

## Involved in Acts of Service:

Serving one's neighbour is the response to Jesus' love for us. Service communicates that love to others.

- Postcards for Peace

Collect some postcards or blank cards. Write a message of peace on the them and send to friends, family, a politician, the Prime Minister . . . anyone. You might also pray a prayer of peace for them before you send it.

- Saying Sorry

Sometimes peace comes by being brave enough to seek to be reconciled with someone. Saying "sorry" is not a bad place to start. Being a parent/carer who is willing to admit mistakes, and say sorry, especially to children, is a great way to model being a peace maker.

- Mystery Angel

Do random acts of kindness for someone in your community—but don't let on that you are doing it. You might send them a card in the mail, drop off a small gift in their letter box, mow their lawn while they're out? Work on something special as a family.



### 10 Simple Ways to Bring Peace to the Home

**Speak kindly.** It's amazing how a little kindness goes a long way to setting the tone for the home.

**Gather regularly.** For meals. For prayer. To simply hang out with each other.

**Laugh readily.** Joke and play. Be ready to have a good time with one another. Lighten one another's load with a good laugh.

**Work cheerfully.** It seems there's always a job to be done. So why not make the most of it? *Do all things without complaining and disputing.* (Phil. 2:14).

**Give generously.** Of your time and your possessions. The home is a place full of all kinds of giving opportunities.

**Forgive quickly.** Don't waste time nursing a grudge.

**Hug freely.** Give your little ones a squeeze. Wrap your arms around your big kids. Your spouse/partner could probably use one too!

**Pray frequently.** Ask God to bring peace into your home. Lift up the needs of the day. Ask God for help.

**Cheer loudly.** Let your family know you're behind them. All the way. Offer your enthusiastic support. Who doesn't need to hear a warm cheer now and then?

**Love genuinely.** It seems obvious, but sometimes we forget how powerful love can be in our home. *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."* (1 Pet. 4:8)

# The Fig Tree

*"Nurturing the seed of faith"*

Welcome to our first edition of "The Fig Tree".

In the bible the fig tree is a strong image and symbol for growth in faith, and in our Parish it is an important symbol in our history. It was on "Fig Tree Hill" that St Mark's Church first stood, and so continues as a good symbol of the foundations on which we continue to build.

It is hoped that parents, caregivers and grandparents will use this as a tool to build upon the faith of your family. We strongly believe that the home is the place where faith is best caught, taught, practiced, nurtured and lived out—and the role of the "Church" is to nurture, encourage and resource you in this most important ministry.

The Fig Tree aims to provide you with resources, ideas and stories to encourage you and your family in exploring the Christian faith, and most importantly how it is lived out in the everyday. We will explore the following four areas of nurturing faith:

- \*Caring conversations
- \*Spirituality in the home
- \*Family rituals and traditions
- \*Getting involved in acts of service

This issue will reflect on the theme of **Peace**. We pray that it may spark some ideas, encourage you to reflect on your own faith, and ways in which we might work together with you to nurture that faith.

We hope to produce an issue each month, and for special Feasts and Festivals of the Year.



All Saints'—2 Ambrose Street,  
Hunters Hill

St Mark's—Figtree Rd, Hunters Hill

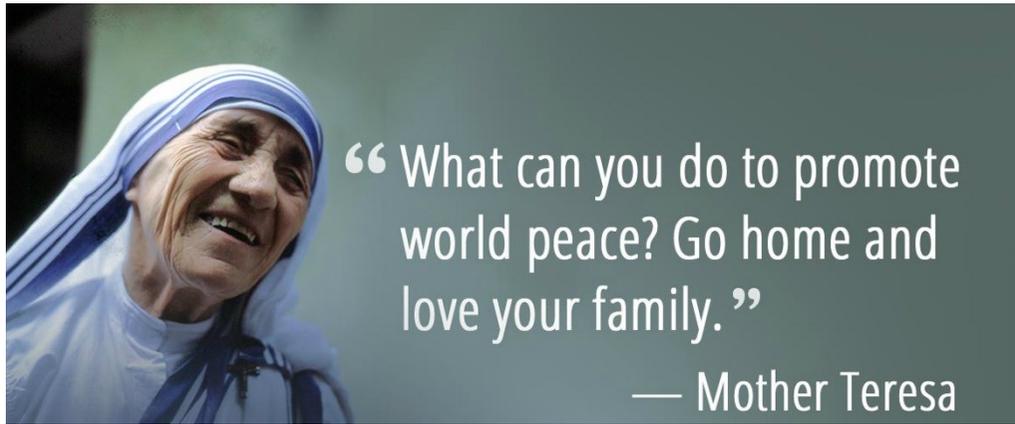
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“What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family.”

— Mother Teresa

### Caring Conversations:

Caring conversations are those that allow time to share in other’s joys, hurts, concerns, dreams, hopes, concerns and values. Here are a few ideas to spark your imagination:

- What is the best thing that has happened to you this week? What is something that you would like to thank God for?
- Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be . . . your brother/sister, mum/dad? What would be the hardest part of being that person? What would be best about being them?
- How have you kept the peace this week—at home? At school?
- Imaginative visualization:  
Picture in your mind a hurt that needs healing.  
Pause  
Picture in your mind someone who needs help.  
Pause  
Picture in your mind something kind you should do this week.  
Pause  
Picture in your mind something that is wrong that should be righted.  
Pause.
- Are you able to perhaps talk about a time when you felt at peace, and describe what that was like? Can you talk about how you might practice being at peace?
- Imagine-if you had power to make peace with anyone, or between anyone—who would it be?

**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14: 27)**

### Spirituality in the Home:

This is all about your family’s devotional life. It includes deliberate activities like bible stories, prayer and table graces through to ensuring that you say please, thank you or sorry and providing Christian resources such as story books, music and much more.



*Why not work on building a meal time ritual with your family? More than anything else this is about making meal times a special time. This might include turning the TV off and turning on some music, setting the table with some special things, lighting a candle, sharing a prayer.*

A great prayer idea is called the prayer pot. On separate cards place the names of people and things that are really important to the family. You could use photos, or drawings etc. It may include particular projects or things that are of importance to the family, like peace at home, the welfare of a sponsor child, a major event coming up etc. These cards are placed into a special pot, and on any one night three are taken out and used as prompts for conversation or prayer.

### Family Rituals and Traditions:

Rituals and Traditions are patterns of behaviour that communicate certain meaning in life. They can include how you greet people, bedtime prayers, seasonal celebrations etc.

#### Silence is Golden

In our noisy world, learning the ability to be still and silent with one another is a great blessing. Sometimes we don’t need words—just being is OK. Try taking five minutes before dinner, or in the car together. You could introduce the time by saying “we are going to be silent together, but we will be mindful of each other—and perhaps even pray for each other, asking God’s peace upon each of us”.

#### Saying Farewell

As you leave your family to go out, why not offer a small blessing of peace on them. It could be as simple as a kiss on the forehead, and saying “peace be upon you”, or you could say a short prayer over them.

#### Hiroshima Day (month)

August 6th is the commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima. It has become a day to pray for world peace. One tradition is to make a “Peace Crane”, which commemorates the story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl who died as a result of the bombing of Hiroshima, but who desired peace. Why not look up the story and tell it to your family, and then make some paper cranes together, and as you do pray for peace.

