

Together

Family Day Retreat

Encountering Jesus
as a Family

"Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

Colossians 3:14



ARCHDIOCESE
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OFFICE OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND LIFE



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Purpose

This retreat was written as a simple retreat for families to be done at home. In hopes that young families would be able to fully participate in this retreat, you will notice that it is not complex. This is by design as we are parents of four young boys for whom we wrote this. If we can do it, anyone can! We also realize that many families will have older children, so in an effort to meet the needs of those and as a resource for parents to deepen their own understanding and discussions, we have added a "deepening" section to each talk from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Sometimes having a schedule with topics and activities written out helps to make one actually do a retreat, we hope that this is the case for you, and that you are able to make the retreat your own, switching things out and adding to it.

Dedication

This retreat is dedicated to the renewal of family life; may each of us use this time of uncertainty and quarantine together to rebuild and deepen the Domestic Church, the seedbed of saints and the hope to the world. (March 2020 Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic)

Works Cited

Catechism of the Catholic Church. 2nd ed. Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000.

Revised Standard Version Bible

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Helpful Hints

- This is **YOUR retreat**. Skip things that are not working well/you don't have time for/kids are not the right age for.
- **Prepare beforehand**. Look at the list of things to prepare and buy/find beforehand so that you can pull everything out and make the most of your time together. Read through the retreat so you know what to expect and what will work well for your family.
- **Switch locations** after every couple of activities to help everyone focus better. If it is nice outside, head outside for a talk/discussion/game.
- If you have **little kids**, use the coloring sheets for them to work on during the talks/prayer and pull things out for them to do during the retreat that are quiet and special (play dough/new sticker book/special markers).
- When things are written in **RED**, it means that you can read them out loud to your family. Take turns with your spouse if you desire.
- **Music** is a great addition to prayer and life in general. If a family member plays an instrument or your family is able to sing some simple songs together we encourage you to do so throughout the retreat. You can also simply play Christian music from a device.
- Try to **take some pictures**. This is a memorable day and you will want to be able to include it in your family album (This also helps you focus on the good and joy, because there will be plenty of difficult moments along the way.)
- **Ask someone to pray for you**. You better be certain that Satan does not want your family to be united and thriving, so there will be lots of tricks up his sleeve to make you feel discouraged, that is why you need a powerful intercessor!

Buy/Gather Beforehand

- Print the retreat packet out.
- Pen/pencils for writing (crayons for little kids).
- Food for snack, lunch and a special dinner.
- Candle, matches, sacred items, picture or statue of Christ/Mary/Saint, nice cloth to create a sacred space for your retreat to gather and pray around.
- Items to make your dinner special (flowers/china/candles/fancy cups/tablecloth).
- Sand game timer/watch/phone to use as a timer.
- Scissors to cut out words and a bowl for game #2.
- Special marker/pen to write Family Prayer for activity #3 and holy card/image for it.
- Mind field items (blindfold and soft items) if playing "Mind field" for game #3.
- Ice cream sundae supplies if choosing to do "Body of Christ Sundae" for game #3 or some other food that you can make with different steps/ingredients.

Schedule

- 9:00 a.m. **Opening prayer**
- 9:15 a.m. **Game #1:** “Our Family” Mad Lib
- 9:30 a.m. **Talk #1:** Born into a family
- 10:00 a.m. **Activity #1:** Our Unique Family questionnaire
- 10:30 a.m. **Snack & Discussion #1:** The day you were born
- 11:00 a.m. **Game #2:** Salad Bowl Game
- 11:30 a.m. **Lunch prep/free time**
- 12:00 p.m. **Lunch** (begin with Angelus, clean up together, prep dinner)
- 1:00 p.m. **Talk #2:** Nothing between us
- 2:00 p.m. **Activity #2:** Examination of Conscience
- 2:30 p.m. **Discussion #2:** I am sorry and **Snack**
- 3:00 p.m. **Game #3:** Mind field or Body of Christ Ice Cream Sundae)
- 4:00 p.m. **Talk #3:** Transformation
- 4:30 p.m. **Discussion #3:** What Changes?
- 5:00 p.m. **Activity #3:** Write a Family Prayer
- 5:30 p.m. **Dinner prep together** (set table special with candles/china)
- 6:00 p.m. **Family dinner** (prayer)
- 7:00 p.m. **Board games/fun together**
- 8:00 p.m. **Rosary/closing prayer** (end with saying written family prayer together)

This is a full day schedule. However, feel free to condense into an afternoon and evening depending on the time your family has available. Doing some is better than none.

*"Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."
Colossians 3:14*

Opening

Gather around your designated "prayer space" to begin the day (candle, sacred image).

"Today our family is able to do something really exciting and important; we have set the whole day to just be together as a family! The most important part of our family is our love for God, so today we will of course play special games, eat special food and laugh a lot!... as well as place God as the center of our family with time to pray, learn and grow deeper in love with Him."

Opening Prayer

"God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we come together as a family to place you at the center of our lives. We love you and want to grow closer to you together.
Be with us during the moments we are tired or bothered, help us choose to be kind even then.
May this retreat unify our family. May the Holy Family (Mary, Joseph and Jesus) be our guide and example as we journey together toward heaven."

