't automatic; it must be learnt, encouraged and cultivated.

Begin by modelling thankfulness yourself; make a point of thanking your own children and let them see

you expressing thanks to others. Be conscious to point out to them things for which they can and should give thanks. Help them to see the outward expression of the gift of thankfulness as their faith grows. Where appropriate, have fun helping them preparing thankyou messages or gifts. Teach them that giving thanks is both valuable and enjoyable, in the doing and receiving.

Make time this term in your household to say thanks to one another. Focus on each person in turn.

Invite people in your household to thank them for positive things they have said and done, and for the ways in which they contribute positively to your home life. You might even like to celebrate this over a special dinner – thanksgiving!



More daily faith practice ideas can be found in the resource 'Growing Faith at Home'.  
2019/20 Year A available to order now.  
[www.growministries.org.au](http://www.growministries.org.au)



The most important work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own home.

Harold B. Lee



Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.

PSALM 127:3



## The Devotional Practice of – Morning and Evening Prayers

Luke 18:7 talks of God's people crying out to him 'day and night'. Prayer each morning and evening gives spiritual bookends to home life.

Use these morning and evening prayers from Martin Luther as part of your devotional practices this term.

Copy, cut and place them somewhere to remind you, or use them as a guide to write your own family morning and evening prayers.

# SUPPORT



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## MORNING PRAYER

I thank you, heavenly Father, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, that you have protected me through the night from all harm and danger. I ask you to keep me this day, too, from all sin and evil, so that in all my thoughts, words and deeds, I may please you. In your hands I place my body and soul and all that is mine. Let your holy angel be with me, so that the evil one may have no power over me. Amen



## EVENING PRAYER

I thank you, heavenly Father, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, that you have graciously protected me today. I ask you to forgive all my sins and the wrong which I have done. And graciously keep me this night. In your hands I place my body and soul and all that is mine. Let your holy angel be with me, so that the evil one may have no power over me. Amen





# Widening the Circle

## Developing stewardship in your family

Christian parenting involves teaching our children that all we have comes from God and that we are called to be good stewards of our possessions including our time. Growing children in stewardship involves teaching them about giving, saving and spending.

**Giving** – The first thing a child should do when receiving money either as a gift, an allowance, or for any other reason, is set aside a portion of it for God's work in the church and for the care of his world.

**Saving** – The next step in teaching stewardship is to encourage saving. Saving money is a good way for a child to reach for a goal, and understand what delayed gratification feels like, and takes.

**Spending** – The remainder of the money given or earned should be available for the child to spend as they like. Children grow in making decisions as they are given the opportunity to do so, advised and guided by their parents.



You can use this simple jar concept to help with these ideas.

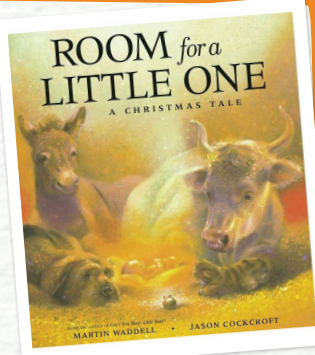
# EQUIP

We're here to help!

Email us at  
[growministries@lca.org.au](mailto:growministries@lca.org.au)

## Resource Review

### Room for a little one A Christmas Tale



In the stable is Kind Ox who invites in a dog, a cat and a mouse on a cold winter's night.

A Tired Donkey carrying Mary, being led by Joseph, is welcomed into the warm stable. "There's always room for a little one here."

On Christmas Eve baby Jesus is born. "That cold winter's night, beneath the star's light . . . a Little One came for the world."

The soft, gentle illustrations provide the atmosphere for this Christmas story, where we are reminded there is always room for one more.

No matter the problem, kindness is always the right response. L.R. Knost


# INSPIRE

## Parenting Seed...

### planting the seeds in our own hearts

Most of our lives are a combination of a Martha and Mary – of active busyness and quiet reflection. But if our lives are all-Martha-all-the-time, they may be out of balance. We may be missing 'the better part.' Does your household life need more Mary-like listening? Do you make time to listen to one another? To Jesus? What is one thing you could change, start doing or stop doing so that you have more time for listening to God and to one another?




 Open with a simple prayer


 John 8:12

Light the **FIRST** candle on your Advent wreath and ask 'why do we light this candle?' Respond 'This candle reminds us of the promise that a Messiah would come, bringing peace and love to the world.'

 Isaiah 9:2-7

 What does this tell us about God?

 Silent Night

 Thank Jesus for being our Hope

**Hope In Action** - Decorate the Christmas tree together. As you hang ornaments, reflect and talk about how the evergreen trees symbolises life in the middle of winter even as Jesus is the resurrection and the life. When you glance at the twinkling lights, remember that Jesus is the Light of the World and he calls us to be shining lights in the darkness. Consider making ornaments to remind you of Jesus' names.

Hope



Open with a simple prayer



John 1:4-5

Light the **FIRST TWO** candles on your Advent wreath and ask 'why do we light the second candle?' Respond 'The second candle reminds us that the prophets waited for a Messiah to come and save the people.'



Isaiah 40:3-5 and Luke 1:26-38



What does this tell us about God?



O Come, O Come Emmanuel



Thank Jesus for being our Saviour

**Preparation in Action** - Write a letter to Jesus, responding to what you've learned about him this week. Thank him for who he is, confess any sins that have accumulated in your life, and ask him to give you a deeper love and understanding of him. Then surrender any area of your life that is hurting this Christmas season, and ask him to fill you with his joy.



Preparation



Open with a simple prayer



2 Corinthians 4:6

Light **ALL FIVE** candles on your Advent wreath and ask 'why do we light the fifth candle?' Respond 'This candle shows us that the waiting is over. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is born!'



John 1:14 and Luke 2:1-40



What does this tell us about God?



Hark the Herald Angels Sing



Christmas Day



Open with a simple prayer



Isaiah 9:2

Light the **FIRST FOUR** candles on your Advent wreath and ask 'why do we light the love candle?' Respond 'This candle reminds us that God demonstrated his love by sending his Son Jesus to be born in a manger and die for our sins, so we may live forever with him.'



John 3:16 and Luke 2:8-20



What does this tell us about God?



Away in a Manger



Thank Jesus for being our Love

**Love In Action** - Bake a birthday cake for Jesus, the Son of Man, who left the splendour of heaven to take on human flesh. Encourage your family to think of ways they might say "Happy Birthday" to Jesus by showing love to someone around them.

Love



Open with a simple prayer



Psalms 97:11-12

Light the **FIRST THREE** candles on your Advent wreath and ask 'why do we light the joy candle?' Respond 'The third candle reminds us that Jesus' birth brings joy to all who believe in him, so we join all of creation in celebrating him.'



Matthew 2:10-11 and Luke 2:1-7



What does this tell us about God?



Joy to the World



Thank Jesus for being our Joy

**Joy In Action** - Ask grandparents about what Christmas was like when they were kids. Share family memories together, and consider how the joy of Jesus' birth—the Alpha and Omega—has been a continuous cause for celebration year after year, even though customs and traditions may change.

Joy