

# God Has Created Us As Families

by Marilyn Spaw Krock

This is a prayer we have said as a family for many years. We did it as an echo prayer (one line at a time) until our children could recite the entire prayer. When friends and relatives join us we still do it as an echo prayer. (Bold lines are the prayer)

**God our Father has made us a family.** Family is the building block of society. Healthy families make a healthy society. The concept of family is fundamental to God's design for us. In Christ we become God's family.

**As members of one another, I need you and you need me.** The feeling of being needed enhances self-esteem. Children need to feel needed.

**I love you and you love me.** Unconditional love more than anything else helps children see themselves as special and valuable creations of God. It means persons are loved for themselves, not what they contribute to a relationship. God loves us unconditionally. We should experience that kind of love in a family setting.

**I forgive you and you forgive me.** "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those..." God calls us to be as forgiving of others as God is of us. Model with your own life proper responses to doing wrong and feeling guilty. If a child observes and confronts you with a wrongdoing, admit the failing and ask for forgiveness. Use this as a teachable moment. Let the child witness your repentance.

**We work together and we play together.** Chores, children, and character go together. Chores are the most effective way of teaching accountability and responsibility. Home should be the place for learning skills that accomplish genuine work. Competence builds self-confidence. Then go out and have some fun together!

**We listen to God's Word and make it our own together.** Traditions are the threads from which our most treasured memories are woven; they make a significant difference in our lives by creating and reinforcing emotional security in the home. Attend Church together, pray together, read Scripture and religious stories together. Establish religious traditions during various holiday times.

**Together we reach out to others and share with them our oneness.** Encourage children to be of service to family members, friends, and their community. Work together as a family on a service project. Volunteering for less desirable tasks at home or school helps counterbalance the emphasis on competition that exists.

**Together we hope to rise and enjoy eternal new life.** Death is a very important concept for children to understand. We must be careful of their developmental level, however, when we are explaining our adult belief in eternal life. For young, concrete thinkers, heaven, angels, and even God, are concepts way beyond their reasoning power: avoid: "gone to sleep," "God/angels took," or "went to a better place." Accept children's feelings; allow them to discuss how they feel.

**This is our faith, our hope, our way of life as a family.** What will it take to give your child a mature and passionate love of God? God asks parents to be responsible for communicating true spiritual values to their children. What are you modeling on the stage of family life? Maybe parents need some spiritual nurturing?

**May the Spirit within us draw us closer together until we are one in the Lord. AMEN.**

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