

Family Night – Introduction

Many mothers and fathers want to have family devotions but struggle to find fun and simple materials to use. Over the past several years Emily Cavins has written Family Night, a weekly devotion for families to aid parents in teaching the faith. Each lesson coincides with the Sunday mass readings. With just a few minutes preparation time, your family can enjoy fun activities, discussion time and even a creative snack, but best of all, the family will remember the time spent together learning more about God. Plan on about forty-five minutes per session or less, but feel free to lengthen or shorten as you wish.

Set Up:

Select an evening when all the family is home. Sunday evening usually works best, but pick a consistent night for your family to meet each week. A Bible for each person who can read is important. For children who cannot read yet, a picture Bible or Bible storybooks would be helpful. (Check the Home Page for suggested children's Bibles.) A Catechism of the Catholic Church is also an essential tool for Family Night.

It is also important to create an atmosphere or "holy space" for the evening where you plan to meet. Perhaps you could arrange the furniture special for the occasion or set up a small table as an altar with Bibles, rosaries, a crucifix, candles or any special holy item. This is especially helpful for younger children to recognize this as a special time. As the weeks pass you may add items the children have made or put their artwork on display.

Family Night Directions:

Each 2 page lesson follows the same outline, but a different theme is presented each week. In the first section "What's the Point?" you will see a synopsis of what you are trying to get across to your family that week. Read through this section before your Family Night session to become familiar with that week's theme. It does not have to be read aloud during Family Night.

To begin your Family Night, select a Traditional prayer from the "Family Night Prayer Supplement" (click on the button on the homepage to download) or from your own prayer book. A suggested prayer is provided in the outline, but please choose what ever you wish. It may be good to continue using the same prayer for several weeks so everyone can memorize it. This is also an excellent time to pray a family rosary.

After the opening prayer, proceed with the "Sunday Readings" section. The gospel is the essential one to read for the evening although reading all of them is beneficial. Divide the readings among all those who can read. Stand when the Gospel is read. A "Quiz" question will be asked from the Gospel reading so remind the children to listen carefully. The "Quiz Answer" will be found at the bottom of page two.

Family Night – Introduction

The “Family Activity” section will have two ideas listed. Choose the ones you feel are most appropriate for your family. Please check a few days prior to Family Night to be sure you have the necessary items for each activity.

Take time to read the entire catechism paragraph cited in the “Catechism Connection.” Only a portion is written out in the study to give you an idea of what the paragraph talks about. Reading the “Catechism Connection” and the “Saintly Examples” sections will aid in answering the discussion questions in the following section, “Let's Talk About It.” The discussion questions are meant as springboards to get the family talking. It's up to you how long you wish to spend on this section. If you aren't sure of an answer to a discussion question, focus on another one or spend some time searching the Catechism or Bible cross references for answers. Include in your discussions any correlations you have drawn between the Sunday readings. Try to foster in your children the habit of drawing correlations between the three texts during the Sunday mass. If restlessness is a problem for the younger children during the discussion time, allow them the freedom to play with other toys or color until snack time.

The “Family Commitment” section is an opportunity for your family to respond to the Sunday readings. Write one or two sentences defining what you commit to do during the following week. Children will learn that it's not good enough just to hear the word of God, but it must be acted upon.

The “Snack” for the evening is for fun, but it also ties in with the evening's theme. Older children can have fun preparing these ahead of the session. Encourage them to use their imaginations.

Before praying the provided “Closing Prayer,” ask family members if they have any needs or intentions for which they would like prayer. This is also a good time to remember the Pope's prayer intentions.

Ending the evening with praise and hugs for the children is an excellent idea. Bless the children and tell them you love them. You may want to have a chart with stickers by their names for quietness or good participation or to score if they got the quiz question correct. Assign clean-up helpers.

While enjoying the time with your children, pray that their hearts will be open to hear the voice of Christ.

Family Night – Prayers

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are the one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths that the holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon from my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Family Night – Prayers

Hail Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor, banished children of Eve.

To thee do we send up our sighs mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Acceptance of God's Will

In all things may the holy, the most just, and most lovable will of God be done, praised, and exalted above all for ever. Your will be done, O Lord, your will be done. The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

Guardian Angel Prayer

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day (or night) be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Prayer for the Pope

V. Let us pray for our Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XVI.

R. The Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon the earth, and deliver him not to the will of his enemies.

Prayer for Purity of Body and Mind

Lord, set aflame my heart and my entire being with the fire of the Holy Spirit, that I may serve you with chaste body and pure mind. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Family Night – First Sunday of Advent

B Sunday, November 27, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b:64:2b-7
We are in need of a deliverer.

