



PARISH WEBINAR

Respect Life Action Guide:

Mother's Day

A Prayer for Pregnant Mothers

○ Blessed Mother, you received the good news of the incarnation of Christ, your Son, with faith and trust. Grant your protection to all pregnant mothers facing difficulties.

Guide us as we strive to make our parish communities places of welcome and assistance for mothers in need. Help us become instruments of God's love and compassion.

Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.

Amen.

Welcome!

Parish Action Guides

1. January: Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*
2. March 25: Annunciation of the Lord
3. April: Sunday of Divine Mercy
4. May: Mother's Day
5. Father's Day
6. October: Respect Life Month

www.respectlife.org/action-guides

ACTION GUIDE
ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE: JANUARY

INTRODUCTION

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion throughout the United States in its companion decisions *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*. Since that time, millions of children have lost their lives, and millions of women and families have been wounded by abortion.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), no. 373, designates January 22 as a particular day of prayer and penance, called the "**Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children.**" The Church directs:

In all the Dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion.

As individuals, we are called to observe this day through the penitential practices of prayer, fasting and/or almsgiving. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides resources to help parishes, schools, families, ministries, and individual Catholics participate in this important day of prayer and penance.

In addition, the USCCB also sponsors an annual nationwide novena called **9 Days for Life**, which encompasses the liturgical observance of the Day of Prayer. Each day for nine days, a different intention is featured, accompanied by a short reflection, suggested actions, and related information as we pray for the respect and protection of every human life. Visit respectlife.org/9-days-for-life for more information on the annual campaign.

A sample timeline and activity, homily helps, announcements, and more are provided to help you get started. You are encouraged to adapt these resources as needed to fit your specific parish, school, or ministry.

Free downloads and additional electronic resources can be found at respectlife.org/action-guides.

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ACTION GUIDE | ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE | 1

Parish Action Guide Components

1. Introduction
2. Simple Steps
3. Sample Timeline
4. Bulletin & Pulpit Announcements
5. Intercessions
6. Homily Considerations
7. Sample Activity

ACTION GUIDE

MOTHER'S DAY: SECOND SUNDAY OF MAY

INTRODUCTION

Mother's Day is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the beautiful vocation of motherhood and the gift of human life. It calls us to cherish the gift of life that we receive from our mothers and to pray for all women to whom God has entrusted life in a very special way. As we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of mothers, we remember mothers experiencing difficult pregnancies and pray they may find support and encouragement in choosing life for their children.

While Mother's Day is not a liturgical or Catholic observance, many parishes still use this holiday to honor and pray for mothers. The month of May has traditionally been dedicated to Mary, Mother of Jesus. Mother's Day provides an opportunity to pray for mothers while honoring and seeking the intercession of Our Blessed Mother. It is a fitting day to ask God's special blessing on all mothers. (The *Book of Blessings* contains various options.) If expectant mothers are present in the congregation, Mother's Day is also an opportune time to make use of the *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb*, which offers blessings for the mother and the child she is carrying. (See the action guide for the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord for sample announcements and other ideas for using the rite. It is accessible at respectlife.org/action-guides.)

In our efforts to celebrate the vocation of motherhood, it is also important to remember that Mother's Day can be a difficult holiday for many people: married couples struggling with infertility; parents who have lost a child; those who have lost their own mothers; couples longing to welcome a child through adoption; and women and men who are suffering because of their participation in abortion. The included homily notes provide considerations for honoring mothers while showing sensitivity and compassion to all who find this holiday particularly challenging.

Simple steps, a sample timeline, announcements, homily notes and an activity are provided to help you highlight the gift of human life in your celebration of Mother's Day. You are encouraged to adapt the following resources to fit the circumstances of your specific parish, school, or ministry. The resources referenced in this action guide can be found at respectlife.org/action-guides, unless otherwise noted.

The resources referenced in this action guide can be found at respectlife.org/action-guides, unless otherwise noted.

Parish Action Guide: Simple Steps

1. Consider how your parish can observe Mother's Day.
2. Meet with your pastor.
3. Make necessary preparation.
4. Pray for mothers and all who find Mother's Day to be a difficult holiday.

