

# Setting a Place at the Table: Living Our Missionary Call

## CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION



### VERY QUICK SUMMARY:

Throughout the world, marriage and the family are our most central social institutions so they must be supported and strengthened. Additionally, since the human person is both sacred and social, how we organize our society politically, economically and legally directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Thus, people have a right and a duty to participate in both family life and in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

## Key Terms:

### Family:

A group of persons who are related by marriage or blood. A family is a natural society whose right to existence and support is provided by the divine law. According to the Second Vatican Council, "the family is the foundation of society" (The Church in the Modern World, II, 52). In addition to the natural family, the Church recognizes also the supernatural family of the diocese and of a religious community, whose members are to co-operate for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ (Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office, 34; and Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 43).

### Community:

A group of persons who share the same beliefs, live together under authority, and co-operate in pursuing common interests for the benefit of others besides their own members. The degree of common belief, living, and activity determines the intensity of the community and its distinctive identity as a human society.

### Participation:

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, 'It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. . . . As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life' (nos. 1913-1915). (USCCB: *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, #13)

### Global Participation:

In order that the right to development may be fulfilled by action: (a) people should not be hindered from attaining development in accordance with their own culture; (b) through mutual cooperation, all peoples should be able to become the principal architects of their own economic and social development. (*Justice in the World (Justicia in Mundo)*, #71)

## **Additional Terms of Interest:**

### **Common Good:**

Seeking to ensure the benefit of the community. It is the welfare of the whole community, as the proper object of a just law, and is distinguished from individual good, which looks only to the good of a single person.

**Subsidiarity:** The principle by which those in authority recognize the rights of the members in a society; and those in higher authority respect the rights of those in lower authority.

## **FAST FACTS About Family and Community Participation:**

Our family is where we learn to relate with each other, sacrifice for others and, most importantly, love one another. It is also where we develop our sense of participation, justice and other skills important in a well-functioning society. The family is often called the domestic or the first church.

A study conducted in 2009 by Columbia University's National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) showed that when families ate dinner together at least three times a week, and without the distraction of handheld devices, their children were less likely to become involved with drugs and alcohol.

USA Freedom Corps places the number of volunteers currently serving across the U.S. at 65 million. Nationwide, over 213,000 volunteers (according to a 2004 survey) support various Catholic Charities organizations in their efforts to provide help and create hope.

### QUICK AND EASY LESSON PLAN:

- 1.) By brainstorming with students, compile a three-column list of the many activities that children do together with their families. Include faith centered activities/recreational activities/chores.  
Have students also research the habits of family life in other parts of the world and create a similar list for comparison.
- 2.) Instruct the students to individually make lists of the activities she/he personally partakes in. Ask them to circle those activities that are helpful or faith centered.
- 3.) Invite students to share with the class their own lists if they so desire.
- 4.) Encourage discussion on whether the students feel that they contribute enough to the faith life of their family or to the necessary tasks that need to be done in order for family life to be happy and healthy. If they feel they could do more have them add additional activities or tasks to their personal lists.
- 5.) By examining their own personal lists, ask students why Christ may feel these tasks are important and good. Encourage contemplation of family life without these faith activities or the performance of these chores.
- 6.) Explain to students, in age appropriate terms, that family life is the center of all societies in the world and that the world does not work properly if family life is not working properly.
- 7.) Using simple plain typing paper cut into strips, have students make coupon booklets to share with their family that include additional chores or activities that they are willing to perform or participate in to contribute to the common good of their family life. Students can decorate their booklets and bind them with masking or duct tape if so desired and time permits.

## School Community Initiatives:

A similar activity could be done that focuses on the school **community**. Coupons could be made for tasks that aid teachers, custodians, cafeteria workers, administrative assistants, etc.



Students could engage in multi-grade level game days, reading breaks, or projects that enhance learning and teach the importance of participating in the school life beyond ones own classroom.



## Home Initiatives:

- Read the Bible together. If you have young children, read a Children's Bible or watch a DVD that will help relay the Bible stories in a way that is engaging to young children. Afterwards, discuss what you have read or watched, bringing the story into the modern-day context. What would Jesus do or say today? Could Jesus be walking among us in His disguise?
- Initiate a family discussion that explores ways that your family can assist others by taking action through volunteerism or almsgiving.
- Pray together, remembering family members who are far away or who have become alienated from the Catholic faith.
- Go for a walk together or spend an afternoon at the park with a picnic and games. Meaningful discussions can happen naturally when family members are relaxed and having fun!
- Plan a "family night" where you stay in and play games or just watch a movie together with the phone and computer turned off.

## SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS:

- . Genesis 2:18  
It is not good for man to be alone.
- . Genesis 4:8-15  
I am my brother's and sister's keeper.
- . Leviticus 25:23-43  
What you own belongs to the Lord and is given for the good of all.
- Jeremiah 7:5-7  
If you act justly with one another, God will dwell in the land.
- Micah 6:6-8  
Act justly, love kindness, walk humbly with God.
- . John 15:12-17  
This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.
- . Acts 2:43-47  
Life among the believers.
- . Romans 12:4-8  
We are one body, individually members one of another.
- . Hebrews 10:24-25  
Rouse one another to love and good works.
- . James 2:14-17  
Our faith is dead if we ignore others in need.
- . 1 Peter 4:8-11  
Serve one another with the gifts you have received.
- . 1 John 3:16-18  
We ought to lay down our lives for one another.
- 1 John 4:19-21  
Those who love God must love their brothers and sisters

## PAPAL ENCYCLICALS AND CHURCH DOCUMENTS:

- **Pope Francis**  
Apostolic Exhortation: [Amoris Laetitia "the Joy of Love"](#) (2016)
- **John Paul II**  
[Audience Series: Original Unity of Man and Woman \(1979-80\)](#)  
[Encyclical: Evangelium Vitae \(1995\)](#)  
Apostolic Constitution: *Magnum Matrimonii Sacramentum*  
[Apostolic Exhortation: Familiaris Consortio \(1981\)](#)  
[Apostolic Letter: Mulierus Dignitatem](#)  
[Letter: Letter to Women \(29 June 1995\)](#)  
[Message for Peace: The Family Creates The Peace of The Human Family \(January 1, 1994\)](#)  
[Message for World Communications Day 1994: Television and the Family](#)  
[Letter: Letter to Families \(1994\)](#)  
[Letter: Letter to Children in the Year of the Family \(1994\)](#)  
Speeches to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council for the Family
- **Paul VI**  
[Encyclical: Humanae Vitae \(1968\)](#)  
[Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Nuntiandi \(1975\)](#)  
Apostolic Letter: *Causas Matrimoniales*
- **Pio XII**  
[Encyclical: Ingruentium Malorum, The Family and the Rosary](#)
- **Pio XI**  
[Encyclical: Chastity in Marriage \(Casti Connubii\) \(31 Dec 1930\)](#)