

Practical Parent Toolkit for the Creation of the Domestic Church



We are such busy people! Amid all the many obligations and activities going on in the life of a thriving family, it can be difficult to infuse our homes with a solid sense of Catholic Identity. The following suggestions are simple things you can do throughout the day or week to build a firm foundation of faith in your family.

"As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live."

~Blessed Pope John Paul II

- Make the Sign of the Cross when you pass a Catholic Church. Jesus is truly present in the tabernacle of every Catholic Church all over the world!
- Say a Hail Mary when you hear an ambulance siren; your prayer is being offered for the individual(s) needing help and those who are helping them
- **Attend Mass every Sunday. This is essential to your holiness, sanctity, and salvation**
- Pray before every meal. You can have a consistent family prayer or have a different child lead it.
- Pray the family rosary together. Start with one or two decades and work up to the whole rosary.
- Display a picture of the Holy Father, the Pope, in your house
- Encourage young children to "play Mass" like they would play house
- Place statues of saints around your house
- Listen to beautiful music throughout your home that glorifies God
- Paint quotes from saints or the Holy Scriptures on your walls
- **Hang a crucifix over each bed in your house and in each room of your house**
- PRAY ALWAYS – in the car on the way to school, before a sporting event, when the house seems to be a chaotic mess, with two children who are at each other's throats, when someone needs a band aid, during household chore transitions, while in the shower, etc. You can pray many different ways – pray a decade of the Rosary in the car every time you drive---it will become normal to your kids. Pray the Act of Contrition before going to bed at night. Allow your children to play upbeat praise and worship music while they are in the shower. Together, say a prayer to St. Joseph of Cupertino (patron saint of exams) the morning of your child's big test.
- Do not allow impure (dirty), vulgar, or questionable music to be played – even if discovered in your teenager's car You have all the right to destroy that CD or check music on their iPod.
- Always end the day in prayer at night
- **Eradicate all bad language – even that which is not necessarily crude, but is not holy or uplifting** (shut-up, sucks-this word is very, very common among teens and adults in our culture etc.)
- Take the family to Saturday confession followed by ice cream!
- Monitor your child's clothing – would Jesus or the Blessed Mother approve? Especially watch for immodesty or provocative clothing especially during the junior high/ high school years or days to the beach. Our body speaks a language---what language are you as a parent and your son/daughter sending by what is worn?

- Place an advent wreath in your home and learn about the Jesse Tree (teaches about salvation history) during the liturgical season of Advent
- Place a crèche/Nativity scene in your home during Christmas
- Have a book of saints and each day, read about the saint of the day or allow a child to pick a different saint to read to the other children at the breakfast table
- **Ask good questions** – How are the relationships with your friends going? Have you been to see Jesus lately in the Church? What has been the most challenging thing for you this week? In which person did you see Jesus in this week? How do you see God working in your daily life; in school, in sports, extracurricular events, family life, employment?
- Read the Sunday Gospel with your family before Mass or earlier in the week
- At the breakfast table after Mass on Sunday, have each child tell one thing that stuck out to them at Mass or something they learned
- **Read the Holy Bible daily, especially the Gospels; read how Jesus lived so you can live the same way**
- When someone takes the name of God in vain or you hear someone use God's name irreverently, pray "Blessed be God. Blessed be HIS HOLY NAME" This way, you are praying in reparation for the sin of taking God's name in vain.
- Go visit our Lord in Eucharistic Adoration; take your children with you!
- Mark your calendars to do holy things with your family just like you mark your calendars for sports, doctor visits, music events, etc. This may include a weekly visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament-Eucharistic Adoration, visit to a shrine, performing spiritual and corporal works of mercy (i.e. feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, instructing the ignorant, etc.), reading the Bible for 5-10 minutes every day, attending mass more than once a week...how about two times? Do this all year, including the summer
- Place beautiful religious artwork throughout your home
- Fill your home with books and reading materials that teach the faith, teach virtues, and inspire your child to grow in holiness
- **Parents, be the witness to the faith your children and teens need you to be.** Draw your sons and daughters to Christ and His Blessed Mother... "Wouldn't it be a shame if others came seeking Christ, and only found you?" It is not enough to admire Christ, one must BE like Christ
- Attend parish events that allow your family to build relationships and help to confirm you and your children in the Catholic faith
- Celebrate feast days in the Church with special meals, baked goods, decorations that pertain to the feast day, etc. (i.e. Nativity of the Blessed Mother, Sept. 8...make a birthday cake or cupcakes for Blessed Mother Mary)
- Have your children place +JM+ on top of their worksheets/workbook pages asking Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to help them in their work and giving glory to them through their work
- Listen to Catholic Radio (Relevant Radio 1050AM) and/or view Catholic television programming (EWTN - Eternal Word Television Network-wholesome Catholic adult, young adult, teen, and children's programming)
- **Work and pray to build a Culture of Life within your family. Be open to life yourselves and be pro-active in prayer and action.**
- If you and your spouse aren't familiar with Natural Family Planning (NFP) it's never too late to learn!
- Study the Catechism of the Catholic Church and get to know the Catholic Faith
- **Be faithful in all things and leave the success to God**

