



ekids!

Mealtime Devotions for Families

Excerpted from Focus on the Family

Soul Food

Mealtime Prayer:

(Tune: "Amazing Grace")

"Amazing grace, how great Thou art, You meet my every need.
You quench my thirst, You guard my home, my soul and body feed."

Appetizer:

Did you know it can take as long as 12 hours for a meal to get through your digestive system? That's because your small intestines are four or five times taller than you are! Look around and find something that tall. Would it fit inside you?

Main Course:

How is the phrase "you are what you eat" true? What happens to your body when you eat nutritious food?

Besides food, what other things do you feed on throughout the day (television, music, friends, etc.)? Which of these please God? Do these things strengthen you or weaken you? How?

One good thing we can feed on is the Bible. God's Word can be thought of as food for your soul. Why does absorbing God's truths into your life give you strength?

Table Talk:

- Name five things you can "absorb" from the Bible. How do they become a part of you?
- What sort of music feeds the soul?
- What sort of music, movies, or games hurt your soul? Why?

Vitamins and Minerals:

"You are strong, and the word of God lives in you" (1 John 2:14).

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True or False?

Mealtime Prayer:

Thank God for the Bible and the messages He gives us in His Word.

Appetizer:

Each person think of a message, true or false, that you want to give. It could be "Mom is beautiful" or "lions eat grass" or anything. Decide whether each message is true or false.

Main Course:

How did you decide which messages were true or false? When someone tells us something, how can we know whether he or she is telling us the truth? There are many messages in the Bible. Some were written by prophets who talked about things that were going to take place in the future. How did the prophets know what to write? How can we know whether they were true? For example, the prophet Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be born. Was this true? Why or why not? How do we know that everything in the Bible is true?

Table Talk:

- What should we do with the messages in the Bible?
- What message in the Bible has not yet come true?

Vitamins and Minerals:

"The prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true" (Jeremiah 28:9).

Go Ahead, It's Good for You!

Mealtime Prayer: Thank the Lord that He has given you food to make your body strong, and His Word to make your spirit strong.

Appetizer: Did you know that broccoli has been served up for dinner for at least two thousand years? (Parts of the Bible have been around even longer!)

Main Course: Have you ever heard your mom say, "Eat your broccoli; it's good for you"? Believe it or not, your parents put broccoli (or other veggies) on your plate because they love you. What good things are in broccoli? How is the Bible like broccoli? What good things are in the Bible? Of course, the best part is that the Bible doesn't taste mushy or leave little green things between your teeth! What does the Bible leave you with instead?

Table Talk:

- How does eating nutritious foods like broccoli make you feel?
- How does reading the Bible make you feel? Just reading it is not enough. What else do you need to do?
- If you could outlaw one vegetable, what would it be?

Vitamins and Minerals: "He took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, 'We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.' (Exodus 24:7)

Wanted: Map Readers and Travelers

Mealtime Prayer: The Bible gives us clear directions for prayer. In Matthew 6:9-11, Jesus told us to pray to "our Father in heaven," thanking Him for our "daily bread." Give each family member a chance to do this.

Appetizer: Did you know that the Bible has 30,442 verses? If you have memorized verses, say one now.

Main Course: Have you ever kept track of your vacation trip on a map? It's exciting to see where you've been, where you are, and where you're going. Name two ways that the Bible is like a map for our lives. Next, read these verses, and then answer the questions.

- Romans 3:23. Where were we before we accepted Jesus? (Stuck in sin.)
- Romans 10:9. Where are we now? (Forgiven in Jesus.)
- 1 Peter 1:3-4. Where are we going? (Heaven.)

Table Talk:

- If your best friend lived far away and you had to travel on a journey to his or her house, what five things would you take with you?
- Why can you be excited about the journey the Bible leads you on?
- What other directions does the Bible give to help you on your journey through life?

Vitamins and Minerals: "Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths" (Psalm 25:4).

King on the Mountain

Mealtime Prayer: As you thank God for your food, thank Him for the Bible, which teaches us how to live. Ask Him to help you obey His commands.

Appetizer: As a family, make up 10 new rules for your house. They can be serious or funny. Put them in order of importance from 1 to 10.

Main Course: After Moses led the Israelites across the Red Sea, they traveled through the wilderness and camped by a big mountain. Moses climbed up the mountain to talk to God. God gave Moses laws to tell the people. One day God wrote some rules on two tablets of stone and gave them to Moses. They are known as the Ten Commandments. How many can you name? (See Exodus 20.) Why did God make rules? Why do some people not like rules?