Our Family

Our family is great! We are not exactly like any other family, especially

since we all love to _____ . We also like _____

_____ . When we wake up, the first thing we do is

_____ . Our Mom/Dad has _____ hair and for

his/her job is a _____ . We have _____ sisters and

_____ brothers, and all of them are _____ . We eat

so much _____ , that we buy it by the case. After dinner

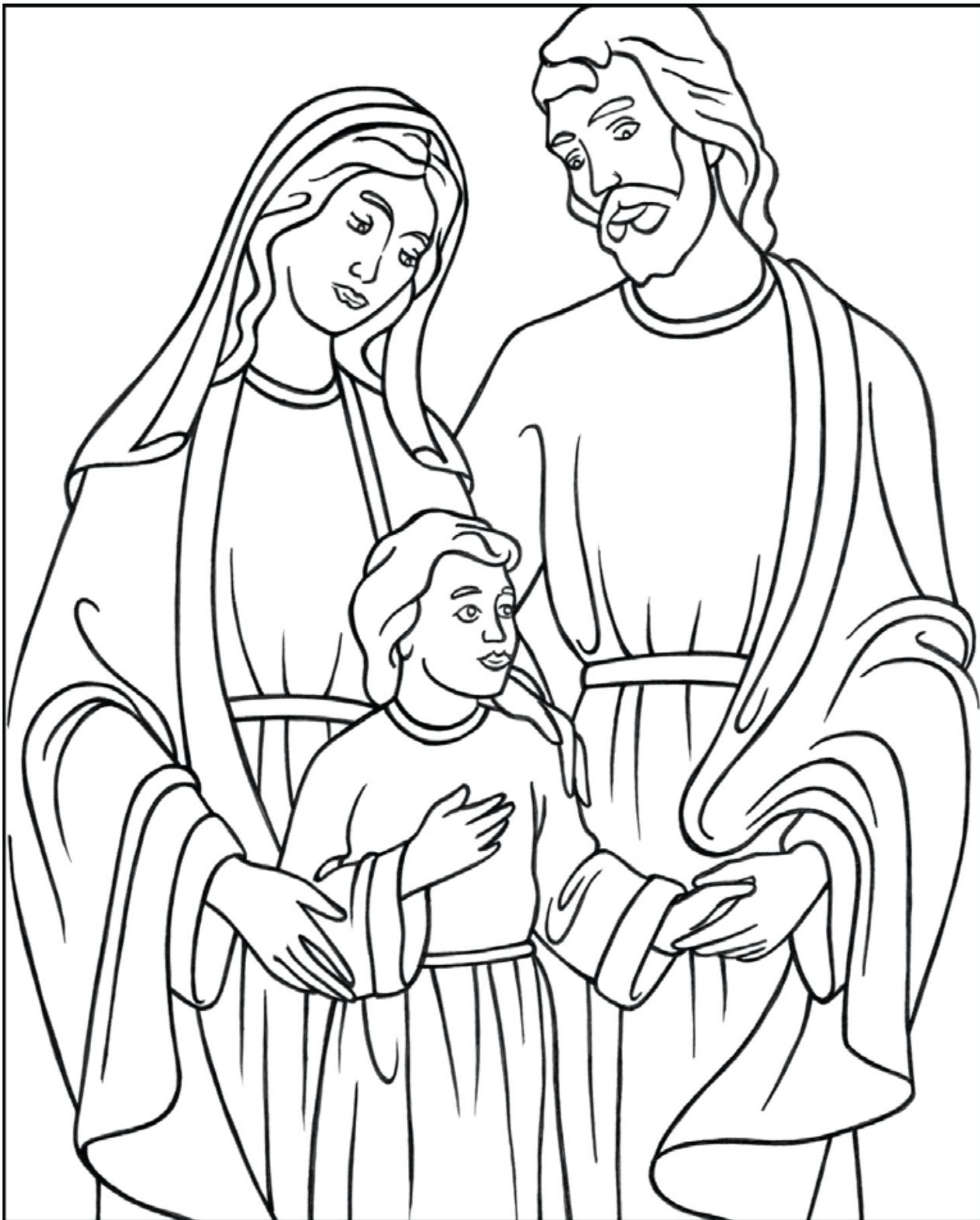
we _____ . Before bed each night we say

our prayers together, we ask for the intercession of Saint _____ ,

the patron saint of _____ s , _____ s and _____ s.

We are a great Catholic Family!





Born into a Family



- Light a candle to signify a time of prayer and the reading of Sacred Scripture.
- Using a sand game timer or your phone/watch, challenge the family to quiet their mind, heart and being and place themselves in the presence of God (1 minute for little kids, up to 5 minutes for older kids).
- We are going to begin with a family challenge. We are going to sit quietly, listening for the voice of God in our hearts for _____ minutes. We quiet our minds....our mouths....our bodies...our hearts.
- Imagine all the ways in which Jesus, the Son of God could have come into the human world, he could have come at any time period, been old or young, unlimited power, looked any way, became any type of creature or even look like something that we have never seen before....what is a way in which you can imagine Jesus could have come into the world?
- How did Jesus come into the world? Where? When? Into what scenario?
(as a small baby, to Mary and Joseph, poor, little town of Bethlehem, Israel, during Roman rule, 2020 years ago, in a manger)
- Open your Bible and slowly read Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). Matthew 1:18-25 RSV

- God came into the world as a tiny baby boy born to a mother and father. God was born into a family. His parents held him and cuddled him. They taught him and prayed with him. Jesus had to do chores, had a bedtime, ate food that his parents gave him. The Holy Family had days where they were tired, or sick or frustrated. They had days where they laughed, played and enjoyed. Out of all the ways God could have come, he chose to be in a family like ours.
- What do you think it was like in Jesus' home when he was young?

- What do you think it looked like, sounded like, smelled like?
- What are some ways that the Holy Family was like our family?
- End your time with a simple “Glory Be” or prayer led by a family member.

Older Kids / Parent Expanded Talk

If you have older children that can participate in a deeper discussion topic or you as the parent would like further reading, the Catechism of the Catholic Church 1655-1657 on “The Domestic Church” is offered here for reading and discussion by simply asking one another “**what stood out to you and why**” as well as “**how does this apply to our family life?**”

CCC 1655 Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than “the family of God.” From the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers “together with all [their] household.” When they were converted, they desired that “their whole household” should also be saved. These families who became believers were islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world.

1656 In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation.”

1657 It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way “by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity.” Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and “a school for human enrichment.” Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous - even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one’s life.



Our Unique Family Questionnaire

1. Our favorite family vacations:

2. Our favorite thing to do outside as a family:

3. Our favorite things to eat as a family:

4. Our favorite holiday family traditions:

Christmas

Easter

Birthdays/other



The Day You Were Born

Parents:

Each person takes a turn answering the questions while you eat snack. After a child answers the question, parents can fill in with details they also remember of the day the child was born and their baptism. Parents make sure to also share what you know of your birth and baptism. You can even take out photos if you are really ambitious.

“Jesus was born in a stable in the City of Bethlehem to his mother Mary and Father Joseph.”

