



Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Shrine

Faith Formation Office

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2025- 2026

Family Project List 2025 - 2026 School Year Now through April 1, 2026

All families should complete a minimum of 6 family activities together from the suggested list. On or before April 1st. Each child in the program fills out the reflection page at the end of the suggested list of projects.

It is important while doing your family activities to focus on family members. Please have each family member turn off their phones while you have this quality time together, sharing your faith as a family.

Family Activity Choices:

1. Any of the family activities at the end of each chapter in your child's book can be used as a family project.
2. Pray the Rosary once a month together as a family from October through April. Talk about how important it is to pray together as a family.
3. Take a family walk and talk about God's creation and how you can take care of it. Name at least 20 things that you see that God created. Give everyone in the family a turn to name something.
4. Play the 10 Commandments dice game. The instructions are listed at the end of this list.
5. Have each family member research if there is a saint with their name. Have a family discussion about the saints that you are named after and share what you learned about your saint with your family. Tell your children how they got their name. *If you are researching saints online, please ensure you are using a Catholic doctrine website.
6. Make a family blessings jar. Every family member writes something they are grateful for/or something they love about another family member on a slip of paper. Everyone adds in at least two slips of paper each week. At the end of each month, sit together as a family to "read and count" your blessings. Talk about the things your family must be grateful for. Does your family know someone who may not be as fortunate? Say a family prayer together for that person.
7. Make breakfast together as a family on a Saturday or Sunday at least two times a month. Start breakfast off by saying the prayer of Grace together.
8. Eat dinner together as a family as much as you can each week. Say Grace together as a family at each dinner.
9. Discuss a "Family Meal" card at the dinner table at least once a week with the entire family. A copy of the questions on the cards is attached separately.

10. Place/keep an empty chair at your table. Don't let anyone sit there, it's reserved for Jesus. Place a candle (flameless is safe) on your table. Let each family member take turns lighting it each time you eat together. Talk about how Jesus is the Light of the World, and He is with you. You can place a colored cloth napkin under your candle to represent the liturgical season. Green for ordinary times, purple for Advent and Lent, red for Palm Sunday and Good Friday, white or gold for Christmas Day and Easter Sunday. (*"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* Matthew 18:20).
11. Have a family discussion about how the Word of God is for all people. Talk about the injustices in the world today, including discrimination, hate crimes, abortion, racism, and intolerance. Say a family prayer together for all those suffering from any type of discrimination. Did your family join in a peaceful protest? Discuss if/how that experience changed you.
12. As a family, go together to a religious store and buy a family crucifix, a statue of your favorite saint, a holy water font, a Bible, and/or any other religious item to have in your home if you do not already have these things. Together as a family, bring your religious items to the parish office and have a priest bless them for your family.
13. Gather your religious items together in your home and make up a family prayer table/space.
14. Together as a family, paint some small rocks with positive words on them. Walk around your neighborhood and hide them for others to find. (Be respectful of where you place them.)
15. Together as a family, paint some small rocks, about 3-5", different solid colors. When extended family and friends come over, each of them uses a black permanent Sharpie-style marker and writes their names and date on a rock. They can also write positive words. Place the rocks in a family "prayer garden" somewhere in your yard. Say a prayer for everyone who leaves you a rock in your prayer garden as you walk through the yard. Make sure everyone in your family adds a rock to the prayer garden. Help them find their prayer rock when they come back for another visit.
16. Attend the sacrament of reconciliation as a family during Advent or Lent.
17. Pay it forward together as a family at least once this Fall and at least once in Winter. This can be done in any number of ways. After your act of kindness, have a family discussion about how everyone felt helping others. Can your family commit to paying it forward in Spring and Summer, too?
18. Make dinner together as a family one weekend night a month. While you are cooking together, let each family member choose a different topic for everyone to discuss. Some suggested topics are planning the next family vacation, remembering the last family vacation, upcoming family celebrations, family traditions, current events, and your faith.
19. Once a month, have a family game night. Make fun snacks together as a family.
20. Once a month, have a family member pick a person that your family doesn't frequently get to see or talk with. Get together and call them on a speaker phone or Zoom with them. If possible,
go and visit them, keeping social distancing in mind. Perhaps an aunt, grandparent, or neighbor who moved away?

