

RECLAIMING Sundays



RECOVER SUNDAY AS A DAY FOR THE LORD AND FAMILY



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

Reclaiming Sundays

Sunday is a day which is at the very heart of the Christian life. [...]et us open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us “his day” as an ever new gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human.

(Pope St. John Paul II, Dies Domini, 7)

Each parish of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis is asked to help families in their parish “reclaim” Sundays. To assist this effort, parishes are encouraged to adopt a monthly theme that focuses on an aspect of living out the gift of Sunday to its fullest and encourages families to take concrete steps — large or small — to develop habits that produce the fruit that comes from fully living the Lord’s Day.

The strategy is to cultivate an interiority (habit of being) among parents and families that allows them to live Sundays as God intends. The intention is to provide enough institutional structure to help families grow in their ability to live out the theme that corresponds to their season in life and meets them where they are. The 12 themes (one per month of the year) of how to reclaim Sundays are intended to be a springboard for parishes that wish to participate in this campaign.

Additionally, there are resources listed below that could be used within current parish small groups:

- *Dies Domini* by Pope St. John Paul II
- *Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer
- *Reclaiming Sundays* by Donna Marie Cooper O’Boyle
- *The Three Big Questions for a Frantic Family* by Patrick Lencioni
- *Forming Families, Forming Saints* by Father Carter Griffin
- Hallow App

12-MONTH Thematic Overview

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and Prayer*

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SEPTEMBER

Prayer

September's theme is a foundational pillar in the 12-month campaign. Prayer is the cornerstone for all "Reclaiming Sundays" efforts and will be carried throughout all the months. The recommended resource for parishes to assist parents in building habits of prayer is the **Hallow App**.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR SEPTEMBER:

- Attend Mass every Sunday this month.
- Prepare your family for Mass by reading the Gospel in advance. Consider laying out clothes, find everyone's shoes, and do anything else that will make the morning peaceful and efficient.
- Pray before meals as a family and individually.
- Institute Lord's Day evening prayer on either Saturday or Sunday and ask for everyone in the family to offer prayer intentions.
- Visit an adoration chapel for 15 minutes, 30 minutes, or more as a family.

// Resource for going to adoration: www.youtube.com/watch?v=irLkwdkeotw



OCTOBER

Rest, Recreation and Prayer

“On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.” *Genesis 2:2*

We are called to rest on Sunday as the Lord rested. It isn't an idleness or simply a time for entertainment but rather a restorative experience of reveling in the fullness of what has been and gratitude for God's providence — a time to take delight in the gift of life.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR OCTOBER:

- Refrain from house projects and tasks centered around productivity.
- Choose activities focused on recreation, leisure, and rest (such as reading a book, listening to music, doing a crossword puzzle, going for a long walk, playing a game, or playing outdoors together).
- Build community by inviting another family over or by visiting a friend or relative.
- Kids love traditions and they are great for building family identity. Create a Sunday tradition such as brunch after Mass or flowers and candles with dinner. Or, on the flip side, adopt a quiet, simple dinner. In the month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, a Sunday family rosary could be in your living room, but also could be prayed on a walk, around a campfire, or in the car on the way back from visiting that relative.
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



NOVEMBER

Beauty and Prayer

“God looked at everything he had made and found it very good.” ” *Genesis 1:31*

On Sunday we are called to participate in appreciating the beauty that is all around us and participate in it. Beauty can evoke in us an appreciation for what God has created in our life and lead us to participate in that creation through the materials around us. We are called to find and assist in creating beauty through the ordinariness of family life.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR NOVEMBER:

- Explore the beauty of our cathedral, basilica, or your parish by taking time to explore the art. Learn about the saints you see. If you have time, draw pictures of your favorite image or take a family photo with a beautiful sacred image in the background. Turn this into a small moment of evangelization by making it your Christmas card photo.
- Create a small sacred space (prayer table/family altar) in your home. Enlist contributions from everyone in your family to make it beautiful (flowers in a small vase, draw pictures for Jesus, etc.).
- Color with your children.
- Share passionate projects in which you create (the woodshop, knitting, etc.).
- **Liturgical Living: Near the beginning of the month, visit a family member's gravesite. Make it neat and bring flowers (if permitted by the cemetery). Pass on family stories about this person to your children. Learn the Eternal Rest prayer and pray it daily for those you know who have died. Pray for the souls in purgatory this month.**
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.