Table Talk:

- The first four commandments are about how we relate to God. Why do you think God put those first?
- Why do you think "honor your parents" is right in the middle?
- Why does God want us to obey His commandments?
- What happens when we obey God's commandments?

Vitamins and Minerals: [Jesus said,] "If you love me you will obey what I command" (John 14:15).

Simon Says-God Says!

Mealtime Prayer: God says that we should pray for each other (Ephesians 6:18). Take time to do this after thanking God for your food.

Appetizer: Did you know that because people obey God and tell others about Jesus, the Bible has been translated into over 1,946 languages? If you could learn another language, which would you choose?

Main Course: Play a game of "Simon Says," giving everyone an opportunity to be Simon. If someone completes the action without the leader saying "Simon Says," that person is out until a new leader takes over. The Bible gives us instructions too. Think of it as "God Says." God tells us what we should do when we're sitting, walking, and lying down. It doesn't matter what we're doing, we should always think about what God says!

Table Talk:

- What was your favorite instruction in "Simon Says"? What was the most difficult to follow?
- What is your favorite Bible instruction? What is the most difficult to follow?
- What happens when you don't obey what God says? (Remember that God is faithful to forgive!) How can you check what you're doing with what "God says"?

Vitamins and Minerals: "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds. . . . [Talk] about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19).

Father's Day: Fabulous Fathers

Mealtime Prayer: Have each person tell Dad why he is fabulous. Thank God for your father while you pray.

Appetizer:

Fabulous Father Bible Quiz:

- Q: Who became a father when he was one hundred years old? (*Answer: Abraham.*)
- Q: Who gave his son a colorful coat? (*Answer: Jacob.*)
- Q: Who was King Solomon's father? (*Answer: David.*)
- Q: Who was the father of John the Baptist? (*Answer: Zechariah.*)
- Q: What did the colt say to his mother? (*Answer: Where's my fodder?*)

Main Course: Why are fathers important to a family? What does your father do for you each day to show that he loves you? How can you show your father that you love him and appreciate all that he does for you? Proverbs 23:22 says, "Listen to your father, who gave you life." What does that mean?

Table Talk:

- How can you bring joy to your father?
- Why is it wise to listen to your father?
- Why did God create fathers?
- Tell your father you love him and why.

Vitamins and Minerals: "Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children" (*Proverbs 17:6*).

Getting to Know You

Mealtime Prayer: Thank the Lord for your favorite food on the table. Then ask God to show you what's important to Him.

Appetizer: How well do you know your parents? What are their ages? Their eye colors? (Without looking!) Their favorite hobbies?

Main Course: Cook a family favorite today. Do you know your family well? As you spend time with each other, you discover likes and dislikes. Give each family member a list of these questions. Try to guess their response before they answer. Name your . . .

Coollest experience:	Bravest thing done:	Favorite holiday:
Favorite summer activity:	Special skill or talent:	Favorite food:
Least favorite food:	Favorite Bible story:	Favorite cartoon:
Favorite animal:	Favorite place to talk to God:	Favorite pastime:
Favorite month:	Favorite thing to wear:	Favorite verse:

Table Talk:

- How does listening to each other prove you care?
- How can you get to know Jesus better?
- What one action today showed your love to a family member? What showed your love to Jesus?
- What did you learn about Jesus recently that you didn't know before?

Vitamins and Minerals: (John 14:21).

Mother's Day: Marvelous Moms

Mealtime Prayer: Have each person tell Mom why she is marvelous. Follow this activity by thanking God for her.

Appetizer: Marvelous Moms' Bible Quiz:

Q: Who prayed for a son and named him Samuel? (*Answer: Hannah.*)

Q: Who gave birth to a son at a very old age? (*Answer: Sarah.*)

Q: Who was the mother of Joseph, Jacob's son? (*Answer: Rachel.*)

Q: Who was the mother of John the Baptist? (*Answer: Elizabeth.*)

Q: Who was the mother of Jesus? (*Answer: Mary.*)

Q: What did the mother skunk say to her children before dinner? (*Answer: Let's spray.*)

Main Course: Why are mothers important to a family? Name all the things your mother does for you from the time you get up in the morning until the time you go to bed at night. What are ways you can show your appreciation for everything she does?

Table Talk:

- Why do you think God created mothers?
- Why did Jesus need a mother?
- Tell your mom you love her and why.

Vitamins and Minerals: "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised" (Proverbs 31:30).

Hooray for Grandparents!