21. While the weather is still nice, invite a senior citizen who lives on your street over for an outside barbecue. Ask them stories about what it was like when they grew up.
22. Have a family donate day where everyone in the family gathers up the clothes they no longer wear, toys played with, etc. And deliver them together to a local charity like the St. Vincent de Paul Shop in Berlin. All proceeds from sales go to assist those in need.
23. Engage your family in a discussion about your family goals. What inspires you as a family? What do you want to accomplish this year, and how can everyone contribute to your goals? What is holding you back from your family goals? Is staying closer to home in this pandemic changing your perspective on your goals?
24. Be an example of Christ to someone who needs it. Have a family discussion about how we can help others and always be kind to everyone.
25. Talk with your children about not knowing what happens behind closed doors in someone's home. Invite one of their friends over for safe, appropriate socialization that perhaps doesn't have as positive a home situation.
26. Have a family discussion about social media and how you can use it to make a positive difference in the world. Also discuss that it can easily become a false God and how, as a family, you can prevent this from happening in your life/family. Discuss the dangers of engaging with strangers online and giving out personal information.
27. Arrange to volunteer together at a pet shelter, Saint Vincent the Paul, Ronald McDonald House, or the Unforgotten Haven. ***This may take time for you to set up. Please only consider doing this if the environment is safe to be in.*** Some charities, like Cathedral Kitchen, have things you can do at home to help them in their mission.
28. Get the family together and make cards for the clients of Cathedral Kitchen. You can make Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter cards. All cards need to be dropped off at the parish office by the following dates: Thanksgiving cards drop off before Monday, November 17th. Christmas cards drop off before Monday, Dec. 15th. Easter cards drop off before Monday, March 14th.
29. Get the family together and make utensil packs for the clients of Cathedral Kitchen. Each pack should be a Ziploc-style sandwich bag filled with a napkin, a plastic spoon, a plastic fork, a salt packet, a pepper packet, and 2 individual wet hand wipes. *****If any family wants to do this, please let me know, as I can give you the salt and pepper packets and probably the napkins to use.***
30. Get the family together and make lunches at home for the Cathedral Kitchen. We will have a specific drop-off day and time at the parish office for this service in November. Information will be sent home in early November for those families who want to participate.
31. Get together and take a fun or formal picture of your family. Get a few printed out and send them to be extended family and/or friends, letting them know you are thinking of them.

Our Churches are open! Our Masses are being held as usual. Invite another family or your child's friend to go to Mass with you.

Greet the priest after Mass and introduce each member of your family to him by name. They want to meet and get to know each of you.

32. After your family attends Mass together, have a family conversation about the homily at the dinner table that night. Did the homily give you "food for thought"? How did it "speak" to you? Did it inspire you to think differently or possibly make different choices? What did you "hear" in the homily that you didn't "hear" while the Word was being read?
33. Have a Mass said for the members of your family who are deceased, and attend the Mass together as a family.
34. This Advent, take Mary and Joseph from your family Nativity set and place them far away from your manger set. Move them closer to the manger set each day as we get closer to Christmas in anticipation of the birth of Jesus. Each member of your family can take turns reading the story of Jesus's birth from the Bible each day as you move Mary and Joseph closer to the manger. Have a family discussion about the birth of Jesus and how the birth of a baby changes the dynamics of each family. If doing this daily won't work for your family, try doing it 2 or 3 days each week.
35. Start a new tradition in your family. Get together and make/decorate your own Advent wreath. Decorate it using fresh pinecones, holly berries, ribbon, and/or floral picks from the craft store. Say a blessing on each of the 4 Sundays of Advent season as you light the candles. Keeping safety in mind, let each family member take a turn lighting the candles. A weekly blessing is at the end of this list.
36. Daily during Advent, say a prayer together as a family for all the babies who go to heaven before they are born.
37. Participate in our annual Christmas Stocking Project for the Christmas Giving Tree. Sign-up information will be sent home in early November. Names and ages will be given out in the last week of November. Families shop together to buy stockings and stocking stuffers for children on our Christmas Giving Tree. Families should have a discussion on their personal blessings and how they can each help the less fortunate throughout the year.
41. Bake and decorate Christmas cookies together as a family. Some cookies have special meanings, like candy cane-shaped cookies. See if you can find some information/special meanings on the cookies you make.
42. Make homemade ornaments together as a family and decorate a small homemade tree. Have a family discussion about how, over the generations, holiday traditions have changed in your family.
43. Decorate your Christmas tree together. When you are done, bless the tree with holy water. A blessing is at the end of this list. Read the story of the birth of Jesus in the Bible. Talk about your family Christmas traditions and compare them to the traditions in the Catholic Church.
44. Put up your family manger set together. When you are done, bless the manger set with holy water. A blessing is at the end of this list. Read the story of the birth of Jesus in the Bible. Discuss how you think the people who came to see the baby Jesus felt when they saw him. Do you think they understood that baby Jesus was the Messiah?
45. Go to Mass together on Christmas Eve/Christmas Day. Have a family discussion about the priest's homily for the Mass. Why is what he said important to our faith?
46. Bake a birthday cake for Jesus together as a family. Sing Happy Birthday to Jesus on Christmas.

