

A Family Celebration of Reconciliation

Gather in a circle. Play soft music and light a candle if you wish.

Read Luke 15:11-32 or another Scripture story about God's mercy.

A parent or older child leads prayer:

Jesus wants us to love one another. Sometimes we have not loved each other as we should. We have hurt one another. This has damaged the peace and joy of our family life. Let us now ask for forgiveness.

Family members admit ways that they have not shown love to one another and apologize to one another.

Pray the Our Father as you hold hands with or wrap arms around one another.

Exchange a sign of peace or invite family members to bless one another by tracing the Sign of the Cross on one another's foreheads.

A parent or older child leads prayer:

Loving and gracious God, we come before you in our brokenness. Help us see our mistakes. Grant that we may be open to your healing mercy and forgiveness as we seek to change our lives. Amen.

Additional ideas:

- After reading the Scripture, family members write on a large paper heart how they contribute to the well-being of the family. After the parent's introductory words, the heart is torn into several large pieces. At the end of the ritual, the heart is taped back together and displayed.
- Members write what they are sorry for on slips of paper. These are crumpled up, put into a metal container, and burned.
- On paper hearts, family members write how they intend to improve. They keep the hearts on their dressers or nightstands as a reminder.
- State the admission of sin in the form of a litany. The leader names a general offense and everyone responds "Forgive our selfishness." For example:
 - For the times we keep others waiting...
 - For not doing our chores...
 - For being grouchy...
 - For not showing appreciation...
 - For hurting others' feelings...
 - For insisting on having my way...
 - For being too sensitive...
 - For taking the best for myself...