

5 WAYS TO PRACTICE LISTENING WITH YOUR FAMILY

As a faith practice, listening involves training our attention to recognize God's voice (John 10:1-6) in the midst of all the other voices calling for our attention.

It involves learning to be fully present with God and with our neighbor.

The ideas below will help your family practice listening, even in the busyness (and noise!) of everyday family life.

1 TALK ABOUT LISTENING

Kids may equate "listening" with obedience. Broaden their understanding by explaining that one way we show love for God is by listening for and to God's voice. Doing that helps us learn more about who God is and who God wants us to be. We also show God's love to our neighbors when we listen well to them so that we may love and serve them better.

2 MAKE ROOM FOR SILENCE

Silence is countercultural in North America, so be intentional about helping your kids (and yourself) become more comfortable with it. Turn off the background noise of TV, music, and games for a while each day. Take a walk in a woods or park, using your eyes and ears more than your words. Try having a family "quiet hour" whenever you can.

3 FIND STILLNESS

It can be challenging for kids (and adults!) to slow down our bodies, hearts, and minds so that we can listen to God. Here are some ideas to try: Place your hands on your heart as you deeply breathe in and out several times. Repeat the verse "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Draw or write in a prayer journal. Light a candle. Lie on your back and watch clouds go by. Find what works for you and your family.

4 BE ATTENTIVE TO GOD'S VOICE

God speaks to us through the Word, through other people, through creation, and more! Model listening for God in these ways. Read the Bible together and talk about what God is saying and doing. Include listening pauses during prayer. Point out to each other how the beauty of creation praises God. Listen for how God might be speaking to your family.

5 LISTEN TO ONE ANOTHER

When someone needs a listening ear, show you care by giving them your full attention: turn off devices, take a seat, make eye contact, reflect what you're hearing rather than first offering solutions. If appropriate, pray for God's guidance together.

Want to dig deeper? Check out the Faith Practices Project's family resources on listening at crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject.



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