47. Read some of your favorite stories in the Old Testament in the Bible together as a family. Have a family discussion about the stories you read. Do you think that is related to something that has happened in modern history?
48. Attend Ash Wednesday services or Mass together as a family to get ashes. Have a family discussion about the sacrifices Jesus made for us. What sacrifices will each member of your family make this Lent?
49. Attend Stations of the Cross together as a family on any Friday during Lent.
50. Shop together for Easter basket goodies and together make an Easter basket for someone less fortunate or who lives alone. Maybe for a neighbor who is a senior citizen? Deliver it as a family (safely) and spend some time with the recipient. Share the joy of Easter!
51. Take turns and have one family member each day during Lent, pick out something that is no longer used in the house, and put it in a donation box for the St. Vincent de Paul store in Berlin. Take it to the St. Vincent store on Good Friday. Have a family discussion about how it feels to help the less fortunate.
52. Bake traditional Easter Bread together as a family. Research the history of Easter bread. Talk about your family Easter traditions.
53. Families with children receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time... Have a family discussion about the differences between a mistake, an accident and sin. Talk about the two types of sin and how they either weaken your relationship with God or they sever your relationship with God. 5
54. Families with children receiving their First Holy Communion this year...*Read the story of the Last Supper from the Gospel of John, 13:1-17:26.* Have a family discussion about how the story of the Last Supper corresponds to the Eucharist at our Mass.
55. Families with 7th and 8th graders...Sit together and read *Galatians 5:22-23 in the Bible*. Then discuss the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. How are they used by your family each day? How can you share these fruits with extended family members? Friends? The less fortunate?
56. Families with 7th and 8th graders: Once a week, for the next 7 weeks, discuss one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit during breakfast or dinner. Talk about how each member of your family experienced Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord.
57. During the year, we celebrate the Feast Days of many Saints. As a family, pick a saint you want to learn more about and research them on a Catholic website. Have a family discussion about the qualities of that Saint and how each member of your family can aspire to be like them.
58. Make a family prayer card. Sit together and make up your favorite saint on the front side and write a family prayer on the back side. Post it on your refrigerator. Say your family prayer each night together before/after dinner.

59. Pray together as a family each night at bedtime, a prayer of gratitude for the gifts you received that day.
60. Pray together as a family for the members of our parish who are in the military. The list is in the bulletin each week.
61. Work together as a family and send a care package to someone you know serving in the military overseas.
62. Pray together for the people on the parish sick list. The list is in our bulletin each week. This can be done at least once a month.
63. Pray together as a family each time you are in the car and pass an accident, see an ambulance with its siren/lights on, see a firetruck on the way to a fire, or see anyone who is in danger and needs immediate prayers.
64. Pray together in the car on your way to sporting events and activities so that everyone will play their best and no injuries will occur.
65. Go on a family scavenger hunt car ride. See the list of things at the end of this list to look for on your hunt. Have each member of the family add a few items to the list to search for.
66. Take out the sidewalk chalk and, as a family, decorate your sidewalk and/or walkways with positive statements of hope, love, and care for your neighbors to admire.
67. What is your idea for a family project? How can your family practice their faith together each month? All ideas are welcome!