1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Jesus Christ will sustain us.

Mark 13:33-37
Be watchful for the Lord's coming.

Watch for the Lord's Coming!

WHAT'S THE POINT?

As we enter the season of Advent, we anticipate God coming to dwell among us, our Immanuel. We see that our sinfulness is the reason for his coming. He will be our deliverer. At the time of Christ's advent, the Jewish people were searching for the savior to deliver them from the oppression of the Romans. Yet Jesus came in such a meek and humble fashion that many did not recognize him. Christ gave us the Spirit to persevere as we watch for his Second Coming. Just as the prophets looked ahead to the coming of the Messiah, we must look ahead and prepare our hearts and others to be ready for His return.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostles' Creed

Family Activity

1. Have the family make a paper chain with 28 links to cover from today (Sunday) to Christmas. Color the Sundays of Advent a different color than the other days. Special days, such as St. Nicholas Day, could be noted on the appropriate link. Let the children remove a link each day.
2. "Be watchful game" Watch a busy street and try to predict when a red car will drive past. It's not possible to predict the exact moment, but it certainly keeps you watching!

Catechism Connection

No. 2849 "The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch."

Quiz

Why should we keep watch for Christ's coming?

Family Night – First Sunday of Advent

B Sunday, November 27, 2011

Saintly Examples: Isaiah the Prophet

Isaiah was an Old Testament prophet who warned the Israelites of what would happen if they did not obey God's commandments. He ministered during a very dark period of Israel's history. Due to idolatry and hardness of heart, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the ruthless Assyrians and taken away as captives. Isaiah prophesied to the remaining Southern Kingdom of Judah that they would meet the same fate if they did not follow God. In the midst of his warnings, he foretold the coming of the Messiah born of a virgin. "Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). Though Isaiah lived in discouraging circumstances, he kept his faith in God and looked to God for deliverance.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What does "advent" mean? (Look in dictionary.)
2. Compare how the people of the Old Testament looked forward to the coming of the Messiah to how we are looking forward to Jesus' return. How did Mary look forward to his coming?
3. How different will Jesus' Second Coming be from his first "advent"?
4. During the time of Isaiah the Prophet, the Israelites were under siege and attack from enemy forces. During the time of Christ, God's people were under the oppression of the Romans. God's people are still today are encountering attacks of the evil one. How can Jesus help us today?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Bake a snack in the oven such as pizza rolls, cookies, or muffins. Don't set the timer. Turn on the oven light and be "watchful" for when it is ready to eat.

Closing Prayer

Dearest Lord Jesus, we are yearning for the time when we can be united with you for eternity. As we journey here on earth, bring us your comfort and consolation. Let us faithfully observe your commandments and partake in the sacraments in holiness. Come Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

Quiz Answer

No one knows when he will return. (Mark 13:35)

Family Night – Second Sunday of Advent

B Sunday, December 04, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11

Make the path straight for the Lord.

2 Peter 3:8-14

Be found without spot or blemish upon Christ's return.

Mark 1:1-8

John the Baptist preaches repentance.

Removing Obstacles

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The prophet Isaiah and St. John the Baptist urge us to make the path straight for the Lord. How do we do that? By ridding our lives of sin. Sin blocks the way for the Lord to come into our hearts. Things like bad habits, unforgiveness, and rebellion prevent us from cultivating a relationship with Christ. They are obstacles in the Lord's way. We must repent of our sins, and thus make straight paths for the Lord. Our repentance will assure that no obstacles will stand in Christ's way. For us today we must examine our conscience, go to confession and determine not to return to the things from which we have repented. Then the way will be made straight for Christ, and we will enjoy a good relationship with Him. His presence will shine forth from our lives and make a difference in the world.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Contrition

Family Activity

1. Obstacle Course. Arrange a path through the living room around chairs, over pillows, etc. Let everyone take a turn running through it.
2. Make a straight path with toy train tracks or other toy tracks. Run vehicles down them and say "Make the way straight for the Lord!"

Catechism Connection

No. 522 "The coming of God's Son to earth is an event of such immensity that God willed to prepare for it over centuries."

Quiz

What kind of clothing did St. John the Baptist wear?

