Say a prayer before (and after) meals

You'll find a number of mealtime prayers in the **Table Blessings** section of CatholicCulture.org, which contains dozens of table blessings for every season. Here are some other ideas for praying mealtime prayers:

► **Start with silence**. Try **Thirty Seconds of Silence** before saying your mealtime prayer together.

► **Bless your family**. Besides blessing the food, you can also ask for God's blessing on your family and your conversation. (If your meals are fraught and chaotic affairs, all the more reason to pray for help!)

► **Pray after the meal**. Some people also pray after the meal. If you try this, you can either pray together before everyone is excused, or encourage kids to make the Sign of the Cross before they leave the table.

► **Offer a menu of prayers**. Use **Table Triangles** as aids to learning new mealtime prayers, and to give kids a choice of mealtime prayers to say.

► **Let kids lead**. Mealtime prayers are an excellent time to let kids begin leading prayer.

► **Sacred reading.** In some monasteries, meals are eaten in silence while one of the monks or nuns reads some sacred text. You can adapt this practice by reading the day's Scripture readings before, during, or after your meal.

For a fine collection of creative mealtime prayers for many different types of food and times of year, see ***Peanut Butter and Jelly Prayers*** by Julie B. Sevig (Morehouse Publishing, 2007).