Family Car Scavenger Hunt

Look for these things when the family is in the car together. Who can find the most things? Some things are seasonal, as this can be done any month of the program.

- ❖ Red doors on a church
- ❖ Church sign welcoming you back to Mass.
- ❖ A Manger/Nativity scene outside of a church
- ❖ Statue outside of a church
- ❖ A Blessed Mother Garden statue
- ❖ Any religious garden statuary
- ❖ Rosary beads hanging in someone's car.
- ❖ A dashboard Jesus in someone's car (you may have to explain this one to your kids!☐)
- ❖ A part of God's creation that is wet (lake, pond, etc.)
- ❖ One of God's creatures flying in the sky
- ❖ Any insect
- ❖ Any wild animal
- ❖ Christmas lights on someone's house (remember, each light is a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the World)
- ❖ A Manger/Nativity scene on someone's lawn.
- ❖ A flowering bush
- ❖ A flowering tree
- ❖ A vegetable garden.
- ❖ A butterfly
- ❖ A bird splashing in a birdbath
- ❖ A crying baby
- ❖ Children playing outside.
- ❖ A family walking together
- ❖ A family biking together
- ❖ A family building a snowman together
- ❖ A family having a picnic
- ❖ A family walking a dog
- ❖ What other things do you want to add to the list?

The 10 Commandments Game

This is a great game to play with children in the older grades, 5th grade and up.

You will need:

A pair of dice and a list of the 10 Commandments to play.

Each family member takes a turn and calls out the name of another family member and then rolls the dice.

Whatever number is rolled, the family member whose name was called out, has to say that commandment and say something about it.

If you throw a #11, you will talk about the 1st commandment. If you roll a #12, you get to choose which commandment you want to talk about. For rolls of #'s 2-10, you will talk about the commandment that you roll.

Ideas of what to talk about:

- Give an example of what the commandment means.
- Say if you have ever broken that commandment. How could you have prevented breaking it?
- What are the ways that people break that commandment?
- Say why/if that commandment is easy for you to keep.
- What are things people can do to keep that commandment? The game ends when every commandment is discussed at least once.

Try to vary which family member is called so everyone gets more than one turn.

Family Meal Cards

The front of the card is listed first. This is the discussion question. The back of the card is listed below and is called Food for Thought. This gives you something to think about and can guide you as you discuss your question.

- If you could carve 4 new faces into the side of Mt. Rushmore, whose faces would they be? Why do you believe your choice deserves such a place of honor? Food for Thought: Tell your child about your favorite apostle, holy person, or hero from the Bible. Let your child know what traits you admire in that person.
- If you had to describe your personality in terms of a form of transportation, which one would you choose? (i.e., Taxi, airplane, camel, train, etc.) A major gift we give our children is an appreciation of their individuality. Pray that you can nurture the gifts your child embodies for the good of the world.
- If you could change one thing about the way your favorite holiday is celebrated, what would you change? Don't deprive your family of the holiday traditions that are part of their heritage. As time passes, one generation may pass up as old-fashioned a custom that the next generation would cherish. Resurrect the ethnic and religious customs (songs, foods, decorations) that helped sustain a lively faith for your ancestors.
- If you could add only one thing to your home to make it spectacular, something that would amaze everyone who visits, what would you add? My one friend's house was fancy and filled with toys, but we never played there. Another friend's house was simple, but we crowded into his living room daily with his many siblings and parents who lit up with joy when we came over. How welcoming does you make your home? Is there more you can do?
- If you knew that you could become the best in the world at any one skill, but that it would take fifteen years of studying and/or practicing hard to get to that level, toward what goal would you be willing to dedicate yourself so completely? From time to time, children will feel overwhelmed as they take on new and expanding challenges. You can help them, in word and example, to understand that while it's important to keep an eye on the end goal, the way to get there is to ask God for help and to simply do the next thing right in front of you.
- What is one seemingly impossible goal you would like the world to achieve during your lifetime? Encourage your child to talk about the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have

them do unto you. That will foster an awareness of their solidarity as one big, human family. Jesus longs for the time when we recognize we are all one, just as Jesus and the Father are one.