DECEMBER

Music and Prayer

“He who sings, prays twice.” *St. Augustine*

Music and song lifts the spirit to God. Engaging in vocal or instrumental music can be a way for our whole self to share in the glory of the Father.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR DECEMBER:

- Share the gift of music together. If you can play instruments, great!
- Make a playlist of favorite hymns.
- Find a playlist of Advent music.
- Does your parish, school, or neighborhood have some sort of musical program this month? Attend as a family.
- Pray with an Advent Wreath.
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



JANUARY

Invitation and Prayer

“The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.” *Pope Francis*

Pope Francis reminds all Christians in *Evangelii Gaudium* that the joy that transforms our lives when we encounter the living Jesus is a joy that must be shared.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR JANUARY:

- Invite someone outside of your family to share an aspect of your “reclaimed Sunday” (e.g., invite a neighbor for dinner, ask family friends to go on a walk with you).
- **Liturgical Living: Intentionally celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.** (E.g., light candles and have a little procession to place the Magi in your Nativity scene, use blessed chalk to bless your doorways, eat a meal of middle Eastern food, sing “We Three Kings,” etc.) Invite someone to share your celebration.
- **Liturgical Living: Celebrate the Baptism of the Lord** by remembering your own family baptisms. Light your candles, look at photos and videos from the sacramental celebration, invite godparents to share your celebration, bless each other with holy water, pray for your godparents, pray for the priests who baptized you all, etc. While you have all these mementos out, document your family’s baptism dates and mark them on your calendar to celebrate in years to come.
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



FEBRUARY

No/Low-Tech Sundays and Prayer

“Sometimes we prove hard of heart and mind; we are forgetful, distracted and carried away by the limitless possibilities for consumption and distraction offered by contemporary society.”

Evangelii Gaudium 196

The endless distraction of smart phones is well known. A device marketed to unite and connect has in many instances had an alternative impact. Create space in the interior of your heart to receive the blessing of God by turning off the distractions.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR FEBRUARY:

- Turn off phones during dinner or all day.
- Stow devices or commit to not responding to emails, or engage in social media-free Sundays.
- If you choose to lessen media, try replacing that time with playing family games or reading books aloud together.
- Ash Wednesday is February 18, 2026. Incorporate some kind of technology fast in your family's Lenten plan. Adults — lead by example!
- **Liturgical Living: Attend Stations of the Cross at your parish or pray a family-friendly version at home. (Start with 14 lit candles and extinguish one after each station.)**
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



MARCH

Elevated Conversation and Prayer

“The spirit of love which reigns in a family guides both mother and child in their conversations; therein they teach and learn, experience correction and grow in appreciation of what is good.”

Evangelii Gaudium 139

The power of conversation in a family cannot be overstated. The act of listening with the ear of the heart and responding out of love to what was heard is the bedrock of trust in the family. Taking time to engage in this kind of conversation can often get pushed aside for the utilitarian needs that take priority in working to manage frantic family life.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR MARCH:

- Set aside time for intentional conversation and check on each other's “highs and lows” from the week.
- Read or listen to the daily Gospels. Discuss the reading.
- Set aside one-on-one time between a parent and a child to encourage conversations that may be lost in the busyness of family life. (Go out for breakfast or coffee/cocoa, etc.)
- Consider a silent dinner (counter intuitive to elevated conversation) - during the silent dinner, a piece of music is listened to, or a book is read. This will lead to elevated conversation following the experience.
- **Liturgical Living: Celebrate St. Joseph's solemnity. Honor your father and grandfathers somehow. Show appreciation to your priest in some way.**
- **Liturgical Living: Celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation in some way. It is a break from Lent and nine months to Christmas!**
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.

APRIL

Breaking Bread and Prayer

“But because of its special solemnity and the obligatory presence of the community, and because it is celebrated “on the day when Christ conquered death and gave us a share in his immortal life,” the Sunday Eucharist expresses with greater emphasis its inherent ecclesial dimension. It becomes the paradigm for other Eucharistic celebrations. Each community, gathering all its members for the “breaking of the bread,” becomes the place where the mystery of the Church is concretely made present.”