SIMPLE STEPS

Here is a list of simple steps that you can use in your parish, school, ministry, or home in your celebration of Mother's Day. These steps offer ideas on how to use the provided resources. Each step may not apply to your specific circumstance, but most can be adapted to suit your needs.

1. Consider how your parish can observe Mother's Day.

Many parishes already have some observance of Mother's Day. It may be a special blessing, a reception after Mass, or a May Crowning of Our Blessed Mother. Find out whether your parish already has any plans or regular traditions. Review the Respect Life resources available for Mother's Day such as the *Spiritual Bouquet to Our Blessed Mother* activity that appears later in this action guide and the *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb* (available by visiting usccb.org/blessing-in-the-womb). Prayerfully consider which resources may work best in your parish, whether there is a way to use them to complement or integrate with your parish's regular observances, and ultimately, what you will be requesting permission to do.

2. Meet with your pastor.

Schedule a time to meet with your pastor to discuss possibilities for observing Mother's Day in your parish. Present your idea of highlighting the gift of human life and the beauty of the vocation of motherhood through this holiday. Explain what ideas you have prayerfully considered, and ask what may be most appropriate for your parish. Ask his permission to move forward. Be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and your pastor throughout your conversation.

3. Make necessary preparations.

Once you have determined how your parish will celebrate Mother's Day, begin making the appropriate plans and preparations. This could include things like submitting bulletin announcements, gathering materials, and assembling a team of volunteers. See the following sample timeline for more detailed steps.

4. Pray for all mothers and all those who find Mother's Day challenging.

No matter how your parish has decided to observe Mother's Day, prayer should be the basis of everything we do. As you plan and prepare, remember to lift up in prayer all mothers and to offer thanksgiving for the gift of human life. We also know that Mother's Day is often a difficult holiday for many, including those who have lost a child, those who have lost or are estranged from their own mothers, and those who are struggling or unable to have a child, among others. Pray that they may be filled with the Lord's peace and comforted by His love on what can be a challenging day.



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Parish Action Guide: Sample Timeline

- Connect with your pastor and parish staff.
- Gather and research materials.
- Recruit volunteers.
- Submit bulletin & pulpit announcements.
- Reconnect with pastor and parish staff to tie up any loose ends and make sure everyone has what they need
- Set up.
- Facilitate the activity.

BULLETIN & PULPIT

SAMPLE TIMELINE

We have provided a sample timeline to help you prepare for the celebration of Mother's Day. While these steps apply most directly to a parish coordinator for Respect Life ministry, whatever your role serving the Church, they can help you think about key steps for planning ahead.



FEBRUARY						
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

MARCH						
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29	30	31				

APRIL						
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MAY						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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30	31					

Early to mid-February

- Meet with your pastor to discuss highlighting the precious gift of life as part of the observance of Mother's Day. Let him know what resources are available, such as the homily helps and sample intercessions that follow later in this guide. Ask him to consider offering the *Blessing of a Child in the Womb* in addition to other special Mother's Day blessings. Share with him the ideas for offering a spiritual bouquet to Our Blessed Mother (sample activity at the end of this Mother's Day action guide). Request permission for these things and any bulletin submissions you have in mind, as well as to set up a table in the vestibule or other gathering area. Most importantly, ask what you can do to help and whether there's any other information he would like you to provide.
- Following your conversation with your pastor, contact your parish office to open the lines of communication. Share the results of the conversation with your pastor and what you are requesting for the observance of Mother's Day. Find out bulletin submission guidelines and deadlines and what the parish hours will be during Holy Week and Easter Week. This information will help you determine the best date to follow up with your bulletin submissions. Many parishes need content several weeks in advance to be able to include it in the weekly bulletin. Find out what else the parish staff needs from you and when they need it.

Early March

Once you have received the appropriate approvals and permission, begin gathering materials for the spiritual bouquet. Research what options you may have for purchasing flowers at an affordable price, and compare the information against your budget. Keep in mind that flower options and prices may change based on the season.

