

# Weekly Faith Formation Update

## October 12- 16, 2020

### [Gratitude Pumpkin | Coffee and Carpool](#)

Many families take the time to discuss what they are grateful for during the month of November. One interesting twist on this tradition is to write down everything we are thankful for on a “Gratitude Pumpkin” which can then become the centerpiece at Thanksgiving.



### Gratitude Pumpkin a Daily November Tradition



When our kids (or us) are feeling low, depressed or just like the world is “unfair,” the quickest way out of the slump is to focus on what we do have. What we are grateful for? What makes our lives great? Of course, someone will always have more than us. But we will also always have more than others.

Focusing on the good things in our life is essential to a happy life. And in our family, we love to focus on the little things we’re grateful for like Daddy’s chicken and rice dinner or ice cream. During a pandemic, focusing on what we’re thankful for is even more essential. So much has been taken away from us. When we focus on the things we’ve lost—time with family, school, time with friends, sports, playdates—we can easily spiral into unhappiness. And because we’re intentionally raising our kids to be kind, empathetic, and compassionate, we have to start by focusing on gratitude.

Kids who are ungrateful and view the world from the point of view that they don’t have “enough,” will never be able to give away kindness and empathy, and compassion. They’ll instead be searching for this elusive “enough” and won’t be able to be their best selves or share their best selves with those around them if they’re devastated because they don’t have a Nintendo Switch or the newest bike or the shiny new toy their friends have.

### [Candlewalk: An Interactive Evening Prayer Practice | Build Faith](#)

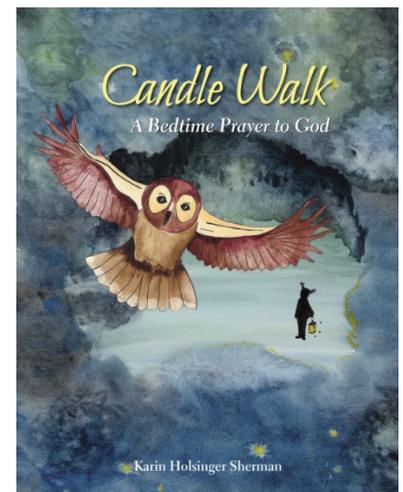
Simple, routine family prayer practices remind us of who we are, create belonging and an environment of emotional and spiritual safety. We can adapt these practices with all ages and as children grow.

#### A Prayer Practice for Bedtime

During the COVID19 pandemic, I’ve used [Candlewalk](#) to offer an interactive evening prayer time for families via Zoom. This method of reading Candlewalk could also be used at home or during in person church gatherings. Tip: I bought the kindle version of Candlewalk so I could share it on my screen when meeting virtually.

**Sharing Candlewalk with Families:** Supplies: Blank paper and drawing/coloring utensils, Battery operated candle, Something to show from the day that made you smile – could be a drawing or photo or object such as a rock from the playground, Blanket, favorite stuffed animal, anything that helps you feel peaceful and comforted related to getting ready for bed

**Create Belonging:** Set the group up in a circle. If some are meeting virtually, give the names of the order you will share. For example, “Let’s pretend we are all together in



one big circle and we will go around and take our turn to talk. I will go first to give you my example. If you are last today, that's okay. I will change our order every time we meet. Here is our order today: Lisa, Vivian, Dutch, Moses, Hannah."

**Keep Time:** Meet for a maximum duration of 30 minutes, especially if meeting virtually. Adjust the sharing time and art response time as needed.

**Settle our Bodies:** I generally say, "Let's make sure our bodies feel relaxed and let's take a few deep breaths. Imagine we are smelling the fresh air as we breathe in through our nose and we are blowing out candles as we breathe out through our mouth."

**Joyful Check In:** I invite each person to show and share about one thing that made them smile or laugh during the day. I remind them, "We will take just a little bit of time to share so everyone has a turn. Let's pay really close attention to each person who is sharing so they know that we see them, we hear them, we are glad to be with them and they are important to us. Let's say 'thanks for sharing' and say their name after each person shares."

**Read Candlewalk:** I generally give a brief introduction before we start, such as "In this book a child takes an evening walk outside with a parent and notices the many things that God created which help her know that God is with her. I will read so everyone can relax and look at the pictures. Sometimes, I will ask everyone to repeat a prayer after me and sometimes we say our prayer all together with motions."

On most pages I read the text and then invite engagement. For example, on the first page after the text "I put on my muddied boots," I invite everyone to pretend to put on boots. On page 18 after the text "Guide us waking and guard us sleeping," I invite everyone to repeat that phrase three time with motions.

**Art Response:** We pause on page 8 for an art response to the questions, "Did God move through our branches today? Or did God's breath feel far away? Did someone seek the shelter of our shade? Is there something that made us sorry?"

**Prayer Motions:** On page 18 we use motions and say together, ["Guide us waking and guard us sleeping."](#) On page 22 we use motions and say together, ["In peace I lie down and sleep."](#)

**Concluding:** We end by listening to this recording of [The Lord Bless You and Keep You](#). I generally say, "Let's rest together and listen to this song."

[Script for Candlewalk](#)

