

# Rituals

**Dear Facilitator:** Do you have a family ritual or tradition? The other day I was speaking with my mother-in-law, and she was talking about putting flowers near someone's gravestone. After thinking about it, I realized that putting flowers on a grave was not one of my family rituals or traditions.

Today we are going to talk about why it is important to create family rituals.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Identify current family rituals.
2. Create a new family ritual.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

*Blessings*

## Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about the importance of building friendships, and how we reflect Christ in our relationships with others.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

## Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** What are some things that you do every day? (i.e. brush teeth, eat, sleep).

Many times, we call these habits—habits we do to complete a task.

Rituals are related to habits, but they are different. A ritual is performed for a special significance, like to remember something or someone.

 **Share:** Share a story of a family ritual that you do. Today we will be focusing on rituals. Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Identify current family rituals.
2. Create a new family ritual.

# Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Tonight, during dinner, we'd like you to talk about rituals.

1. What are some of your family's favorite activities that you do together? Generate a list.
2. Are you able to call these rituals?
3. As you listen to others talking, have you come to realize that you have more rituals than you thought?

*After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.*

*As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.*

*Notes*

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| <i>40 minutes</i>        |                |
| <h1>Parent Training</h1> |                |
| <i>Family Time</i>       | <b>RITUALS</b> |

In general, habits are behaviors that are self-generated. A habit is a decision that is made at some point until it becomes a regular behavior without putting much thought into it. In 1960, Maltz noticed that it took 21 days to get used to seeing a new face after plastic surgery, and a phantom limb was felt for 21 days after removed. Phillippa Lally, in London, researched 96 people over 12 weeks and discovered, on the average, it takes 66 days for a new behavior to become automatic.

So, for instance, the first time you ate a donut at work, it was a decision. The 45th time, it was a habit that occurred, essentially, unthinkingly. The first time you backed your car out of the driveway, you had to give it some serious thought and decision making. The 100th time, it happened automatically.

Rituals, by contrast, are almost always patterns developed by an external source and adopted for reasons that might have nothing to do with decision-making. Someone might celebrate Thanksgiving with a turkey not because they love turkey, but because society has indicated that's what we eat at Thanksgiving. We might

make the sign of the cross when praying not because it makes our prayers more effective, but because that's how we learned to pray (if you are Catholic), and the physicality of the ritual has become comforting (<https://www.quora.com>).

God made use of rituals, helping His people remember significant events. There are many feasts ordained by God and described in the Old Testament. Leviticus 23 provides seven such feasts: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. Some of the feasts have already been fulfilled through the work of Christ: Passover, Feast of Unleavened

Bread, Feast of First Fruits, and Feast of Weeks. Others are a shadow of things to come when Christ comes again: Feasts of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. There are other feasts such as Tisha B'Av, Hanukkah, and Purim that have their origins during Old Testament history but are not directly commanded in the Old Testament.

As rituals are to help us remember, it is important for your family to know and understand the ritual.

Take one of your rituals or create a new one.

- Write out the steps.
- Write out the meaning of the ritual.
- Tell how you will explain it to your children.
- Share with the group.

## SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Identify current family rituals.
2. Create a new family ritual.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?



## *Scripture* SUPPORT

### **2 Thessalonians 2:15**

*So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.*

### **1 Corinthians 11:2**

*I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you*

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

# Student Training

*Family Time*

**RITUALS**

## Objectives

- Help children be aware of what a family ritual is.
- Help children be aware of the benefits of family rituals.
- Help children be aware of types of family rituals.
- Help children identify their family rituals.
- Help children value family rituals.

Family rituals are specific practices that family members repeat together again and again.

These are behaviors that you perform the same way at the same time. Family rituals are done with a certain purpose in mind and are done intentionally. Family rituals tell a story about a family and are even said to provide stability when families face challenging times. Another name for family ritual is family tradition.

Many rituals are teachings or practices that have been handed down from grandparents and even great-grandparents, but some families may create new ones of their own. A family ritual is meaningful behavior that

your family engages in that makes the statement: This is who we are! This is how we roll!

Family rituals help family members feel secure. Rituals and traditions give them a feeling of belonging to something unique and special. Family rituals give families an opportunity to share the important times in life together as they value and enjoy each other's company. Did you know that researchers found that family rituals were linked to positive self-identity, self-confidence, and a strong sense of comfort and security in children?

Family rituals are also connected to stronger family unity.

Even the Bible speaks about the importance of keeping traditions such as baptism, communion, and marriage. In 2 Thessalonians 2:15, Paul tells the people, “So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.” Along with our family traditions, we also have our Christian faith traditions to keep. Some of those rituals and traditions are praying, attending church services weekly, taking communion, and anointing the sick with oil for healing. Then there are Christian traditions you may celebrate in the church as well as in your family such as Christmas, Lent, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter. These rituals and traditions have been passed down over hundreds of years.