Mid-March

Begin to recruit volunteers to help you facilitate the spiritual bouquet. Volunteers will be needed to staff the table after each Mass the weekend of Mother's Day. Other volunteer tasks might include picking up or transferring flowers to the parish or preparing materials.

MOTHER'S DAY

BULLETIN & PULPIT

Send the bulletin and pulpit announcement submissions you hope to have featured. This will help...

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Parish Action Guide: Intercessions

- Prayer of the Faithful
- Bulletin
- Parish communications

Option 2 (if you are not providing flowers) (Suggested Weekend: Mother's Day Weekend)

After Mass, please join us in offering a spiritual bouquet to Our Blessed Mother. All are invited to *[insert location of the table with the supplies]*, where there are pens and paper for you to write down a prayer intention. You can then present your intention to Our Lady by placing it in the basket at *[insert designated Marian statue, icon, or painting and location]*. If you brought Our Blessed Mother a flower, you can offer it to her in thanksgiving for her maternal care by placing it in the vase located *[insert location]*. *[Consider adding: "For those who did not bring a flower, a limited supply is available near the pens and paper."]*

As we celebrate the gift of mothers and honor Our Blessed Mother, we also recognize that *Mother's Day can be a difficult holiday for many*. We hope this spiritual bouquet provides an opportunity to pray for the intentions in your heart today.

Option 3 (if you are providing flowers) (Suggested Weekend: Mother's Day Weekend)

After Mass, please join us in offering a spiritual bouquet to Our Blessed Mother. All are invited to *[insert location of the table with the supplies]*, where there are pens and paper for you to write down a prayer intention. There are also flowers for you to offer to Our Lady in thanksgiving for her maternal care. After writing down your intention, take a flower, and present both to Our Blessed Mother at *[insert designated Marian statue, icon, or painting and location]*.

As we celebrate the gift of mothers and honor Our Blessed Mother, we also recognize that *Mother's Day can be a difficult holiday for many*. We hope this spiritual bouquet provides an opportunity to pray for the intentions in your heart today.

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INTERCESSIONS

These sample intercessions were written for use on Mother's Day; however, many can be used throughout the year. These intentions are appropriate for inclusion in the Prayer of the Faithful at Sunday Mass. They can also be printed in the weekly bulletin, featured in email newsletters, shared on social media platforms, or prayed during personal or family prayer times.

For all mothers:
That they may be supported and encouraged in their special vocation of love;
We pray to the Lord:

That all might treasure and support God's plan for life and love;
We pray to the Lord:

For all mothers:
That their children will honor their many sacrifices by lives of service and virtue;
We pray to the Lord:

For mothers facing unexpected pregnancies:
That they may find strength and courage in the example of our Blessed Mother;
We pray to the Lord:

For all mothers awaiting the birth of their children:
That the Lord protect them and bring their babies to safe delivery;
We pray to the Lord:

For all married couples struggling to have a child:
That the Lord grant them peace as they hope for the gift of a son or daughter;
We pray to the Lord:

For all those longing to welcome a child through adoption:
May the Lord guide their journey and grant them peace along the way;
We pray to the Lord:

For mothers who mourn the loss of a child:
That they may find peace and consolation in the hope of eternal life;
We pray to the Lord:

Parish Action Guide: Homily Helps

- Background
- Considerations

HOMILY HELPS

These homily helps, rather than providing specific points based on the readings of the day, are structured to provide background and considerations for preaching with sensitivity and compassion on Mother's Day. While we should always celebrate the vocation of motherhood and thank God for the gift of life brought forth through mothers, it is also important to acknowledge the challenges of those who find this annual observance painful. Other ministry leaders can also keep these considerations in mind when planning events, activities, or communications in observance of Mother's Day.

Mother's Day | Second Sunday of May

Background

Mother's Day is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the vocation of motherhood and the gift of life entrusted to mothers by God in a very special way. While Mother's Day is not a liturgical or Catholic observance, many parishes still take advantage of this holiday to honor and pray for mothers. It is a fitting day to ask God's special blessing on those who bring forth and nurture human life. (The *Book of Blessings* contains various options.) If expectant mothers are present in the congregation, Mother's Day is also an opportune time to make use of the *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb*, which offers blessings for the mother and her child.