➤ If you could jump into the pages of any book you've ever read and experience action along with the characters, which book would you choose? Think about a fictional character that you admired when you were the age your child is now. Tell your child about the character and the story, sharing what you most enjoyed and appreciated about them and what lessons you learned.

➤ Different forms of art serve as great inspiration to people all over the world. What form of art do you personally find most inspiring, and why do you think it makes you feel so good inside? My wife's spiritual director was an artist, a sculptor of some renown. His best piece of advice to her while she was in the middle of raising our two young daughters was this: Make time to do something creative every day. This is one sure way to connect with the Divine Artist, the maker of heaven and earth.

➤ If you oversaw planning for and building a brand-new museum, what specific theme would be the focus of the museum and where do you think would be the best place to build it? What values or advice would you like to leave as a legacy to your child? Why not draft a "moral will." This is like a regular last will and testament, but instead of monetary or physical bequests, it lists the moral qualities, virtues, and values you hope to pass on to your child, the words you hope they can live by.

➤ If you were asked to design a brand-new place for people to worship God, a place unlike anything you've seen before; how would you design it? Be as specific as you can. Tell your child about the church attended when you were young. Share what you liked best about that church-it might have been a work of art, a stained-glass window, the altar-whatever it was that appealed to you.

➤ If you could build a private bridge or tunnel that would take you directly from your home to any place at all, what would it connect you to? Prayer is one of the surest ways we connect with God. At any time, in any circumstance, you can talk to God heart to heart. Make prayer a daily habit in your home.

➤ If you could have been born on a holiday, which one would it be? Why? Make faith come alive in your child's imagination by celebrating as many religious holidays as you can. Celebration can be as elaborate as decorating the house for Christmas, or as simple as singing a

hymn. A religious calendar that lists feast days can help you plan celebrations in advance.

- If you could open the back door to your house and step out into the perfect backyard, what would that yard be like? Be as specific as you can. Take a moment to imagine in what ways heaven will be the perfect place. Jesus said, “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” Take one action today that will make life in your family more like your vision of heaven.
- If you had to complete the following sentence for each person in the room with you right now, how would you finish it? “You are special to me because. _____.” Whenever you speak about yourself or another family member, keep this in mind—we were each created with love by a loving God. Practice Psalm 139: “You formed my mother’s womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works!”
- If you could transport yourself back in time and experience first-hand any story in the Bible, which one would it be? The story of our salvation that is recounted in the Bible continues in our own lives today. Right now, look for one way that God is active in the life of your family. At dinner or before bedtime, be sure to share your observations with your child.
- If an ice-cream company asked you to come up with a brand-new flavor of ice cream, what flavor would it be and what creative name would you give it? We each have great gifts to give a troubled world. Discovering our likes and preferences can help us discover the true nature and flavor of our most valuable gifts. Help your child taste a wide array of experiences to help him or her discover those favorites that might point out the way to a life of fulfillment.
- When you consider our amazing and complex earth, in what aspect of it do you find it easiest to “see” God? I recall how long it took to learn how to hit a baseball. As he pitched ball after ball my way, my father would chant, “Keep your eye on the ball.” But fear had me closing my eyes and swinging blindly. In your life, what does fear prevent you from seeing?
- Suppose that twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, you had to hear a background noise in your head. This background noise would always be there throughout your life. What background noise would you choose as your very own? When you’re stressed, your imagination can help. Call to mind sounds that calm you—a babbling brook, birds chirping, a favorite song—and let them lead you to an inner place where you can hear the still, small voice of God.
- If you could create the most beautiful stained-glass windows in the world, what design or images would the window contain? We parents owe our children two seemingly

paradoxical gifts, roots, and wings. If, early on, we help our children sink their roots deeply into faith in a loving God, it's much more likely that in adulthood they will find their wings and truly soar.

