

# SETTING UP A PRAYER TABLE IN YOUR HOME

## What is a prayer table?

In the atrium the prayer table is where we gather for prayer at the end of our time together in the atrium. It is where we gather together our thoughts and prayers and share in a communal time of prayer before going home.



During the time in the atrium the children of all ages can first of all set the prayer table up ready for prayer at the end by laying the cloth for the colour of the season on the table, adding a prayer card, candles, a sacred image either in the form of a statue or a picture or both. They can decorate by adding flowers. For the younger children the Bible goes onto the prayer table in the centre on a special stand. You could also use a small cushion. The older children get very creative here and use pebbles, theme cards, and other images from around the atrium.

The other thing that happens at the atrium is that a child can use this space for personal reflective prayer. They can go there at any time and sit in silence, choose and read from a variety of psalm cards or other prayer cards sing songs to themselves or even read from the Bible.

Setting up the prayer corner is a very popular work at all levels and it is a place where children of all levels can find a way to connect with God.

At the end of the session we sing songs, have some moments of silent prayer, prayers of thanksgiving or petition, or spontaneous prayer. We also have some beautiful blessings songs that we use to finish our time together.

## So how to set up a prayer table in your own homes

You may already have a prayer table but if not this is your chance to get creative. There are so many ways to do this. Here are a few options...

1. Have a designated child size table in a living or family room or wherever works for you to be used by the whole family
2. Each child could have a small table or shelf by their bed
3. Use your coffee table and set it up for times of family prayer and also allow your child to set it up at any time during the day.
4. A fold up table that can be set up easily as needed at any time of day

5. Wherever you situate your prayer table make sure there is a place like a cushion or small chair or even a way to sit on a bed where a child can access it whenever they want and also where it might be available for the whole family to use on a regular basis

If purchasing furniture that your child will use, look for sturdy, yet easy-to-move pieces. For the youngest child, you will want a low table that is no more than 13 to 15 inches in height. A low table will allow the child to prepare the prayer space, thus taking ownership of his or her environment. Look in your second hand shops as these are always good places to find treasures for atrium and home. Also you could shorten the legs a little by just cutting a bit off at the end.

**Near each table you need a shelf or small cupboard** for placing necessary items for setting up your prayer table or rearranging it each day as the children desire. A friend of mine used a closed in shelf area under the TV easily accessible to the children and each night after dinner the children set up the coffee table for family prayer. How and when you do this will be unique and individual to every family with different age children etc.

### What are the items you will need....

**First of all a selection of cloths.** Ideally if you can find something in the shades of the liturgical colours this would work best. However if this is not available to you do not let this stop you. Just a lovely cloth that is special will do, perhaps ones that you can change for the differing seasons. I will include some pictures below.

If you are going with the Liturgical Colours here is what you need

Purple is for preparation which means the seasons of Lent and Advent (though each could be a different shade)

White is for celebration especially for Easter and Christmas

Green is for the growing time after the feast otherwise known as Ordinary Time

Red is for the feast of the Holy Spirit or Pentecost

So start simply with purple of some sort and then have a beautiful white or gold one ready for Easter. Gradually build up your selection as we go through the year.

You could use any pieces of material, table runners, large napkins or whatever you have available or whatever you can find easily.

## **Next a Bible**

If your family does not have a Bible, you may want to purchase one, but which translation? There are so many to choose from! Rather than purchasing a children's Bible that may paraphrase sacred Scripture, it is preferable that the child hear the same translation that they would hear at Sunday Liturgy or what they would hear at the atrium. Good options are the Jerusalem or the New Revised Standard Version. However if you have a Bible at home by all means use that. More about this in a later note.

## **What other articles do you need?**

In your cupboard or on your shelf you could have a selection of candles, small statues, icons, other sacred images, prayer cards, song cards and stands. Half the fun is having a variety so that the children can pick and choose and decorate the table as they feel led. Every day it could be different. However, don't have everything out at once but rather theme it with the seasons and rotate as needed. We also have a variety of rocks and other natural items, as well as vases for flowers etc.

We will send home some samples of sacred images and prayer cards that go with Lent to start with and will then follow up a bit later with more that you could get ready for Easter.

Prayer times as a family can be very simple. Favourite songs, a short time of silence, thanksgiving prayers especially with younger children, intercessory prayers with the older children. We will send home some ways in which you can begin if this is not something you are regularly doing as a family just to make it as easy as possible.

**Oh and I almost forgot you need to get a snuffer. Another great joy for the children is the opportunity to snuff out the candles.**

Below I will include some photos of our prayer tables at the atrium set in different ways but I will also try to gather some pictures of home prayer tables. If any of you have pictures or ideas that you would like to share please let me know. And I can forward them out to all of the parents.

Hoping you are all keeping well.

Love and prayers

Anne



Some familiar photos from our atria. These are both from our Easter celebrations. The others below are from family homes.

I will send ideas for prayer cards that the children can make and also some pics of sacred images that you can run off and either frame or mount on card or laminate to have in your home.



I  
For the Graceville Atrium families  
Put together by Anne Delsorte  
Director - Graceville Atrium

Corinda/Graceville Parish  
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Australia