In our efforts to honor and offer thanksgiving for all mothers, it is also important to remember that Mother's Day can be a difficult holiday for many people, such as women who are struggling with infertility, those who have lost or are estranged from their mothers, and mothers who have lost children through miscarriage, abortion, or in some other way.

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Considerations

Some considerations are provided for you to bear in mind as you honor mothers while showing sensitivity and compassion to all who find this holiday especially challenging.

- ◆ During your homily, you may want to take a moment to acknowledge that this is a difficult day for many people. Those struggling with feelings of loss, emptiness, or loneliness on this holiday can often feel overlooked. This simple gesture can communicate a sense of understanding and recognition for what they are going through.
- ◆ Invite the congregation to pray for mothers as well as those who find this holiday to be painful: those who have lost a child; those who have lost their mothers; those struggling to conceive a child; and those waiting to welcome a child through adoption, among others.
- ◆ Consider utilizing the provided sample intercessions in the Prayer of the Faithful. Some pray for mothers, while others focus on those who may find Mother's Day difficult. Addressing both is a beautiful way to celebrate motherhood, while also extending compassion and solidarity. It is especially important to acknowledge those for whom Mother's Day is hard if you plan to offer a blessing for mothers following the Prayer of the Faithful or as a solemn blessing at the end of Mass.
- ◆ All women have the capacity to be spiritual mothers.
- ◆ Reaffirm the goodness and gift of the vocation of motherhood. The incredible bond between mother and child is truly a gift from God to be celebrated.
- ◆ Consider highlighting the role the Church plays as our Mother and the role of our Blessed Mother in our lives. The Church and Our Lady can offer maternal comfort to those who are struggling and inspiration to mothers.

Parish Action Guide: Sample Activity

- What: *Spiritual Bouquet to Our Lady*
- Materials
- Directions
- At-Home Modification

SAMPLE ACTIVITY

A Spiritual Bouquet to Our Blessed Mother

May has traditionally been observed as a month dedicated to Mary, Mother of God. It is also the month in which we celebrate our earthly mothers through the observance of Mother's Day. Mother's Day provides a beautiful opportunity to pray for all mothers, including those who are unexpectedly pregnant in difficult circumstances. It can be a difficult holiday for many, including those struggling with infertility, those who have lost children, and those who have lost their own mothers.

This activity seeks to lift up the many intentions laid on our hearts by the observance of Mother's Day and offer them to Our Blessed Mother during the month honoring her. It also provides a way to give thanks for her maternal love and care for us. On the weekend of Mother's Day, parishioners are invited to write a prayer intention on a slip of paper and offer it, along with a flower if possible, to Our Lady. While there are many options for adapting or carrying out this activity, the purpose is to present a spiritual bouquet to Our Lady, by placing the intentions and flowers beneath a statue, icon, or image of the Blessed Mother.

When the activity is complete, you will have a spiritual and physical bouquet of prayer intentions and thanksgiving offered at the feet of Our Lady. This offering can remain for the next week or two, serving as a visual reminder of the powerful intercession and love of Mary, Our Mother.

While the following directions describe completing this activity within a parish, this can be easily adapted for use in a school, ministry, or family. Some adaptation ideas are included in the following pages.

Materials:

- ◆ *Flowers of various varieties (inexpensive options often include carnations, daisies, and alstroemeria, among others)
- ◆ Buckets to store the flowers in water
- ◆ Small note cards or slips of paper
- ◆ Pens, crayons, or markers
- ◆ Vases of water
- ◆ Basket to hold prayer intentions
- ◆ Designated statue, icon, or image of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- ◆ Copies of the *Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Life* (optional, respectlife.org/action-guides)

Directions:

1. Use the included sample bulletin announcement the weekend before Mother's Day to invite parishioners to participate in the upcoming activity. (Be sure to submit your bulletin announcement request well in advance to ensure space is available in the bulletin.)
2. Gather your materials. Flowers can often be obtained in bulk through a local wholesale florist or wholesale chain. Your parish may have already established connections due to ordering flowers throughout the year. The size of your parish, school, or community will determine how many flowers you need to purchase. To help keep needed quantities lower, ask that each participant use only one flower. You could also consider asking parishioners to bring their own flowers, perhaps supplying only a small number – if any – for those who forget to do so.
3. Pre-cut notecards or small slips of paper.