➤ If you could be the tallest tree for many miles around, where in the world would you want to be planted so you could have an awesome view of everything below you? God has planted a seed of faith in each child. You have a major influential role in how well that seed of faith is nurtured. Pray that you can respond to the opportunities to nurture tender faith each day.

➤ If someone gave you \$1,000 in cash, in the form of ten \$100 bills, and told you that you HAD to give it all away within 24 hours, to whom would you give the money? Advertising fills us

children's imaginations with many things they can acquire and possess. Counter that by showing your child the joy of being a creative giver. For example, invite your child to donate toys and clothes to those in need or to assist a neighbor who could use a helping hand.

➤ If for just one day, you could be the most talented in the world at something, just to experience what it's like to be so incredibly skilled at it, what would you choose? We parent greatly influence how our children define success. You may not be the fastest swimmer, best gymnast, most creative author, or best gourmet cook, but you can always be the person God created you to be. In God's eyes, that's how you spell success.

➤ If you could permanently eliminate any one part of your daily routine, what would it be? True enlightenment comes in discovering that even our mundane moments are charged with the grandeur of God's presence and love. Pay attention and you will see the ways that God is present in both the high points and low points of each day.

➤ If you could change the ending to any movie, you've ever seen, what movie would it be and how would you change the ending? Prayer changes things. It may not automatically change the

➤ circumstances I am struggling with, but it does change me. It makes me more willing to seek the will of God and pursue it in my life. When that happens, I find that what really needed to change were not my circumstances, but myself.

➤ If you could personally see the biggest, the tallest, or the longest of anything in the world, what would you want to see most of all? Help your child figure out what he or she is meant to do in life by offering these three criteria for a good vocation: In what work will you be happy?

In what work will you be holy? In what work will you be effective? A great way to spend a life!

➤ If you could personally hear or see the loudest, the strongest, or the fastest of anything in the world, what would you choose to hear or see? Just for dad: Kids long for their father's blessings. Yet too often, dads remain silent about what they feel inside. Sometimes this week, set aside an hour to write a letter to each of your children describing in detail something unique that you appreciate about him or her. Write from the heart and give them this gift that will last a lifetime.

➤ If you had to rearrange the letters in your first name to come up with a brand-new first name for yourself, what would be your new name? Note: You must use up all of the letters in your name and can't add any additional letters. Children crave a sense that they are special in their

parents' eyes. Tell your child how you chose his or her name, why it's special to you, and how it means even more now that it belongs to your child.

➤ For Kids: What aspect of being an adult are you looking forward to the most? For adults: What aspect of being a kid do you miss the most? As a parent, you have many responsibilities. But don't forget how much fun it is to play. Set aside one night a week/month as family fun night. Play board games, sing songs, and play charades. Let your inner child come out to play. You will connect more with your child, and you'll live a more balanced life.

➤ If you could release a helium balloon with a message card attached to the end of the string, what message would you write for the unknown recipient to read? Try this for fun. Have each family member pull from a hat the name of a family member. Include extended family members, if possible, for a whole week, ask each person to pray for the family member whose name they picked. At the end of the week, reveal everyone's "Secret Prayer Pal."

➤ Suppose you were told that you could have one wish come true-but the wish you make would have to be for someone else, not yourself. What would you wish for and for whom would you wish it? Empathy is a fundamental building block for all moral growth. Make it a family value to frequently consider how your behavior and choices affect others. When your child talks about other children's experiences, gently ask, "And how do you think they felt about that?" This will nurture your child's capacity for compassion.

➤ If your home had to be surrounded by one natural feature, which one would you want it to be? (Examples-desert, fields of flowers, lakes etc.) Being a conscientious parent can feel lonely, but you don't have to go alone. Surround yourself with the company of other parents who share and support the values you want your family to live by. They will give you a boost and be valuable witnesses to your child.

➤ If you had to award a gold medal to someone other than your parent or child, to whom would you give it and for what reason? Telling stories of people in your life who exemplify the virtues that matter most to you is an effective way to communicate those virtues to your child. Think of someone in your life who manifested courage, generosity, or honesty, and tell your child a story about the person that conveys your admiration and respect.

