

# Teacher Quick Guide Card



**HOLY HABITS CHALLENGE**



## **MAKE MEALS MATTER**



**PRAY A MEAL PRAYER BEFORE EACH MEAL.**



**PRAY A THANKSGIVING PRAYER AFTER EACH MEAL.**



**EAT ONE MEAL EACH WEEK WITH ALL "SCREENS" PUT AWAY OR OFF: TV'S, LAPTOPS, PHONES, AND TABLETS.**

### ***The Background***

Meals and the habits of eating have undergone many changes throughout the long history of humanity. For most of human history, having food to eat was nothing that could be planned on with certainty. When there was food to eat it was another chance to live another day. The regular scarcity of food and water made humans very aware of how much we depend on forces out of our control in order to have food at all.

This is part of why Jews and Christians both have long traditions of thanking God for food and for meals, recognizing that we can eat and drink only because of the gifts that He offers through creation.

Meals were also always social events that occurred in groups or with the whole family. Meals often were occasions when important bonds were formed between differing groups, families, or peoples. Sharing a meal was a sign of mutual recognition of dignity and status. Hence, meals were always sacred moments between people.

For us as disciples of Jesus, meals are not simply about getting nourishment. They are seen as blessings from God, so much so, that we thank Him before and after we eat. Meals are a reminder of the great banquet of the Eucharist and of Heaven. Meals are a very important time to focus on forming bonds with the people around us who matter most.

Focusing on the faces of the people around a meal table, rather than on devices and screens, brings health and life to our relationships. That kind of focus takes real effort, but it is work that God always rewards and blesses.

## ***Useful texts:***

### ***Sample before meal prayer:***

"Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, through Christ, Our Lord, Amen" (proceeded and followed with the sign of the cross).

### ***Sample after meal prayer:***

"We give thee thanks, Almighty God, for all thy benefits, who live and reign, for ever and ever. Amen. / May the Lord grant us His peace, and life everlasting. / May the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace, Amen."

### ***Holy Habit Pledge:***

"I pledge, together with my brothers and sisters in Christ, to make the Holy Habits Challenge, and to run so as to win the crown of righteousness."

## ***A Saint for the Habit:***

- **Saint Martha:** The woman who hosted Jesus for dinner in her home; a patron saint of cooks.  
Feast Day: July 29th

## ***Classroom Tips:***

- Incorporate the Habit and Logo on a classroom board.
- Make the before and after meal prayers at the beginning and end of the school lunch hour, or at the beginning and end of class snack time, before snacks are opened.
- Talk about why it is so difficult to focus on the person in front of us rather than looking at a television, phone, or tablet.
- Talk about where our food comes from, and how God's gifts make our food and drink possible.
- Talk about what it means to share our food with those who have less than we do.
- Organize a class food drive for an area food pantry.

## ***Catechism Connection:***

- See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* section 2569 on offering God the fruits of creation.
- See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* section 2626 on prayers of gratitude.
- See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sections 2828-2837 on "our daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer.