What do you know about the day you were born?

What do you know about the day that you were born into the life of Christ, your baptism?

Salad Bowl

1. **Secretly print** this page and **cut out** each of the words with image and fold them in half and place in a salad bowl (eliminate ones that you think are too hard for your kids.) 2. **Decide which way** is best for your family to play the game depending on age of kids and time available. The original way to play is to have teams and a one minute timer. One member of each team pulls out a word, the team guesses the word through each of the three stages, seeing how many they guess correct in one minute at each stage, the team with the most wins. Because this is a family builder, you can all work together to see how many you can get correct in one minute, or with no time restraint or you can eliminate any of the stages so that everyone can play.

Stage #1: **Describe** the word without using the word on the paper.

Stage #2: **Charades** (act it out without words).

Stage #3: **One Word Cue** (get others to guess by using only one word).

Dancing



Tea Party



Gorilla



Lumberjack



Baseball



Hide and Seek



Tree



Canoeing



Swimming



Grilling



Sword Fight



Banana



Lunch

Lunch break is a great time to do some necessary tasks around the house, such as prep for dinner. Make sure to make meals part of the retreat, meaning that everyone helps make the meal together and clean up together, and you stay seated at the table together until everyone is done (all of this depending on age and ability as well). Some ways to make lunch easier or more special would be to order/pick up pizza, have takeout or a picnic (inside or out).

A great addition for your family routine is praying the Angelus at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Traditionally the prayer is done at dawn (6 a.m.), noon (12) and dusk (6 p.m.) to mark your day focused upon God.

The Angelus

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, etc...

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to Your Word.

Hail Mary, etc...

V. And the Word was made flesh,

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, etc...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord,

Your Grace into our hearts;

that as we have known the incarnation of Christ,

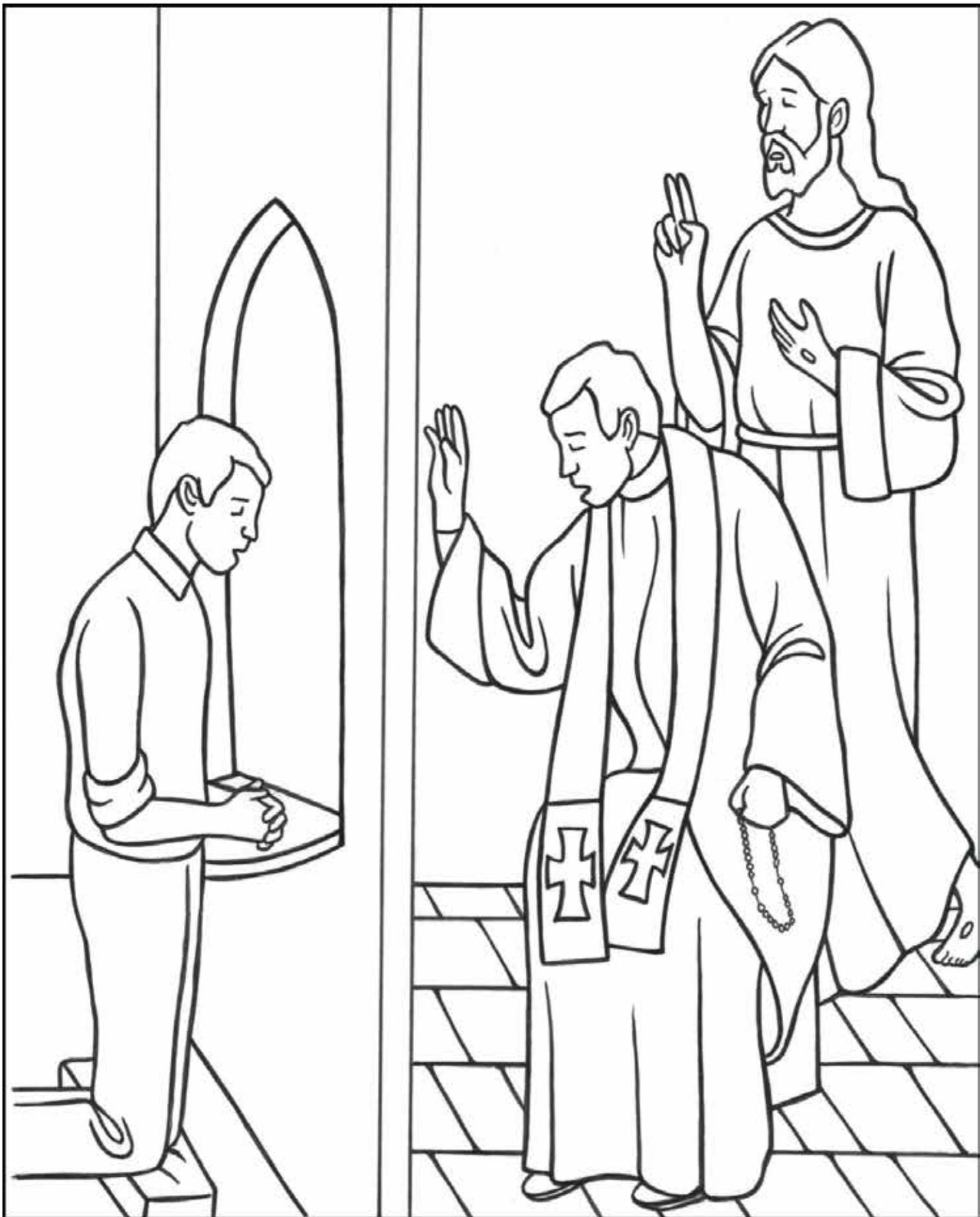
your Son by the message of an angel,

so by His passion and cross

we may be brought to the glory of His Resurrection.

Through the same Christ, our Lord.

Amen.



United

Light a candle to signify this time set apart and the meditation of Sacred Scripture.

“When you live day after day with someone, there will always be things that bother you, ways that they do things differently and things said to one another out of frustration and pain. As a family, it is without a doubt that every day, sometimes more than once a day, you will need to say “I am sorry” and “I forgive you.” Jesus knew how hard it was to forgive and love. When he was asked how to pray, he taught us the Our Father, which includes “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” The disciples even asked Jesus directly about how serious he really was about forgiveness. “*Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven” (Matthew 18: 21-22).* Think about how many times in our family we say or do things that hurt one another. Jesus asks us to keep forgiving over and over and over every day.