Dies Domini 34

Just as we gather around the banquet feast at the Eucharist, our families can model this communal breaking of the bread in our own homes through celebrating the day with a special meal and extended time at the table.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR APRIL:

- Create a special meal and share time at the table together.
- Early in the month, spend some time one Sunday to make family plans for the Triduum and Easter. There are so many traditions that go with these days! Adopt a new one.
- Find ways to incorporate Alleluias into your family's prayer. (Sing it, pray it, decorate your prayer space with it, greet each other with it ...)
- Plan ways your family can intentionally celebrate the season of Easter for all 50 days.(especially appropriate on Sundays)
- Learn the *Regina Caeli* prayer
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



MAY

Community and Prayer

“Houses and neighborhoods are more often built to isolate and protect than to connect and integrate. The proclamation of the Gospel will be a basis for restoring the dignity of human life.” *Pope Francis*

Pope Francis urges in *Evangelii Gaudium* to keep the proclamation of the Gospel at the center of going forth to serve those around us. It is in keeping Christ at the center of our outward movement that the dignity of human life will be restored.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR MAY:

- Walk around your neighborhood together, praying for those in each house you pass. Pray for those who serve your neighborhood (police, firefighters, local government, etc.).
- Spend more time outside in the hopes of meeting more of your neighbors.
- Start a small group of couples/families in your home. (Reach out to your parish ECT for Small Group information.)
- Host a community potluck (school community, neighborhood community, parish community).
- Play games with the family.
- Do a puzzle with a friend.
- Engage in activities that connect us and resist the temptation to isolate.
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



JUNE

Screen-Free Sundays and Prayer

“Sometimes we prove hard of heart and mind; we are forgetful, distracted and carried away by the limitless possibilities for consumption and distraction offered by contemporary society.”

Evangelii Gaudium 196

Not only do smart phones distract, but also the endless streaming of Hulu, Netflix or Peacock. Create space in your family life to engage one another outside of the temptation to “binge” one show after another.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR JUNE:

- Skip the screens and enjoy glorious Minnesota summer.
- **Liturgical Living: Pentecost!** Certainly, this inspires something. (Wear red to Mass, have a bonfire, make a birthday cake for the Church, eat spicy food - “tongues of fire.”)
- **Liturgical Living: Corpus Christi** – participate in a procession at your parish or somewhere else in the Archdiocese. There are many options.
- **Liturgical Living: June 29** is the feast of our diocesan patron, Saint Paul. Celebrate by going to Mass at the Cathedral.
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



JULY

Creation and Prayer

“The work of creation was sealed by the blessing and consecration of the day on which God ceased ‘from all the work which he had done in creation.’” *Dies Domini 60*

The Lord has given us the Sabbath to bless and delight the fullness of our work. Creation is celebrated and blessed on the day of rest and seen as good. It is in acknowledgment of the gift and blessing of creation that we can more fully appreciate God's providence.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR JULY:

- Get outdoors and relish the gift of God's creation.
- Go for a swim, walk, hike, sit outside and drink your cup of coffee, have a bonfire and roast s'mores with the neighbors.
- Visit your favorite local park. Volunteer to clean up a section of it, if necessary.
- Enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds us and is a sign of the Lord's love and providence.
- This month America will celebrate her 250th birthday. Participate as a family in a patriotic event or celebration.
- **Liturgical Living: July 26 is the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne. Do something to honor your grandparents.**
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



AUGUST

Service and Prayer

“Inviting to a meal people who are alone, visiting the sick, providing food for families in need, spending a few hours in voluntary work and acts of solidarity: these would certainly be ways of bringing into people’s lives the love of Christ received at the Eucharistic table.” *Dies Domini 72*

When we receive the love of Christ at the Eucharist it is right to go outward and share that love. Upon reception into the Body of Christ it is natural for one to then seek to serve Christ’s body in the world.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR AUGUST:

- Serve at your parish. Every parish has some ministry opportunities that are family-friendly (greeters, hospitality, etc.)
- Surprise a neighbor with a bouquet and some cookies.
- Who is someone in need of Christ’s love who you could reach out to?
- Is there an area of your neighborhood that needs a little TLC?
- Does your neighborhood participate in the National Night Out? If so, attend.
- How can the love that you have received at the Lord’s table be shared with others?
- **Liturgical Living: August 15 is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Go to Mass, pray the glorious mysteries, put fresh flowers and a Mary statue in your prayer space.**
- Recommended resource to assist in building habits of prayer is the Hallow App.



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Learn more at archspm.org