**If your parish or community is unable to afford flowers, this activity can still be completed without them! Simply have parishioners place their written intentions in a basket before the designated statue of Our Lady. Or, you could consider providing crayons or markers and suggesting participants draw a flower next to their intention. This adaptation cuts costs and encourages participants' creativity! Another option would be to invite parishioners to bring their own flowers. If you do have some access to flowers or money for them, you could provide a limited number on a "first come, first serve" basis for those who forget to bring one.*

Where can I find the action guide?

respectlife.org/action-guides

respectlife.org

Live the Gospel of Life

Respect Life Prayer and Action | Respect Life Resources | Prayers for Life | Articles | More | Get In Touch

ORDER

EN

ACTION GUIDES

These Respect Life action guides* provide actionable, ready-to-go parish resources created to complement existing parish life. Structured around six main calendar occasions, these action guides are designed help you take advantage of natural opportunities to highlight and integrate Respect Life themes in your parish, school, or ministry. Each action guide includes sample timelines, bulletin announcements, intercessions, homily helps, activities, and more to help you build a culture of life.

[Learn more in our FAQ...](#)

Use the buttons to jump to each action guide!

- Anniversary of Roe v. Wade
- Solemnity of the Annunciation
- Sunday of Divine Mercy
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Respect Life Month

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- Mother's Day ○
- Father's Day ○
- Respect Life Month ○
- FAQ ○


Where can I find the action guide?

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL respectlife.org. The page features the "Live the Gospel of Life" logo and a navigation menu with links for "Respect Life Prayer and Action", "Respect Life Resources", "Prayers for Life", "Articles", "More", and "Get In Touch". There is also an "ORDER" button and a language selector set to "EN".

Mother's Day | May

Mother's Day is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the beautiful vocation of motherhood and the gift of life. It calls us to cherish the gift of life that we receive from our mothers and to pray for all women to whom God has entrusted life in a very special way. As we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of all mothers, we also specifically remember mothers experiencing difficult pregnancies and pray they may find support and encouragement in choosing life for their children.

Action Guide



This Action Guide includes:


- Introduction
- "Simple Steps"
- Sample Timeline
- Sample Announcements
- Sample Intercessions
- Homily Helps
- Sample Activity

**All components are also available as individual PDF files.*

[English](#) [Spanish](#)

Coming soon!

Parish Webinar



USCCB staff explain how to use the provided materials during the month of May.

[Webinar Registration](#)

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FAQ ○

Supplementary Resources

- [Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb](#)
- [Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Life](#)

Action Guide Files

- Full Action Guide
- Action Guide Components

usccb.org

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

REPORT ABUSE STORE READINGS

Respect Life Action Guide: Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the beautiful vocation of motherhood and the gift of life. It calls us to cherish the gift of life that we receive from our mothers and to pray for all women to whom God has entrusted life in a very special way.

This Respect Life action guide for Mother's Day contains the following components:

- Introduction
- Simple Steps
- Sample Timeline
- Sample Bulletin and Pulpit Announcements
- Intercessions
- Homily Considerations
- Sample Activity (with a modified option for using at home)

[\(PDF\) Full Respect Life Mother's Day Action Guide](#)

- [Introduction](#)
- [Simple Steps](#)
- [Sample Timeline](#)
- [Sample Announcements](#)
- [Intercessions](#)
- [Homily Considerations](#)
- [Activity \(with at-home option\)](#)

Office/Committee

- [Pro-Life Activities](#)

Year Published

- 2021

Language

- English

Next Steps...

1. REVIEW the available resources.



2. DECIDE what you would like to ask permission to implement.

3. CONNECT with your pastor and parish staff.

...And remember, progress, not perfection.