

**Daily Bible Readings:**

These readings are related to the Lectionary readings for this Sunday. Try to take time each day to read the assigned Bible passage.

Sunday	Mark 8:27-38	Taking up the cross
Monday	Romans 1:8-17	Paul not ashamed of the gospel
Tuesday	Philippians 3:7-16	Running towards the goal
Wednesday	Hebrews 12:1-13	The example of Jesus
Thursday	1 Peter 3:13-17, 4:12-19	Suffering for doing right
Friday	1 Peter 5:6-11	God will restore those suffering
Saturday	Psalms 54	Thanksgiving for deliverance
Sunday	Mark 9:30-37	The servant of all is greatest

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**Scripture Verses for the Week:**

Jesus then told the crowd and the disciples to come closer, and he said:

"If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me. If you want to save your life, you will destroy it. But if you give up your life for me and for the good news, you will save it." – Mark 8:34-35 (CEV)

- Cut out & carry with you.
- Say at each mealtime.
- Read at bedtime.
- Commit to memory.

**Prayer for this Week:**

Lord God, please help me to use my tongue not to hurt others but to thank and praise you. Amen. (James 3:6-9)

**For Throughout the Day:**

Lord Jesus Christ, give me strength today to take up my cross and follow you. Amen. (Mark 8:29,34)

**A Blessing to Share:**

*May God's goodness give you peace in your heart and your mind. May he protect you with his kindness. Amen. (Ps. 116:5-7)*

**Mealtime Refrain:**

Let us use our tongues to praise God our maker:

**God is our Lord and our Father.** (James 3:9)

**Mealtime Prayer:**

*Lord Jesus, as we chew and as we swallow, make us strong to love and follow. Amen.*

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FOUR KEYS FOR THE HOME

**Faith Talk:**

Discuss in your household or small group:

- Share about a time when you carried something heavy.
- Jesus says that if we want to come after him, we must pick up our crosses and follow him? What do you think he means?

**Devotional Practices:**

When you gather as a household this week at mealtimes or for your home devotions, begin by making the sign of the cross. This is an ancient Christian tradition that reminds us that we are people saved through the cross of Christ. To make the sign of the cross, bring together your thumb and index and middle fingers. Place them on your forehead, then move down to the sternum, then from the left shoulder across to your right shoulder.

**Service:**

We serve others not only through what we do but also through what we say. James 3:1-9 encourages us to use our tongues to bless others, not hurt them. Aim to be God's "sacred agents" this week in your home, places of work or education, church and community groups. Set out each day to give at least one compliment or affirmation to someone else. Report back to other each other day about your experiences.

**Rituals and Traditions:**

Visual symbols are a powerful means for communicating our faith and reminding us of Christ's place in our lives. What crosses do you have on display in your home? Aim to have a cross of some type in every room. Spend time together as household designing crosses (from paper, wood or other materials) to place on your walls or furniture.

**Parent Toolbox: Words that Bless our Children**

**"I'm proud of you for ...."** Genuine encouragement and praise does wonders for a parent-child relationship and for the self-esteem of children. Our words and actions are often the "mirrors" through which they evaluate themselves. Help them to see themselves in God's likeness (James 3:9).

**"That's OK. How can we learn from that?"** Guide your children to see mistakes as learning opportunities. Responding in grace gives them space to grow and the hopefulness to try again.

**"I'm sorry."** Children learn how to say sorry and forgive through our example. They learn the power and value of reconciliation with others from us.

**"I love you no matter what".** In a world where love and favor is so often conditional, our children need to know that we will always be there for them. This gives them the confidence to be who they are, and gives them an insight into God's perfect "forever love" for them!

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