

Year of Faith: Family Resources

Read and Reflect



[The Church in the Modern World \(Gaudium et Spes\), Part II, chapter 1 \(para 48\)](#)

Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ's redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church, so that this love may lead the spouses to God with powerful effect and may aid and strengthen them in sublime office of being a father or a mother.(6) For this reason Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state.(7) By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus they increasingly advance the perfection of their own personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God.

As a result, with their parents leading the way by example and family prayer, children and indeed everyone gathered around the family hearth will find a readier path to human maturity, salvation and holiness. Graced with the dignity and office of fatherhood and motherhood, parents will energetically acquit themselves of a duty which devolves primarily on them, namely education and especially religious education.

Discussion Questions:

- a.) Does my family consistently pray together? What can we commit to do together on a regular basis: a decade of the rosary after dinner, reading a short meditation daily, or simply reciting the Our Father as a family?
 - b.) As a parent, do I lead my spouse and my family closer to God? Am I a witness of Christ not only in my words but in my actions?
 - c.) Is my faith evident to those around me, both in my family as well as those who "gather around my hearth?" What can I do to shine ever brighter as a light of Christ in my daily life?
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[Catechism of the Catholic Church \(2685\):](#)

The *Christian family* is the first place of education in prayer. Based on the sacrament of marriage, the family is the "domestic church" where God's children learn to pray "as the Church" and to persevere in prayer. For young children in particular, daily family prayer is the first witness of the Church's living memory as awakened patiently by the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions:

- a.) How do I teach my children to pray—through family devotions, helping them to participate in Mass, modeling prayer in my own life? What can I do better?
 - b.) In this Year of Faith, what are some practical goals that we can set to live awakened by the Holy Spirit?
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[Pope John Paul II, On the Family \(Familiaris Consortio\) \(para 50\)](#)

The Christian family is called upon to take part actively and responsibly in the mission of the Church in a way that is original and specific, by placing itself, in what it is and what it does as an “intimate community of life and love,” at the service of the Church and of society.

Discussion Questions:

- a.) Does my family actively participate in the life of the Church? Does the faith of my family extend beyond the boundaries of home into the Church and the world?
 - b.) Am I involved in my parish community? In what ways can we become involved in the life of faith and worship within the Church (children as altar servers, parents as lectors or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion)?
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[Familiaris Consortio \(para 44\)](#)

Families therefore, either singly or in association, can and should devote themselves to manifold social service activities, especially in favor of the poor, or at any rate for the benefit of all people... The social contribution of the family has an original character of its own, one that should be given greater recognition and more decisive encouragement, especially as the children grow up, and actually involving all its members as much as possible.

Discussion Questions:

- a.) Do we as a family seek out ways to serve others, at my parish, at a homeless shelter, or by praying at an abortion clinic?
 - b.) Are we willing to sacrifice as a family to help others? Do we cultivate an attitude of selflessness and service within our family?
 - c.) Do we encourage the practice of tithing, regularly donating a portion of one’s income to those in need?
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[United States Catholic Catechism for Adults \(p. 377\)](#)

The Christian family is called to be a community of faith, hope, and love in an environment of prayer. Aided by a number of other virtues, such as prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, the family that practices them begins to actualize its spiritual calling as a domestic church. When a family becomes a school of virtue and a community of love, it is an image of the loving communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is then an icon of the Trinity.

Discussion Questions:

- a.) What does it mean to be a “school of virtue and a community of love?” Can such high praise be said of my family?
 - b.) What does it mean to image the Trinity as a family? What can we do as a family to be more united in faith and prayer?
 - c.) In this Year of Faith, what is one simple practice that we can commit to in order to transform our family more and more into a community of faith? How about a simple prayer for safe travels every time you pull out of the driveway in your car?
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[U.S. Catholic Bishops, “Follow the Way of Love”](#)

“Baptism brings all Christians into union with God. Your family life is sacred because family relationships confirm and deepen this union and allow the Lord to work through you. The profound and the ordinary moments of daily life—mealtimes, workdays, vacations, expressions of love and intimacy, household chores, caring for a sick child or elderly parent, and even conflicts over things like how to celebrate holidays, discipline children, or spend money—all are the threads from which you can weave a pattern of holiness...A family is our first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us, and acts in the world. The early Church expressed this truth by calling the Christian family a *domestic church* or *church of the home*. As a Christian family, you not only belong to the Church, but your daily life is a true expression of the Church.”

Discussion Questions:

- a.) When does your family seem most like an expression of the Church? When you’re praying together, serving others, teaching the faith, forgiving and asking for forgiveness? Something else?
- b.) How do you experience the Lord working through your family?