

Joint Activity Routines, Rituals and Spiritual Practices

Joint Activity Routines

Critical Elements

1. Obvious unifying theme or purpose
2. Requirement for joint focus and interaction
3. Limited number of clearly delineated roles
4. Exchangeable or reversible roles
5. Logical non-arbitrary sequence (can use topic boards)
6. Structure for turn-taking in predictable sequence
7. Planned repetition
8. Planned for controlled variation

Types of Joint Activity Routines

1. Preparation or fabrication of a specific end product (e.g., food preparation, product assembly)
2. Cooperative turn-taking games or routines (e.g., songs with spaces to fill, action routines, sports)
3. Routines organized around a plot or theme (e.g., daily living routines such as meal time, going to church, doing chores)

Implementing Routines

1. Introduce concept gradually. Start with simple routines based upon:
 - a) motivation and interest
 - b) functionality
 - c) likelihood that they already occur or can be scheduled to occur as a regular activity
2. Initially model and prompt to establish routines
 - a) Discuss purpose or use picture sequence to facilitate understanding
 - b) Withdraw prompts and support as routines become familiar
3. Provide structure and repetition until routine is mastered. Add variation after mastery but keep “meaning” or purpose constant. Provide consistent simple language to mark dynamic aspects of routine (e.g., actions).¹

¹ From Snyder-McLean et al (1984). Structuring joint action routines: A strategy for facilitating communication in the classroom. Seminars in Speech and Language, 5, 213-228

Joint Activities cont.

Ways to Vary Routines (thereby introducing flexibility)

1. Interrupt or violate routine
2. Omit necessary materials
3. Introduce new materials
4. Initiate old routines in new contexts
5. Initiate new routines in old contexts
6. Initiate routine and “play possum”

CORE DAILY ROUTINES and FAMILY RITUALS AND PRACTICES
(see John Roberto’s article “Family Matters” in Fall, 2009, *C21 Resources*)

Rituals and traditions are those patterns of behavior that occur with regularity. They communicate meaning, values and relationships that exist between people and with God (including God’s created universe). Family rituals take many forms from daily rituals such as mealtime, bedtime, leaving and returning; celebrations such as birthdays, anniversaries and special achievements; church year rituals at home such as Advent and Lent; and milestones such as births and deaths, first day of school and graduations, etc. Family rituals and traditions speak volumes about what the family values believes and promotes and how much the family values its faith.

1. Daily family life:
 2. Mealtime
 3. Bedtime
 4. Leaving and Returning
 5. Celebrations; birthdays, anniversaries and special achievements
 6. Church year rituals (Advent and Lent)
 7. Milestones (birth/death)
 8. First day of school/graduations

What is a Christian Practice? (Dorothy Bass)

The process of growing in faith has more to do with how we live than what we are taught. Focused attention to the “practices” that shape the Christian life provides access to an important resource for growing in faith.

Christian practices - shared patterns of activity in and through which life together takes shape over time in response to and in the light of God as known in Jesus Christ. Woven together, they form a way of life. *Each practice is a complex set of acts, words, and images that addresses one area of fundamental human need.* Hospitality, Sabbath keeping, Forgiveness, Making music. Practices are what we do.