Mealtime Prayer: "Thank You, Lord, that You never change. You loved us yesterday. You love us today. And You'll love us for every tomorrow. Amen."

Appetizer: Did you know that Big Macs were invented in 1968? How old were your grandparents then? Can your grandparents name the ingredients of a Big Mac? (Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions, on a sesame seed bun!)

Main Course: Invite your grandparents over for dinner. (If you don't have grandparents nearby, adopt some!) Fix their favorite food as a surprise. No matter how things change over the years, who never changes? How is God's care of you now the same as it will be when you're older? Read Isaiah 46:4.

Table Talk: Ask the grandparents these questions:

- What was your favorite meal as a child? What's your favorite meal now?
- How did your parents cook their food? What new appliances do you use today?
- What is one way God has taken care of you over the years? How does God take care of you now?

For the kids:

- What types of food do you think you'll eat when you are your grandparents' age?
- What types of appliances do you think you'll use?

Vitamins and Minerals: "Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life" (Proverbs 16:31).

In a Pickle?

Mealtime Prayer: Give thanks to God that He is with us in all situations and will guide and direct our lives.

Appetizer: How many kinds of pickles can you name? What is green and bumpy and red all over?
(*Answer: A pickle with a sunburn.*)

Main Course: Ever gotten yourself into a pickle? Not a bumpy, green pickle, of course, but a difficult situation. What happened? The Bible gives examples of people who got themselves into "pickles" and how God helped them:

- Daniel ended up in a lion's den because he prayed, but God kept the lions from hurting him (Daniel 6).
- Jonah disobeyed God and ended up inside the belly of a big fish (yuck!). He prayed to God and the fish spit him out (Jonah 2).
- When Paul and Silas were in prison for preaching the gospel, they prayed and sang hymns of praise. God sent an earthquake and their chains fell off (Acts 16).
- Who deserved their "pickles" and who didn't? Why?

Table Talk:

- How do we sometimes end up in a pickle?
- What did the Bible characters above do to get out of trouble? What should we do?
- How can God help us get out of our pickle?

Vitamins and Minerals: "Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise" (James 5:13).

Let's Go Fishin'

Mealtime Prayer: Ask God for opportunities to share your faith and bring others to Him.

Appetizer: Name all the ways that it is possible to catch fish.

Main Course: Have you ever gone fishing? If so, what bait did you use? How many fish did you catch? Imagine you caught five hundred in an hour. How could it have happened? Read the story of an exciting fishing trip in Luke 5:4-11.

Table Talk:

- How did the men catch so many fish?
- How are people like fish?
- What did Jesus mean when He told the disciples they would catch men?
- What kind of bait can we use when we fish for people?
- Where can we go fishing for people?

Vitamins and Minerals: "Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men'" (Matthew 4:19).

Walk a Mile in His Shoes

Mealtime Prayer: "Help us, dear Jesus, every day
To follow You in every way;
To glorify and honor You
In everything we say and do. Amen."

Appetizer: How long would it take for you to walk from one end of your town to the other?
What would you want to take with you?

Main Course: When Jesus lived on earth, He walked from town to town teaching people about God and healing people who were sick. One day Jesus asked 12 of His friends to help Him. The 12 men who agreed to follow Jesus were called His disciples. What do you think it would have been like to be with Jesus all day? What would be hard about being a disciple? What do you think the disciples brought with them? What did they have to leave behind?

Table Talk:

- If Jesus lived here today, where would you follow Him and how could you help Him?
- What would you leave behind? What would you gain?
- Jesus is here right now. How can you follow Him in your regular life? What will you "leave behind"?

Vitamins and Minerals: "Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'" (Matthew 16:24).

Caterpillar or Butterfly?

Mealtime Prayer: Thank God for His salvation and that He changes lives.

Appetizer: The caterpillar spins its cocoon with silk. What other creature spins with silk?
(*Answer: The spider spins its web with silk.*)

Main Course: A caterpillar is not always a caterpillar. It eats and eats until it is full. Then it spins a silky cocoon around itself and goes to sleep. When it wakes up and comes out of its cocoon, it is a new creature—a butterfly. If you could go to sleep and wake up different, what would you be? Why? How is Saul in the New Testament like a caterpillar? Read Acts 9:1-22 to find out.

Table Talk:

- Are you a caterpillar or a butterfly? Why?
- How do people change when they become Christians?
- When you meet someone, how can you tell if he or she is a Christian?
- How can people tell that you are a Christian?

Vitamins and Minerals: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).