What would our family be like if we forgave each other 24x7 each day?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (the book in which key teachings of the faith are written) when specifically talking about family life highlights: “*Each and everyone should be generous and tireless in forgiving one another for offenses, quarrels, injustices, and neglect. Mutual affection suggests this. The charity of Christ demands it” (CCC 2227).* The Church is saying that the affection or loving feelings towards each other suggests that it is a good thing to forgive each other; but the Church goes even further to say charity, which is the love of other people because of your love for Christ, demands it. In other words, because of our love for Christ, it is not an option to say we are sorry and to forgive each other, it is part of being a follower of Christ.

Why would Christ demand us to forgive and ask forgiveness in our family as part of following Him?

Has there been a time when you did something wrong and were forgiven for it (especially within our family)? What happened? What was it like?

Christ has given us the healing and nurturing Sacrament of Reconciliation in order to reconcile us with God and to have the grace to overcome the sins that we confess, so that we have the extra strength to overcome those sins we struggle with. When we are in the best relationship with God, it is easier to be in a good relationship with one another. This is why as a family we make the Sacrament of Confession a priority, trying to schedule to go every month.

* Confession is often offered daily at parishes, and if you are doing this retreat on a Saturday most parishes have confession this afternoon! If you are able, go to confession today or this week. * *(At the time this was published, there was limited availability for confession times due to the coronavirus. Reach out to your parish about how you can receive the sacrament.)*

Closing Prayer:

Pray the Our Father **highlighting and pausing** for a moment after the words “and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

Older Kids / Parent Expanded Talk

If you have older children that can participate in a deeper discussion topic or you as the parent would like further reading, below is offered the Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 2839-2845. These focus on the words from the Our Father: “And forgive us our trespasses” and “As we forgive those who trespass against us.” Simply read the paragraphs below and discuss by asking one another “**What stood out to you and why**” as well as “**How does this apply to our family life?**”

“And Forgive Us Our Trespasses...”

2839 With bold confidence, we began praying to our Father. In begging him that his name be hallowed, we were in fact asking him that we ourselves might be always made more holy. But though we are clothed with the baptismal garment, we do not cease to sin, to turn away from God. Now, in this new petition, we return to him like the prodigal son and, like the tax collector, recognize that we are sinners before him.¹³³ Our petition begins with a “confession” of our wretchedness and his mercy. Our hope is firm because, in his Son, “we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”¹³⁴ We find the efficacious and undoubted sign of his forgiveness in the sacraments of his Church.¹³⁵

2840 Now - and this is daunting - this outpouring of mercy cannot penetrate our hearts as long as we have not forgiven those who have trespassed against us. Love, like the Body of Christ, is indivisible; we cannot love the God we cannot see if we do not love the brother or sister we do see.¹³⁶ In refusing to forgive our brothers and sisters, our hearts are closed and their hardness makes them impervious to the Father’s merciful love; but in confessing our sins, our hearts are opened to his grace.

2841 This petition is so important that it is the only one to which the Lord returns and which he develops explicitly in the Sermon on the Mount.¹³⁷ This crucial requirement of the covenant mystery is impossible for man. But “with God all things are possible.”¹³⁸

"... As we Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us "

CCC **2842** This "as" is not unique in Jesus' teaching: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"; "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful"; "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."¹³⁹ It is impossible to keep the Lord's commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live can make "ours" the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.¹⁴⁰ Then the unity of forgiveness becomes possible and we find ourselves "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave" us.¹⁴¹

2843 Thus the Lord's words on forgiveness, the love that loves to the end,¹⁴² become a living reality. The parable of the merciless servant, which crowns the Lord's teaching on ecclesial communion, ends with these words: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."¹⁴³ It is there, in fact, "in the depths of the heart," that everything is bound and loosed. It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offense; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession.

2844 Christian prayer extends to the forgiveness of enemies,¹⁴⁴ transfiguring the disciple by configuring him to his Master. Forgiveness is a high-point of Christian prayer; only hearts attuned to God's compassion can receive the gift of prayer. Forgiveness also bears witness that, in our world, love is stronger than sin. The martyrs of yesterday and today bear this witness to Jesus. Forgiveness is the fundamental condition of the reconciliation of the children of God with their Father and of men with one another.¹⁴⁵

2845 There is no limit or measure to this essentially divine forgiveness,¹⁴⁶ whether one speaks of "sins" as in Luke (11:4), "debts" as in Matthew (6:12). We are always debtors: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another."¹⁴⁷ The communion of the Holy Trinity is the source and criterion of truth in every relationship. It is lived out in prayer, above all in the Eucharist.¹⁴⁸

*"Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."
Colossians 3:14*

Examination of Conscience

"Saying we are sorry is often not easy, but a crucial part of family life. We are going to take a few minutes to read together an Examination of Conscience which goes through each of the Ten Commandments and helps us to understand ways in which we may have chosen to break these Commandments or not to follow them to the fullest. As we read through this, think of ways that they apply to you, and think of things that you may need to ask forgiveness for from members of our family."

* Read aloud the "Family Examination of Conscience" together now and later before bed read the "Parent Examination of Conscience" as a couple.

Children's Examination of Conscience



#1 I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

- Have I given time to God every day in prayer?
- Have I told someone that I was not Christian or not Catholic because I was afraid they would make fun of me or not like me?

#2 You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- Have I used the words “God” or “Jesus” in anger?
- Have I said bad words that I am not supposed to say (like swear words)?
- Have I hoped something bad would happen to someone who was mean to me or that I didn't like?

#3 Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.

- Have I paid attention during Mass?
- Have I complained to my parents about going to Mass or put up a fight trying not to go to Mass?
- Have I not acted respectfully when I was in church, talking loud, running or misbehaving?
- Have I tried to make Sunday a special day for God?

#4 Honor your father and your mother.

