Build a culture of life through prayer

Building a culture of life and teaching your children about pro-life topics doesn't have to be something "extra." One of the simplest ways to build a culture of life in your family is through family prayer time. Through daily family prayer, your children will learn from your example about the many facets of the culture of life and how we all have a duty to look out for our brothers and sisters in need. Here are a few suggestions for what to do.

Make a list of intentions

While making a list of intentions, such as praying for an end to abortion, is admirable, try putting your faith in God to ask for an answer to specific requests. Instead of praying for an end to abortion in general, pray for a young woman with an unexpected pregnancy who might be entering a local clinic seeking an abortion. Pray for workers at a local abortion clinic, that God would soften their hearts and help them find a way out of their jobs.

We can also ask for God's help in other areas. Pray for people who are nearing the end of their lives or those who struggle with disabilities. Ask God to comfort them in their final moments and help them to bear their sufferings. Specifically mention the names of friends and acquaintances who are suffering from short- or long-term illnesses or disabilities. Pray for people who care for those who are sick or have disabilities, that they may have the strength to continue their important work of easing the sufferings of others. Pray especially for the sick in your parish or community.

Spiritual adoption

Younger children will enjoy praying for preborn babies and

their moms through a spiritual adoption program. Depending on the ages of your children and the point at which you decide to teach them about abortion, you can use Archbishop Fulton Sheen's spiritual adoption prayer, or encourage them to pray a Hail Mary every day for a preborn baby. Select a name for the baby your family prays for and remind your children that even very tiny babies are loved and cherished by God.

Praying for others is just one way that we can extend our love and concern for others. When we say a quick prayer on someone's behalf, it may seem like a simple action, but it reminds us that we need each other's help on our earthly journey.

Even more ideas

- Keep a small notebook or prayer journal with the names of people who need your prayerful support.
- Pray for the intentions of different groups of people—those who are sick, those with disabilities, those who have died or who are nearing the end of their lives, and those who are getting ready to be born.
- Invite each child to list specific intentions in their own words every day, or give each child his or her own day to lead the family in prayer.
- Encourage your children to pray using their own words when invoking God's blessings to help them develop a personal relationship with Christ.
- Save memorized prayers for times when your children witness an ambulance going down the street or when you drive past an abortion clinic.

The constant practice of these little habits builds a strong foundation in the culture of life and grounds your children in their faith.