



## Dear Faith Shapers,

As we are moving from the season of Lent to the season of Easter, I'm reminded of the many gifts of God's grace we experience on a daily basis. We take the season of Lent to reflect and look to the cross, to the ultimate sacrifice that Christ made for us.

Now in the season of Easter, we celebrate the gift of the resurrection and the gift of life we are given in that resurrection.

In this issue, I want to talk about ways that we can help our children and ourselves keep our eyes open to the many gifts and blessings that are around us every day. This includes being intentional about looking for the gifts as well as being grounded in prayer.

Deb Bachman  
Director of Children's  
Ministry at St. Paul's  
Lutheran Church and



God Smiles

Each week at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School, the school children gather together for worship. It's a wonderful thing to see children leading worship together. But one of the greatest things that happen at the beginning or end of the service is where the principal, Dr. Meyer, stands up and goes over the "God Smiles" for that previous week.

God Smiles are things that everyone in the school and church are welcome to submit. These are times or events where people have seen God at work in the school, the church, through peers, or through trusted adults. It helps the kids to look to see where God is active in their lives and to be thankful for the gifts of friends, trusted adults and events in their lives. It's amazing to hear the ways in which God has revealed himself to the students and staff each week.

This is a great exercise to do with your own children—even each day during dinner or before bed. Reminding children to look for the ways in which God is at work in their lives helps turn their focus to the gifts given to us each day.

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## A Family Gratitude Journal (Taken from Living Faith at Home May 2013)

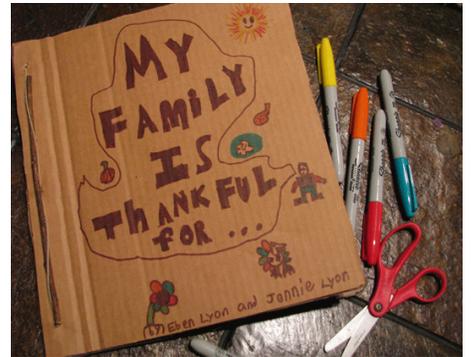
Before I started sharing here, I read this in the newsletter and have used it myself over the years. It fits well with this month's theme so I wanted to share it again with you. Thanks to Lisa Kammerer for sharing this idea back in 2013.



**What is a family gratitude journal?** A family gratitude journal is simply a daily journal that you use as a family to capture the unique things you are thankful for each day. Every day each person in your family should write down or draw a picture of something they are grateful for. There is nothing too big or too small to be written down. There are only two rules to a family gratitude journal.

1. All journals entries must be positive.
2. You can only list something you are grateful for once.

**How do I start a family gratitude journal?** All you need is a pen and a journal. Your journal can be as simple as a spiral notebook or as elaborate as a family decorated journal. The most important things is to select something that you and your family can be excited to write in. Next pick a spot to keep the journal that is easily accessible for the whole family. Once a week gather the family to read the entries.



**Why?** To acknowledge and give thanks to God for the many ways He blesses us each and every day. Living with holy joy!

### Being Grounded in Prayer

Being aware of the gifts we have been given for me is easier when I'm grounded in prayer. Here are some times and ways you can pray together as a family:

\*Pray before each and every meal. There are many meal time prayers that you can use or you can pray your own each night. Give thanks for the gift of food and pray for those who do not have enough to eat each day.

\*Pray before bed time. Lift up any concerns that each person may have and pray for the important people in your life.

\*Pray the Lord's Prayer together.

\*When you see or hear an ambulance, take time to pray for whomever is hurt and pray for all those who are sick and in need of God's healing power.

### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed by your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on  
earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily  
bread. Forgive us our  
sins as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time  
of trial and deliver us  
from evil. For the king-  
dom, the power and the  
glory are yours, now  
and forever. Amen.