- Have I disrespected or disobeyed my parents?
- Have I said mean words to my parents or talked back to them?
- Have I been willing to help around the house?
- When asked to do something have I put it off, making my parents have to ask me over and over?
- Have I tried to get along with my brothers and sisters?
- Have I been a good example to younger siblings and other children?
- Have I respected others in authority: priests, teachers, bus drivers, police, the elderly, babysitters?

#5 You Shall not kill

- Have I said cruel things or made fun of others?
- Have I said mean things about others behind their backs?
- Have I hurt someone else's body by something like hitting them?
- Have I encouraged someone to do something bad or wrong that they shouldn't have done?
- Have I reached out to someone when they were sitting alone, did not have a partner, or were being made fun of?

#6 You shall not commit adultery

- Have I taken care of my body?
- Have I watched television shows or movies that I shouldn't watch?
- Have I worn clothes that I am not supposed to wear? (too short, tight, low, or had bad images on it)
- Have I said something impure or made a crude joke?
- Have I looked at pictures that are bad?

#7 You shall not steal

- Have I taken things from another person or a store that was not mine?
- Have I purposefully not returned something that I borrowed?
- Have I returned things I have borrowed in worst condition than when I borrowed them?

#8 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor

- Do I tell lies to protect myself from punishment?
- Have I exaggerated or not told the truth to make a story look more exciting and better or to make myself look cool?
- Have I told a lie to make someone else look bad?
- Have I started a rumor telling others something about someone that was not true?
- Have I cheated or copied someone else's school work?

#9 You shall not covet your neighbors spouse

- Do I get mad when I have to share my friends?
- Are there kids I will not play with or that I am mean to because they look different?
- Do I let my parents spend time together and talk without interrupting them?

#10 You shall not covet your neighbor's goods

- Am I ungrateful to God and my parents for what they have given me?
- Am I jealous over the toys or things that other people have and are able to do?
- Am I jealous over the abilities someone else has in school, sports or with friends?
- Have I shared the things I have with my family, friends and the poor?

The Act of Contrition (new form)

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

The Act of Contrition (old form)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee. I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

Examination of Conscience for Husbands and Wives

Spouse Examen

“Set me as a seal upon your heart...for love is strong as death...Its flashes are flashes of fire, a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.” -Song of Songs 8:6-7

- Have I said *I love you* today both in words and actions?
- Do I speak with words that are good, true, lovely, and beautiful? Or do I use harsh, judgemental, and condemning words when speaking to him/her?
- Have I complained about my spouse (interiorly or aloud)?
- Do I share with others information about my spouse that isn't meant to be shared? Specifically failings or faults?
- Do I give him/her the benefit of the doubt or do I always assume the worst?
- Do I offer loving patience when my spouse is having a difficult time or do I lose patience and lack compassion?
- Am I empathetic with my spouse's sufferings?
- Have I held on to small hurts or harbored resentment or anger?
- Do I choose to smile and bring peace to the home even when I don't feel like it?
- Am I a reflection of the unconditional love of God to my spouse?
- Did I use my spouse in any way today as a means to an end?
- Have I loved him/her as a child of God with intrinsic value?
- Have I worked to make life more bearable for my spouse today?
- Have I prayed with and for him/her?
- Have I forgiven wrongs immediately or do I hold on to them?
- Have I taken myself or my spouse too seriously and failed to be a source of joy?
- Have I read, listened to, prayed about, or watched at least one small thing today to build up the relationship?
- Did I do any acts of love or service for my spouse today?
- Was I pure in thought while away from my spouse?
- Have I kept unhealthy friendships or allowed others to take priority over my married relationship?
- Have I supported or watched any shows or media that devalue Christian marriage?
- Do I say I'm sorry and admit wrongs openly?
- Do I blame my spouse for my own failings?
- Do I cling to pride when my spouse brings up grievances or do I bear wrongs patiently?
- Have I honored my spouse with my presence and time today?
- Has gambling, video games, novels, movies, or other created things taken precedence over my marriage today?
- Do I love as Christ would have me love?

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Nightly Examination of Conscience for Parents

Parent Examen

Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children. -Catechism of the Catholic Church 2225

- Have I yelled or spoken harshly to my children today?
- Do I speak in calm, gentle, and loving ways when dealing with them?
- Have I modeled a strong and consistent example of a mature Christian?
- Did I pray with and for my children today?
- Have I said *I love you* in both my words and actions?
- Did I bear wrongs patiently and lovingly?
- Have I compromised their innocence by my words, actions, or example today in how I live and act?
- Have I smiled at them?
- Have I yelled at or spoken harshly at my spouse or others in front of my children?
- Do I find time to play and fully engage with my children?
- Do other priorities, hobbies, friends, or pastimes distract me from loving and caring for my children?
- Have I read, watched, listened, or learned in some way new information about Catholic parenting today?
- Do I strive to be the best parent I can be or do I give in to laziness, idle thoughts and behaviors, fatigue, or a sedentary life?
- Am I a joyful witness of the Gospel and love of Jesus to my children or do I allow depressed moods and thoughts to take over in front of them?
- Do my children see the love of the Trinity mirrored in me (and my spouse) and how our family loves?
- Have I sought to serve my children today in love?
- Have I gone out of my way to make them feel special?
- Do I make excuses when I don't feel like helping with an activity?
- Did I discipline with the inherent dignity of the child in mind?
- Do I follow parenting techniques that are sound or do I use techniques with the goal of my comfort and convenience?
- Have I treated my child's body with respect and honor in all my dealings and disciplines today?
- Have I respected my children and their developmental needs?
- Did I fail to meet real needs (physical, emotional, social, psychological, educational, spiritual) of my children today out of selfishness?
- Have I allowed my children to view shows or listen to music that compromises their innocence?
- Do I monitor the type of friendships my children are engaging in?
- Have I gossiped about my child or shared information not meant to be shared?
- Do I complain about my children or shame them in front of others?
- Do I joke about hurting them or their feelings?
- Have I treated them how I would want to be treated by a loved one?
- Have I bullied my child or used fear tactics to get my way?
- Have I apologized and sought forgiveness if I have wronged my child?

Author: Angie Windnagle.

