

In the Home

Celebrate Family!

“The family is important, and it is necessary for the survival of humanity.” - Pope Francis, July 27, 2013

- Prioritize the spiritual health of your family.
- Attend Mass as a family on birthdays, anniversaries, and other special days.
- Pray together, especially in the morning, before meals (even in public), in the evening, at bedtime, and in the car traveling. Pray the Rosary, prayers of the saints, and spontaneous prayer with your family throughout the day.
- Make “mini-pilgrimages” and visit other churches in your neighborhood.
- Plan a visit to a shrine, church, or holy place during the family vacation.
- Read and meditate upon the day’s Gospel together.
- Read inspirational stories to your children about the saints.
- Have family dinners more often, every day if possible.
- When you help your children choose their extracurricular activities, be selective and prudent to keep everyone’s schedule free for family time.
- Plan a day each month to have a game night or fun time as a family. Take turns selecting the activity.
- Research the place of Faith in your culture and family history. Make a spiritual family tree of Baptisms and include the churches where family members made their Sacraments.
- Create a “Family Wall” with your family members’ photos and family tree.
- Move electronics to a common area and schedule regular times to turn off technology. Limit screen time or pick a day to “unplug,” like “Tech-free Tuesdays.”
- Send uplifting family group text messages and tweets.
- Do corporal and spiritual works of mercy together.
- Visit a sick family member and request Mass to be offered for them or their whole family.
- Invite clergy into your home for dinner on special days and holidays, and to bless your house.



ON MISSION FOR
**THE CHURCH
ALIVE!**

Celebrate Family!

“To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children. Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of others.” - Pope Saint John Paul II

For
Students

- Host family meals or family game nights for the families in the program.
- Organize a father/son, father/daughter or mother/daughter, mother/son event.
- Hold regular outings and events for all families.
- Create a family day for the school/parish program; invite grandparents to celebrate special days.
- Have a student present a story about the Saint of the Day.
- Offer presentations on family-related topics, such as “What does ‘Family’ Mean?”
- Hold a parent-child prayer service implemented by the school/parish program and incorporate intergenerational activities.
- Plan family activities like bowling, dinners, and bake sales as fundraisers for the food pantry and other parish ministries.
- Hold family activities after Sunday Masses or parish baptisms.
- Host a family movie night during the weekend and provide popcorn and refreshments.
- Have students create and share a retrospective on family life. It can include a spiritual family tree that lists the aspects of each family member’s service to Christ and His Church.
- During Lent, plan a family Stations of the Cross. Each family can create a collage of contemporary stations and compose a prayer meditation to share.
- Offer family retreats for holy days and Sacramental preparation.
- Promote “Family Catechetical Days.” Provide families with a different topic monthly, along with an outline and questions for faith discussions at home.



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In the Parish

Celebrate Family!

“We are an Easter People and Alleluia! is our song.” - Pope Saint John Paul II

- Celebrate a Blessing of Families liturgy or teaching Masses.
- Open a coffee and refreshments bar in the parish hall or other gathering space as a place for fellowship and formation. Offer family movies, books, small group discussions, and coffee and snacks, all supported by donations.
- Write a prayer for the families in your parish that can be prayed at Mass or during Adoration.
- Include prayers for the family in society and the families of the parish in the Prayers of the Faithful.
- Hang parishioners' family photos on the Christmas tree.
- Feature families' special interests and talents on posters near the entrance of the Church.
- Hold a parish family picnic, festival or ice cream social.
- Invite parishioners to interview family members about their faith. Record the interviews and upload them to the parish website.
- Collaborate with other parishes to host family-centered events together.
- Offer service opportunities that are intergenerational and family friendly.
- Establish small groups of parents that meet at restaurants or other convenient locations to discuss parenting and family topics and share experiences. Offer to provide childcare during meeting times.
- Host a pancake breakfast or donut social after Mass.
- Have a family board game night. Invite everyone to bring their family's favorite game.
- Establish a Family Welcoming Center for new families that join your parish community.
- Start a family choir to include all family members in the ministry of music.
- Celebrate Easter with a parish brunch and egg hunt for children.
- Coordinate food collections for other families' holiday celebrations. For example, distribute hams on Easter and turkeys on Thanksgiving to families in need.
- Host a family-friendly bingo night.



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Ways to Help

Celebrate Family!

- Invite families to join the Christian Family Movement (www.cfm.org), Teams of Our Lady (www.teamsofourlady.org), and Worldwide Marriage Encounter (www.wwme.org).
- Form a Marriage and Family Life Committee to help accompany parish families in their mission.
- Host an Evening of Prayer with a father/son campout or an Afternoon of Prayer with a mother/daughter tea.
- Encourage parents to have a Parents' Night Out and offer to provide childcare.
- Have Family Faith Formation evenings with catechesis for the whole family. Hold session at the parish or families' homes.
- Host a walking tour of the parish grounds for the whole family, teaching about the parish history and architecture along the way.

Bishop David A. Zubik's Prayer for the Family:

Dear God,

You, who are the Creator of all life and the Author of all love, thank you for sharing both your life and your love with us. Thank you for fashioning the family – wife and husband, daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins as a mini Church – where we learn about you and where you share your love with us.

May we in our individual families, and the family we know as Church, and in your family of the world of peoples, seek always to reflect your life and share your love. We ask this in the family we call Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

AMEN!



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