

Thirty seconds of silence: A great way to help kids prepare for prayer

Prepare for [mealtime prayers](#) or [family prayer](#) with thirty seconds of silence, a practice that helps everyone (including parents) settle down and refocus their attention. It also helps children learn to be silent and still, which is good preparation for other prayer practices, such as [meditative](#) or [contemplative prayer](#).

Here's what to do:

- Explain that you will be spending this time in silent prayer. You might encourage younger children to listen for the presence of God, or for what Jesus is whispering in their hearts. You can begin with one of the invitations to prayer provided below, too.
- Optionally, light a [prayer candle](#) as a way of signaling that this is a special time, and as a sign of God's presence.
- Start with thirty seconds and gradually lengthen the time.
- Model prayerful silence by spending the time actually opening yourself to the presence of God. As much as possible, ignore children's fidgeting and giggling (at least during the time of silence). With enough practice, even young children will begin to imitate your example.

Once you've mastered the practice of thirty seconds of silence at the beginning of your prayer time, try it at the end of your prayer time, too. For example, rather than simply reciting the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be for bedtime prayers, begin with thirty seconds of silence before reciting the prayers, and then conclude with thirty seconds of holy

silence afterward as well.

Two Invitations to Silent Prayer

Lasallian Call to Prayer

Let us remember
that we are in the holy presence
of God.

Children's Call to Prayer

Let's be as still as stones,
and as silent as the stars
as we listen for the voice of God
whispering in our hearts.

Both of these prayers, and many more, can be found in [The Catholic Family Book of Prayers](#).

Learn more

- [Catechism of the Catholic Church #2717](#)
- [1 Kings 19:12](#); [Psalm 62:5](#)