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"Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."
Colossians 3:14

I am Sorry

Snack: You can either start with snack, eat during (though may be distracting) or let them know that snack will be after this.

"When we were reading through the Examination of Conscience, I am sure there were things that stood out to each of us that we need to apologize for to one another. We are going to take a few minutes to be able to say we are sorry and for others to forgive. We will take turns. First you will say the name of the person whom you need to ask forgiveness from and look at them as you speak. If you have done the same thing to more than one person, just do these same steps with each individual person you need to apologize to. You will then say "I am sorry for..." and we will quietly listen to you without interrupting. When you are done, the person whom you apologized to will be able to forgive you by saying "I forgive you." I am going to start....

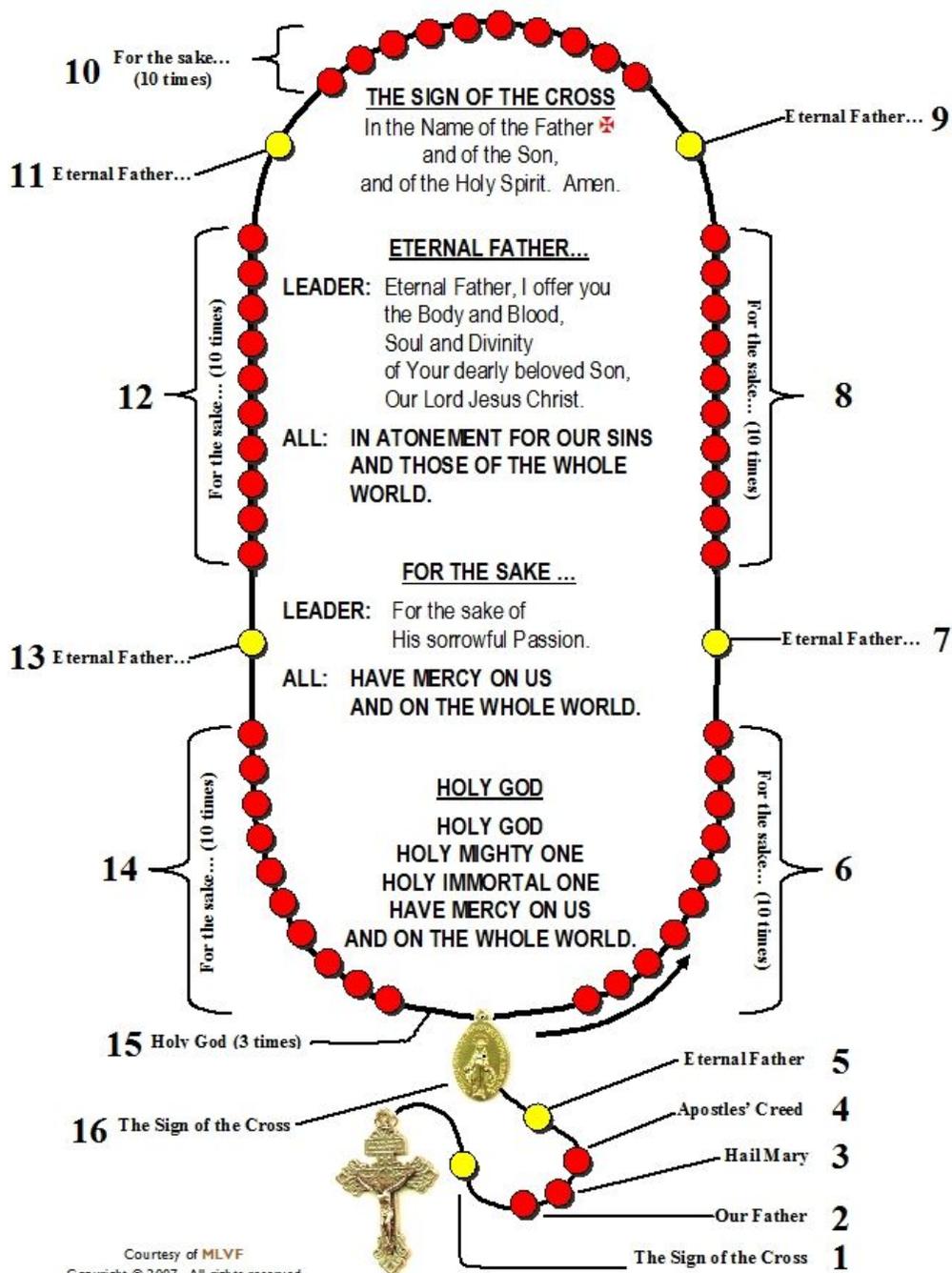
"I am sorry for..... will you forgive me?"

"I forgive you."

Divine Mercy Chaplet

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is most often said at the 3:00 p.m. during the “Divine Mercy Hour,” when we remember the hour in which Christ suffered and died for us. Now that we have said we are sorry to one another, let us receive the Mercy of Christ as we pray the chaplet together. (Walking outside for the chaplet is ideal to take a break and get some movement).

The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy



Optional Opening Prayers:

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls,
and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.
O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy,
envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

(Repeat 3 times) O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of
Mercy for us, I trust in You!

After opening prayer say an Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Apostle's Creed.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on
earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we
forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the
fruit of your women Jesus. Holy Mary mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of
our death.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only
Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under
Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He
rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father Almighty; from there He will come and judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy
Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

For each of the five decades *(On each "Our Father" bead of the rosary, pray)*

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our
Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

(On each of the 10 "Hail Mary" beads, pray)

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Concluding prayer *(Repeat 3 times)*

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Optional Closing Prayer

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly
upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor
become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love
and Mercy itself.

Mind Field

Lay out several items (pillows, stuffed animals, things that won't hurt people) to make a "mind field" in a large area such as a living room. Using a long sock/dish towel/bandana take turns blindfolding each family member one at a time. The other members stand on one side of the "mind field" and the blindfolded person on the other side. The people not blindfolded will guide the blindfolded person through the obstacles by taking turns saying directions. (If you have littler kids, they can do a "trust walk" with an older sibling or parent leading them by the hand but still blindfolded through the course). The point of the activity is to show how much we need one another to get through the "mind field" obstacles of this world, and make it to heaven together.

