

Helping Families Become a Domestic Church

Catechism 1657

It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the *priesthood of the baptized* in a privileged way "by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity." (LG 10) Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and "a school for human enrichment." (GS 52 s.1) Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous - even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life.

THE BIG QUESTION: How do we help families make their homes a place of divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life?

Fully integrating the life of Christ and the life of the Church into family life. How?

- Create Family Rituals
 - 22% of Millennials go to Mass on Sundays
 - 48% abstain from meat on Lenten Fridays

- 1. The Little Oratory
 - a. Setting up a sacred space in the home.
 - i. Prominent place for family prayer
 - 1. Secluded place for private prayer
 - ii. Sacred Art - calculated disengagement
 - iii. Prayer tools (Bible, Rosaries, etc.)
- 2. Daily Rituals
 - a. Family Prayer(s)
 - i. Morning Offering, Meal prayers, Angelus, Vocal prayer
 - ii. Family Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, Daily Mass/Readings
 - iii. **Top Tip: Evening family prayer - daily thanksgivings/check-ins and vocal prayer (Hail Mary)**
 - 1. Have kids lead!
 - b. Individual Prayer
 - i. Mom and Dad protect and fight for each other's prayer time
 - ii. Older kids - encourage to pray on own as well
 - c. Spousal Prayer
- 3. Weekly Rituals
 - a. Holy Mass as a family
 - i. Visits to the Church, Tabernacle, Adoration
 - ii. Read the Sunday readings ahead of time
 - b. Meatless Fridays
 - c. **Top Tip: Keeping Holy the Lord's Day; work hard to make Sunday free**
- 4. Monthly/Yearly Rituals
 - a. Confession & Ice Cream
 - b. Liturgical Feasts
 - i. Saints of the Month
 - ii. Devotion of the Month

- iii. Anniversaries (Saint names, Baptismal Anniversaries)
- iv. At-home celebrations
- c. Liturgical Seasons
 - i. How can you “baptize” family traditions?
 - 1. Look into cultural heritage/traditions
 - ii. Advent & Christmas
 - 1. Celebrate Advent! Then Christmas
 - 2. Jesse Tree
 - 3. Manger Hay
 - 4. St. Nicholas
 - iii. Lent & Easter
 - 1. Sacrifice Beans
 - 2. Stations of the Cross
 - 3. Holy Thursday Foot Washing
 - 4. At-home Easter Vigil
 - 5. Pentecost - Spicy food party!
- d. Feasting & Fasting
 - i. Make it fun & memorable
 - ii. Talk about the Feast
 - iii. Fasting makes the Feasts more joyful!

Tips & Resources to Get Started

1. Start small & simple
 - a. It's about JOY - if it's causing strife/anger/anxiety - scale back
 - b. Don't worry if you forget a feast day - it will come around next year!
2. Leverage existing rituals
3. Explain changes to kids - talk about WHY you're doing what you're doing.
4. FOR PARISHES
 - a. Send home a monthly challenge/habit for families to adopt each month
 - i. Christ King Checklist
 - b. Help parents explain the meaning of the tradition/ritual
 - i. Homilies, bulletins, emails
 - c. Keep it simple, relatable, and doable
 - d. **TOP TIP: encourage families to take pictures and put in your bulletin**

Resources:

- *The Little Oratory* - David Clayton & Leila Lawler
- *The Catholic All Year Compendium: Liturgical Living for Real Life* - Kendra Tierney
 - CatholicAllYear.com
- Holy Heroes Challenge - Fr. Nathan Reesman