

## Inviting baptism families at Harvest

Every school will encourage children to think about Harvest, thanksgiving and the environment, so churches are often pushing at an open door inviting baptism families back to church to celebrate Harvest.

Churches throughout Wales will be having Harvest Festival services, or other services of thanksgiving. These often involve bringing food donations and sometimes toiletries to give to food banks or homeless charities. Try and encourage school to get involved, or write to baptism families and invite them along to your Harvest service.

These are some simple ways to encourage families to say 'thank you' to God at home too. Here are some suggestions to pass on.

### Say a 'thank you' prayer

A line in the Lord's Prayer asks God to 'Give us this day our daily bread'. When we say that line, we're asking God to provide the basic things in life that keep us healthy and happy. It can start with the food we need to eat each day, but for lots of different reasons, not everyone has enough.

So saying thank you for our food is important – we might thank the person who cooked it, and we might go back further and think of the people in the shops where we bought the ingredients, and even trace it right back to the farmers who grew the crops in the first place.

For children who are old enough, trying talking about this together one meal time, taking each item on the plate and thinking about where it came from and all the people and work that has gone into bringing it to your table.

Saying grace before a meal is a way of saying thank you to God for making the earth and everything in it – all good things come from God, and it's up to us to use them in the very best and most generous way.

Try singing this grace:

*One, two, three, four, five, thank you God that I'm alive.*

*Six, seven, eight, nine, ten, thank you God for food. Amen!*

*One of the most traditional graces goes like this:*

*“For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful and keep us always mindful of the needs of others.”*

*Some families hold hands while they say grace – this reminds us that we are thankful not only for our food, but that we can share it with people we love, as in this prayer:*

*“Thank you God for food, and family, and friends. Amen.*

*or*

*“Thank you God for food, and family, and friends,  
we remember those who have no food today,  
and those who have food, but nobody to share it,  
As you have blessed us, help us be a blessing for others. Amen.*

### **Decorate a ‘grace’ table mat:**

Take a piece of A4 paper, and in the middle draw round a medium sized plate to make a circle, then in that circle draw round a smaller plate. You should have something that looks a little bit like a plate. Then draw a fork outline on the left, and a knife outline on the right, and a spoon above – don’t worry about the quality of the artwork!

Now, have some fun decorating your plate with pictures of their favourite food – you can draw pictures yourself, or cut them out of magazines, or use pictures from food packets – and you can even label them if your child is old enough to start learning to read.

Somewhere on your paper, perhaps at the top or in a corner, write ‘Thank you God’ in big letters and colour it in – this is your thank-you place mat, a reminder of all the good things that God gives us.

Once you’ve finished decorating, you can either laminate your artwork, or slip it into one of those plastic folders and seal up the end with sticky tape.

Use your place mat at family meal times as a reminder of your thankfulness for all God’s blessings, and particularly for food.

This is such a fun activity, that you can create a new one every so often, with updated favourite foods, and perhaps even write a little ‘grace’ prayer of your own to go on it? Or simply include one of the prayers on this page.

### **Make food fun!**

If your child is a bit of a fussy eater, you could try making their food more fun. Maybe arrange the veggies in the shape of a smiley face?