Items needed:

- 1 blindfold/bandana/long sock/kitchen towel
- Several soft items to place on the floor
- Larger room to play in



Body of Christ Ice Cream Sundae

Items needed:

- 3 blindfold/bandana/long sock/kitchen towel
- Ice cream sundae ingredients [Ice cream, 3 toppings (chocolate/chocolate chips/sprinkles/whipped cream/cherry...) bowl, spoon]
- Garbage bag or big towel wrapped around the person being fed to prevent mess.
- Kitchen table and chair (place that can have spills)

Different Positions:

Mouth- blindfolded, can't talk and sits at the table

Right Hand- blindfolded, can't talk and can only use their right hand

Left Hand- blindfolded, can't talk and can only use their left hand

Brain/Eyes- Can see and talk but can't touch anything



Have the person who is the "mouth" sit down at the table and the left and right hand sit or stand on either side. Once everyone is blindfolded, one person (can be the brain/eyes if needed, places the items around both the left and right side but within reach. The point of the game is to make an ice cream sundae with all of the ingredients and feed a bite to the mouth. You can switch positions or just all enjoy together. The activity is meant to show the family that we need each family member to work together to be the best we can be and achieve heaven (the eating of the ice cream ;)



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Transformed

When we played the last game (Mind Field or Body of Christ Sundaes) we saw how important each of us are to our family. Without one of us, our family would be missing something. Each of us bring unique gifts and joys to our family and God meant for it to be this way. In the Bible we read in the book of St. Paul to the Romans 12:4-8 (use a Bible when possible)

For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.” Romans 12:4-8

What gifts do each of us bring to our family? Starting by talking about the youngest member of our family (ending with the oldest), we are now going to all together tell that person what gifts they specifically bring to the life of our family.

Immediately after St. Paul tells us about the Body of Christ, he continues on with what is known as the “Marks of a Christian,” a description of how to live life. As a Christian family, we can even re-title this as “how our Christian family is meant to live.” Christ wants to transform our family, drawing us closer to Him and to Heaven each day. We are going to read through Romans 12: 9-19 in light of our family life, asking after each line:

“What does Christ mean for our family by this?”

“How can we do this?”

(If you have little kids or are running short on time, pick 3-4 of these to read and talk about)

- 1) Let love be genuine;** *The dictionary definition of Genuine: actual, true, having the reputed or apparent qualities*
- 2) hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;**
- 3) love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor.**
The dictionary definition of Honor: a good name or public esteem, showing merited respect.

4) Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord.

The dictionary definition of Zeal: eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something. Passion/enthusiasm.

5) Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation,

The dictionary definition of Tribulation: distress or suffering resulting from oppression or persecution.

6) be constant in prayer.

7) Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

8) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

The dictionary definition of Persecute: to harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve or afflict.

9) Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

10) Live in harmony with one another;

11) do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited.

The dictionary definition of Haughty: an attitude of superiority.

The dictionary definition of Conceited: excessively high opinion of oneself.

12) Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

The dictionary definition of Noble: possessing outstanding qualities.

13) If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.

**14) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written,
“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”**

The dictionary definition of Vengeance: punishment inflicted in retaliation for an injury or offense.

Closing Prayer:

Holy Spirit, thank you for the many gifts you have given to each member of our family and how together we are stronger and made whole. We pray that we may always use our gifts to serve one another and as a family serve the world. Help us to live out the “marks of a Christian family” with greater zeal and strength from your grace.

Thank you especially for _____(child’s name) help them to use their gifts of _____-to serve you and others well. (continue on for each child and parent)

Amen

Older Kids / Parent Expanded Talk

As we complete our retreat, we begin to look forward to how we can live out our role in Christian family life together. The Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 1691-1696 introduce the section entitled “Life of Christ,” and provide us with beautiful insight that can easily be applied to our family. If you have older children that can participate in a deeper discussion topic or you as the parent would like further reading, simply read the paragraphs below and discuss by asking one another “**what stood out to you and why**” as well as “**how does this apply to our family life?**”

CCC 1691 “Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God.”

1692 The Symbol of the faith confesses the greatness of God’s gifts to man in his work of creation, and even more in redemption and sanctification. What faith confesses, the sacraments communicate: by the sacraments of rebirth, Christians have become “children of God,” “partakers of the divine nature.” Coming to see in the faith their new dignity, Christians are called to lead henceforth a life “worthy of the gospel of Christ.” They are made capable of doing so by the grace of Christ and the gifts of his Spirit, which they receive through the sacraments and through prayer.

1693 Christ Jesus always did what was pleasing to the *Father*, and always lived in perfect communion with him. Likewise Christ’s disciples are invited to live in the sight of the Father “who sees in secret,” in order to become “perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

1694 Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, Christians are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” and so participate in the life of the Risen Lord. Following Christ and united with him, Christians can strive to be “imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love” by conforming their thoughts, words and actions to the “mind . . . which is yours in Christ Jesus,” and by following his example.

1695 “Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God,” “sanctified . . . [and] called to be saints,” Christians have become the temple of the *Holy Spirit*. This “Spirit of the Son” teaches them to pray to the Father and, having become their life, prompts them to act so as to bear “the fruit of the Spirit” by charity in action. Healing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation. He enlightens and strengthens us to live as “children of light” through “all that is good and right and true.”

1696 The way of Christ “leads to life”; a contrary way “leads to destruction.” The Gospel parable of the two ways remains ever present in the catechesis of the Church; it shows the importance of moral decisions for our salvation: “There are *two ways*, the one of life, the other of death; but between the two, there is a great difference.”

What Changes?

As we come to the end of our retreat, our family takes a moment to ask the question, “so what changed?” How has God inspired our family to live differently or to add to what we already do in order to make us more united and better able to walk the path to heaven together?

What things should we do more of as a family?

What things should we do less of as a family?

God desires to use our family to aid and inspire other people. How is God asking our family to reach out beyond ourselves?

-----cut this out and hang it up together-----

Our Family Commits This Week to:

Dinner

This dinner is meant to be set apart and special, a way to celebrate the unique greatness of your specific family. You may desire to not have the help of the kids to prepare the meal, and though it will take more time and be more messy, try to have everyone involved. Try to choose food that is exciting and prepare the table in a way that says “this is special.”

