

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

1. THE NEW YEAR • Centering at Home 3

BLESSING THE HOME 4

Ancient New Year's House Blessing

Blessing the Home with Water

Blessing the Home with Light

Single Mother's Home Blessing

BLESS THIS MESS 7

CLEARING AWAY CLUTTER 8

EPIPHANY 10

ACTIVITIES FOR EPIPHANY 11

Kings' Crowns

Buñuelos—For a Latin American Epiphany

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DAY: WORKING FOR JUSTICE 14

VALENTINE'S DAY: NOT JUST FOR LOVERS 15

Valentine Activities for Families with Young Children

Valentine Activities for Families with Older Children

Valentine Activities for Parents

2. LENT • GROWING IN CHRIST 19

MARDI GRAS 20

ASH WEDNESDAY 20

Ash Wednesday Family Prayer Service

Other Ash Wednesday and Lenten Activities

FAMILIES THAT FAST TOGETHER... 22

Ways to Fast

PRETZEL PARTY: A LENTEN TWIST 24

Recipe for Soft Pretzels Made in a Bag

MAKING FORGIVENESS A FAMILY HABIT 26

Practicing Forgiveness with Young Children
Forgiveness Stones

JUGGLING HOLY WEEK AND HOMEWORK 29

Holy Thursday: Washing of the Feet
Good Friday
Veneration of the Cross at Home

HOLY SATURDAY: DAY OF WAITING 34

Coloring Easter Eggs

3. EASTER • DISCOVERING NEW LIFE 37

EASTER TREASURE 38

Easter Treasure Hunt for Children
Easter Season Morning Prayer

CELEBRATING EASTER EVERY DAY 40

Easter Freedom

PENTECOST: A POWERFUL WIND 44

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE GARDEN 46

4. ORDINARY TIME • Moments of Grace 49

MEALTIME 50

Traditional Catholic Grace Before Meals
Open, Shut Them: Grace for Young Children
Superman Grace
"Rock Around the Clock" Grace
Simple Grace
Johnny Appleseed Grace
Traditional Grace

CELEBRATING SPECIAL DAYS 54

Blessing of a Child
Prayer to Honor a Person on a Special Day

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS 55

Prayer for National Holidays

SUMMERTIME 55

Keep Holy the Summer
Thank God for Water!

DISCIPLINE TIME 60

- Parent's Prayer
- Firm and Kind
- A Call from the Principal's Office

PRAYER TIME 64

- Praying as a Family
- Prayer in Times of Crisis
- Family Prayer Ritual in Crisis
- The Examen: An Everyday Prayer

5. LABOR DAY BACK-TO-SCHOOL • WORK AS COCREATION 71

LABOR DAY 72

- Labor Day Family Blessing
- Blessing Litany

CHORES 74

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING: A TEACHABLE MOMENT 75

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL BLESSING 77

- Prayer for Younger Children
- Prayer for Older Children

GET RHYTHM! 78

BEWARE OF BUSYNESS 80

- Prayer for Parent Feeling Overwhelmed

KEEPING THE SABBATH 83

- Family Sabbath Box

6. AUTUMN EMBER DAYS

• REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING 85

FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS: OCTOBER 4 86

HALLOWEEN, ALL SAINTS' DAY AND ALL SOULS' DAY 89

- The Tale of the Jack-O-Lantern
- Jack-O-Lantern Blessing
- Trick-or-Treating

ALL SOULS' DAY 92

- Family Remembrance Celebration
- Space to Grieve

GRIEVING DIVORCE, SEPARATION OR ABSENCE 95

A Psalm in Time of Loss and Grief

IN TIME OF ILLNESS 96

Blessing for Healing

Prayer for Healing a Sick Child

ENCOURAGING FAMILY STORIES 97

THANKSGIVING 99

Thanksgiving Table Prayer

Thanksgiving Litany

Thanksgiving All Year Round

7. ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

• **WAITING IN HOPE, LIVING IN JOY 103**

ADVENT WREATH TRADITIONS 104

Family Advent Wreath Lighting

An Advent Leap of Faith

TRADITIONS AROUND THE MANGER 107

Family Blessing of the Nativity

THE FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS: DECEMBER 6 109

A Night Prayer for the Feast of Saint Nicholas

COUNTERING CHRISTMAS CONSUMERISM 112

CHRISTMAS TREE TRADITIONS 113

Family Christmas Tree Blessing

CHRISTMAS EVE TRADITIONS 115

Christmas Eve Prayer

CHRISTMAS MORNING 117

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS 118

CHRISTMAS JOY LIVES ON 119