- If you won a grocery store contest in which your prize was to fill up one shopping cart with anything you wanted, what specific items would be in your cart by the time you got to the checkout line? A trip to the store can be an opportunity for lessons on gratitude and compassion for others. Almost two-fifths of the world live on less than \$2.00 per day. Many lack not only food, but clean water and cooking fuel. The next time you are shopping with your child, count your blessings and think about what you can do for others.
- If you were allowed to try and break any world record, which one do you think would you have the most fun trying to break? Why? Introduce your child to the lives of the holy men and women of our faith. These people were not perfect. But in the words of St. Paul, they fought the good fight and ran the good race. Some did truly heroic things; others lived quite ordinary lives. All of them learned to love and serve God in the circumstances they were in.
- When it comes to things that make you happy, what five things would you rank at the very top? When asked what it would take to get to heaven, Jesus said, “Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and clothe the naked.” That’s what parents do each day. It’s a paradox that our greatest happiness comes when we freely give of ourselves. Think about that the next time you’re fixing supper or folding laundry.
- If you could travel back in time to live through any one year or event in American history, which year or event would you want to experience? Why? Quickly make a spiritual timeline that lists the moments and events in your life that had the most impact on your spiritual beliefs. Review the highs and the lows and list the top three most influential events.
- Reflect on what God was trying to tell you in these moments.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath

God of love, may this wreath and its light remind us that Jesus came to save us from our sin. Bless this wreath and all who gather around it as we prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas. Come, Lord Jesus, bring hope, faith, and life to our world. Amen

Week 1 ~ Hope

Dear Jesus, you are the Hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what's important. We place our Hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your Birth on Christmas. Amen.

Week 2 ~ Peace

Dear Jesus, you entered our world on Christmas as the Prince of Peace. This Advent, as we strive to become "The best version of ourselves." Fill us with a deep and Abiding Peace. Help us share that Peace with everyone we encounter, especially those who need it most. Amen.

Week 3 ~ Joy

Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy Season. May we stay aware of the Joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger On Christmas. Amen.

Week 4 ~ Love

Dear Jesus, may the light of your Love always shine in Our hearts. As Christmas draws closer, we marvel at Your great Love for us. Let your Love transform every Aspect of our lives and touch everyone we encounter. Our hearts are open to you, Jesus. Amen.

Blessing of the Christmas Manger

In its present form, the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas Eve of 1223.

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time.

When the manger is set up in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another family member.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R/. Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, Luke 2:1 (lines 1-8) or Isaiah 7:10 (lines 10-15, the birth of Emmanuel). If you do not have a family Bible to read from, you can Google the Book, Chapter, and Verse.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The leader prays, and everyone holds hands:

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation, you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great, you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives, he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever.

R/. Amen.

From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers Taken from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops website.

Blessing of the Family Christmas Tree

The use of the Christmas tree is relatively modern. Its origins are found in the medieval mystery plays that depicted the tree of paradise and the Christmas light or candle that symbolized Christ, the Light of the World.

According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany.

The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing. In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, in connection with the evening meal on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day.

When all have gathered, a suitable Christmas song may be sung. The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply "Amen."

The leader may greet those present in the following words:

Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders, Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, Titus 3:4 (lines 4-7) or Ezekiel 17:22 (lines 22-24 4; I will plant a tender shoot on the mountain heights of Israel.) If you do not have a family Bible to read from, you can Google the Book, Chapter, and Verse. Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

The intercessions are then said. The leader says: Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.... "Our Father, who art in...."

The leader says this prayer with everyone holding hands:

Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night. We praise you for the light of Israel: The Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.

We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying: May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

The blessing concludes with a verse from “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”: O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death’s dark shadow put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

—From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers Taken from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops website

Family Project Reflection 2024-25

This reflection is due back to the faith formation office on or before April 1, 2025. Each child registered in the program should fill out their own form.

Family last name:

Child's Full Name:

Current Grade:

What Family Projects did you do with your family? If you did more than the required 6, please list all the ones you did. List them by their number on the list:

What Family Project did you like doing the best? Why?

How did it feel to spend this time with your family?

Did it feel like your family was sharing their faith while you did these projects?

Is there a Family Project that you think your family will continue to do together? Which one.