Here are some ideas:

- Flowers and candles on the table
- Fancy china plates and wine glasses
- Name place settings made by the kids (could even write a little note inside)
- Themed meal (a country/place you have visited or favorite book/movie)
- Dinner music or themed music playing
- Lower lighting or fun Christmas lights
- More expensive meal like a good cut of meat
- Dessert either made or ordered
- Of course no devices at the table :)

Board Games

Take out your family’s favorite board games/card games/ puzzles/art project as a time of fun together (and don’t be disappointed if there are disagreements/frustrations, it is all part of family life as the “school of virtue”).

* If it is a nice night out, feel free to head outside together to go on a walk, toss a ball, or even play a board game outside.

How to Pray the Rosary

1. SAY THESE PRAYERS...

IN THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. *(As you say this, with your right hand touch your forehead when you say Father, touch your breastbone when you say Son, touch your left shoulder when you say Holy, and touch your right shoulder when you say Spirit.)*

I BELIEVE IN GOD, the Father almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty. He shall come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

OUR FATHER, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

GLORY BE to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

O MY JESUS, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN, mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us. And after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

O GOD, WHOSE only-begotten Son by His life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech Thee, that by meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANNOUNCE each mystery by saying something like, "The third Joyful Mystery is the Birth of Our Lord." This is required only when saying the Rosary in a group.

2. IN THIS ORDER...

- INTRODUCTION**
 1. IN THE NAME...
 2. I BELIEVE IN GOD...
 3. OUR FATHER...
 4. HAIL MARY...
 5. HAIL MARY...
 6. HAIL MARY...
 7. GLORY BE...
 8. O MY JESUS...

- THE FIRST DECADE**
 9. ANNOUNCE...
 10. OUR FATHER...
 11. HAIL MARY...
 12. HAIL MARY...
 13. HAIL MARY...
 14. HAIL MARY...
 15. HAIL MARY...
 16. HAIL MARY...
 17. HAIL MARY...
 18. HAIL MARY...
 19. HAIL MARY...
 20. HAIL MARY...
 21. GLORY BE...
 22. O MY JESUS...

- THE SECOND DECADE**
 23. ANNOUNCE...
 24. OUR FATHER...
 25. HAIL MARY...
 26. HAIL MARY...
 27. HAIL MARY...
 28. HAIL MARY...
 29. HAIL MARY...
 30. HAIL MARY...
 31. HAIL MARY...
 32. HAIL MARY...
 33. HAIL MARY...
 34. HAIL MARY...
 35. GLORY BE...
 36. O MY JESUS...

- THE THIRD DECADE**
 37. ANNOUNCE...
 38. OUR FATHER...
 39. HAIL MARY...
 40. HAIL MARY...
 41. HAIL MARY...
 42. HAIL MARY...
 43. HAIL MARY...
 44. HAIL MARY...
 45. HAIL MARY...
 46. HAIL MARY...
 47. HAIL MARY...
 48. HAIL MARY...
 49. GLORY BE...
 50. O MY JESUS...

- THE FOURTH DECADE**
 51. ANNOUNCE...
 52. OUR FATHER...
 53. HAIL MARY...
 54. HAIL MARY...
 55. HAIL MARY...
 56. HAIL MARY...
 57. HAIL MARY...
 58. HAIL MARY...
 59. HAIL MARY...
 60. HAIL MARY...
 61. HAIL MARY...
 62. HAIL MARY...
 63. GLORY BE...
 64. O MY JESUS...

- THE FIFTH DECADE**
 65. ANNOUNCE...
 66. OUR FATHER...
 67. HAIL MARY...
 68. HAIL MARY...
 69. HAIL MARY...
 70. HAIL MARY...
 71. HAIL MARY...
 72. HAIL MARY...
 73. HAIL MARY...
 74. HAIL MARY...
 75. HAIL MARY...
 76. HAIL MARY...
 77. GLORY BE...
 78. O MY JESUS...

- CONCLUSION**
 79. HAIL HOLY QUEEN...
 80. O GOD, WHOSE...
 81. IN THE NAME...

3. WHILE TOUCHING THESE BEADS TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS...



4. AND SILENTLY MEDITATING ON THESE "MYSTERIES", OR EVENTS FROM THE LIVES OF JESUS AND MARY...

On Monday and Saturday, meditate on the "Joyful Mysteries"
 First Decade (Steps 9-22): The Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)
 Second Decade (Steps 23-36): The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56)
 Third Decade (Steps 37-50): The Birth of Our Lord (Luke 2:1-21)
 Fourth Decade (Steps 51-64): The Presentation of Our Lord (Luke 2:22-38)
 Fifth Decade (Steps 65-78): The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

On Thursday, meditate on the "Luminous Mysteries"
 First Decade: The Baptism of Our Lord in the River Jordan (Matthew 3:13-16)
 Second Decade: The Wedding at Cana, when Christ manifested Himself (Jn 2:1-11)
 Third Decade: The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15)
 Fourth Decade: The Transfiguration of Our Lord (Matthew 17:1-8)
 Fifth Decade: The Last Supper, when Our Lord gave us the Holy Eucharist (Mt 26)

On Tuesday and Friday, meditate on the "Sorrowful Mysteries"
 First Decade: The Agony of Our Lord in the Garden (Matthew 26:36-56)
 Second Decade: Our Lord is Scourged at the Pillar (Matthew 27:26)
 Third Decade: Our Lord is Crowned with Thorns (Matthew 27:27-31)
 Fourth Decade: Our Lord Carries the Cross to Calvary (Matthew 27:32)
 Fifth Decade: The Crucifixion of Our Lord (Matthew 27:33-56)

On Wednesday and Sunday, meditate on the "Glorious Mysteries"
 First Decade: The Glorious Resurrection of Our Lord (John 20:1-29)
 Second Decade: The Ascension of Our Lord (Luke 24:36-53)
 Third Decade: The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41)
 Fourth Decade: The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
 Fifth Decade: The Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth

You are encouraged to copy and distribute this sheet.