Speaking of traditions and rituals in the Bible, in 1 Corinthians 11:2, Paul says to the people, “I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you.” Even in Bible days certain traditions and rituals were practiced and considered very important.

There are different kinds of family rituals. There are family celebrations that family members look forward to such as weddings, birthdays, family vacations, or maybe even Cinco de Mayo or Kwanzaa! Then of course we all have wonderful memories of holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s Day, Easter, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day, and the fun and festivities that surround them. We celebrate these holidays, and the rituals and activities we take part in convey important cultural values of the family.

For example, on Thanksgiving, members of a family might volunteer to serve dinner at a food kitchen for those less fortunate. This ritual is teaching children the values of compassion, giving, and serving others. Perhaps every year during the Christmas season, a family puts up a manger scene in their home so that they can reflect on Jesus—God’s gift to the world. On Easter Sunday, Christian

## Notes

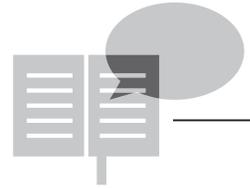
families go to church to celebrate the fact that Jesus rose from the dead to save us from our sins and give us an abundant life.

Each one of us can name special activities that our family practices for these special occasions. Is there a specially decorated chair at the dinner table for the birthday king or queen at your house? Maybe for Kwanzaa you light the Kinara Candles daily. Does your family wear exclusive clothing, prepare special foods, or put up cultural decorations to celebrate Cinco de Mayo?

There are many more family rituals and traditions, and families often create their own! A family ritual can be as simple as a family game night to emphasize that your family values having fun and enjoying one another's company. A ritual can be eating dinner together every evening at the dinner table to indicate that the family values unity and togetherness. Another ritual could be a family who reads the Bible together on Sunday afternoon or prays each night before bed or in the morning before school. This ritual is teaching children the importance of prayer and faith in Jesus. Family rituals draw family members closer together, help them bond with one another, and affirm family values. All these rituals are cherished occasions that families remember for many years to come.

The celebration of ritual events helps us better understand our family and ourselves and attests to what our family holds dear. To make family rituals more memorable, take time to talk to one another about the traditions your family keeps and why they are important to you.

Psalm 145:4 says, "One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts." And So, children, make sure you are involved, listening, and learning so that you can keep the family traditions alive and well. Family rituals are a way to pass on to future generations beliefs, values, history, and culture that are significant to your family testimony.



*Scripture*  
**SUPPORT**

**2 Thessalonians 2:15**

*So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.*

**1 Corinthians 11:2**

*I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you.*

**Psalms 145:4**

*One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.*

**James 5:16**

*The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

**Hebrews 10:25**

*...not giving up meeting together... but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

**1 Corinthians 11:26**

*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the LORD's death until he comes.*

**James 5:14**

*Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the LORD.*

**Genesis 2:24**

*That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."*

**Matthew 28:19**

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Joel 2:12**

*"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."*



# Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on ages 4-11, and the second is for older children ages 12-16.

## AGES 4-11

### Materials

“My Family Rituals” worksheet

Pencils, crayons, or markers

### Have children view YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/o9STz3B3ffw> (discuss briefly)

If it's not possible to view video, do activity without it.

After the lesson and video, have children fill out “My Family Ritual” worksheet.

When finished, have children share what they wrote.

\*Smaller children can color a picture of a happy time with their family.

## AGES 12-16

### Materials

“My Family Rituals” Worksheet

Pencils, crayons or markers

### Have children view YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/Eb0XHjzM8aQ> (discuss briefly)

If not possible to view video, do activity without it.

After the lesson and video, have children fill out “My family Ritual” worksheet. When finished, have children share what they wrote.

\*Older children can recap the lesson for the group.



**CHALLENGE QUESTION**

DO I ENJOY AND PARTICIPATE IN OUR  
FAMILY RITUALS?

**CHALLENGE COMMITMENT**

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE  
CHALLENGE QUESTION?

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <p><b>AFFIRMATION</b> <i>Have children repeat:</i></p>                       |
|   | <p><i>The rituals that my family practices bring us closer together.</i></p> |

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## MY FAMILY RITUALS

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Family rituals are repeated behaviors that bond family members together and cause them to reflect and celebrate family values and beliefs! Rituals may also be called traditions. **Think it through and share:**

Our family has a daily ritual of

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Every week our family has a ritual of

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Our family enjoys a spiritual ritual of

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Our family has a recreational ritual of

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The holiday rituals my family celebrates are

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My favorite family ritual is

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It is my favorite because

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