Praying with Children with Disabilities

Answer Key

1. Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities, 1978 and USCCB, Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, 1995
2. Section # 49
3. Desire, capacity and the ability to lead others to prayer
4. Bed Time, Meals especially dinner, Morning “Rituals”, Comings and Goings, while driving, Birthday, Anniversary of Baptism , Times of Sickness or Death, Times of Celebrations, Ethnic or family customs, and Feast Days
5. Some examples are:

* Use prayer aides
* Have children memorize prayers by signing together or reciting out loud.
* Memorize them while driving- Sign or recite prayers during long and short trips
* Video yourself or your child saying/signing the prayer. Use it again and again.
* Use good YouTube, podcasts on prayer or rosary to assist with repetition.
* Try to memorize them every night before bed by signing and/or reciting their prayers

1. Some strategies and accommodations are:

* Selecting a Mass with less music or that is shorter. (Adaptive Mass)
* Teen, young adult or peer to act as buddy – modeling.
* Use forward or backward chaining.
* Use a worship aids such as My Picture Missal App
* Ask your child’s IEP team or behavior specialist to assist with a plan.
* Make a plan that involves your parish

Staff.

* Positive reinforcement
* Make Sunday Mass attendance special

1. Cross, candles, liturgical colors, vestments, nature, sounds, statues.
2. Use of the sounds of liturgy like bells, touching sacred symbols such as the cross or vestments, smelling of incense or sacred oils.
3. Welcome participants by name, provide time of silence and/or use calming music, light candles and use bells to show that prayer is beginning.
4. Do go slowly and don’t rush. Do use brief sentences and don’t be wordy. Do be still and patient and don’t be anxious or hurried. Do be consistent with setting, structure and routine and don’t change setting and routine. Do use peaceful and calming music and don’t use music with lyrics or that is loud. Do be creative with topics and don’t abandon the philosophy and goals of the program.