

Baby Steps

Starting something new, especially something faith-based, can be hard for families. Carving out time for intentional faith-based activities can be especially difficult. Sometimes getting everyone on board to realize how important it is can be the main obstacle. Sometimes the good intentions to add more faith-based conversations and activities get forgotten when added to the mix of already busy schedules.

The first thing you as a parent must hear is this: Don't beat yourself up. Do what you can, and rejoice in that. Love God; love your spouse; love your children. Give your family time to make changes that are important...but never beat yourself up for what you're "not" doing. Celebrate what you *are* doing.

Secondly, start where you are. Do you already have a bedtime ritual? During bath time, remind your children of their baptism. Mark the cross of Christ on their foreheads regularly. Say goodnight prayers together. Say the Lord's Prayer together. It is a great time for a child to learn the Lord's Prayer. Read a Bible story each night. Or, choose a picture book with a beautiful message. Some suggestions include: *Jesus the Word*, by Mark F. Bozzuti-Jones; *Whoever You Are*, by Mem Fox; *Water, Come Down; In the Beginning there Was no Sky; The Bedtime Rhyme*; all by Walter Wangerin, and *You Are Special* by Max Lucado.

One option: get some anointing oil (your pastor can help you get some), mark the cross of Christ on the forehead of your child before you say goodnight, and bless them with these words from Martin Luther:

*My loved ones, rest securely
For God this night will surely
From peril guard your heads.
Sweet slumbers may he send you,
And bid his hosts attend you,
And through the night watch o'er your beds.*



The point is, start small. Start with what you can do. Create success, and gradually you will find that other things fall into place.