Family Night – Second Sunday of Advent

B Sunday, December 04, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. John the Baptist

As the forerunner for the Lord, St. John the Baptist prepared Jesus' way by preaching repentance. The Church teaches (CCC No. 523) that St. John the Baptist was a prophet of the Most High, surpassing all the prophets, of whom he is the last. Even while in the womb of his mother Elizabeth, John was sensitive to the presence of Jesus. John knew that the main obstacle to a relationship with Christ was sin. Consequently, his first statement upon seeing Jesus at the River Jordan was "behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." John bears witness to Christ in his preaching, by his Baptism of conversion, and through his martyrdom. Perhaps the best advice John could have given us when it comes to our relationship with Christ is: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. How does our sin keep us from living a holy life?
2. If the president of the United States were coming to your home, how would you prepare?
3. List some ways that John the Baptist and other prophets made the way straight for the Lord's first advent.
4. How can the Ten Commandments assist in preparing for the sacrament of reconciliation? Discuss when you plan to go to your next confession.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make a snack using straight items, such as licorice sticks, large, straight pretzels, or celery sticks with peanut butter and raisins.

Closing Prayer

Lord God, your church joyfully awaits the coming of our Savior who enlightens our hearts and dispels our darkness. We praise you for your Son; Emmanuel, the hope of all peoples, the wisdom that teaches us and the Savior of the world. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Camel's hair and leather girdle around his waist. (Mark 1:6)

Family Night – Third Sunday of Advent

B Sunday, December 11, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 61:1-2a;10-11

The Lord will bring freedom and deliverance.

1 Thes. 5:16-24

May you be found blameless when the Lord returns.

John 1:6-8,19-28

John witnesses to the One who is to come.

Be A Witness to Truth

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The Holy Spirit is evident in the life of John the Baptist from his first encounter with Jesus within the womb of Mary to his ministry as the forerunner of the Messiah. He witnessed the visible presence of the Holy Spirit descend upon Christ at his baptism. The Holy Spirit empowered John to preach the coming of the Lord. We also have been given the same Spirit, so we can proclaim boldly the truth about Our Lord. We are a witness to the saving power of Christ in our lives. Each one of us has a unique relationship with the Lord that needs to be told.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Family Activity

1. In a dark room reflect a flashlight off of someone holding a mirror onto others. We bear witness of the light.
2. Play a few rounds of “Duck, Duck, Gray Duck” only substitute “Elijah, Elijah, John the Baptist.”

Catechism Connection

No. 718 “The fire of the Spirit dwells in him (John) and makes him the forerunner of the coming Lord.”

Quiz

Who did John say that he was?

Family Night – Third Sunday of Advent

B Sunday, December 11, 2011

Saintly Examples: Elijah the Prophet

Elijah the Prophet lived during the 9th Century B.C. Much of his prophecies dealt with the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Ahab, a wicked king. Elijah, much like John the Baptist, was a wilderness dweller who wore simple clothes and ate a simple diet. His devotion to the Lord made him a bold spokesman for what is right. Elijah performed many miracles, including the raising of the son of a widow from the dead. It was predicted that Elijah would reappear before “the great and terrible day of the Lord,” (Mal. 4:5) which prompted the religious leaders of Jesus’ day to ask John the Baptist if he was indeed Elijah. Elijah also appears upon the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Jesus.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Who do you know that does a great job of being an example of Jesus?
2. Read paragraphs 1304-05 in the Catechism. How does the Holy Spirit help us to witness?
3. Briefly discuss how each member of the family could be a “voice crying in the wilderness” at work or at school.
4. Have each member of the family describe an attribute about each person that reflects Christ.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Trail mix or energy bars to represent the “energy” or power of the Holy Spirit for us to witness to the truth.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, help us to be an accurate witness to all you have done in our lives. Give us courage so that we will not be silent when you are opening up doors of opportunity for us. May people see you through everything we say and do. Amen.

Quiz Answer

A voice crying in the wilderness. (John 1:23)

Family Night – Fourth Sunday of Advent

B Sunday, December 18, 2011



Sunday Readings:

2 Samuel 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16
The Son of David will be on the throne forever.

Romans 16:25-27
Praise and glory be to Jesus Christ forever.

Luke 1:26-38
Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel.

Mary, Bridge Between the Testaments

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The scene of the Annunciation is one of the great moments in salvation history. When Mary agrees to accept the gift of Christ within her womb, she becomes the tie between the Old and New Testaments. She fulfills the Old Testament prophecies proclaiming the Messiah will come from the line of King David and will be born of a virgin. She links the promises God gave to Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets to the Church, wherein the promises are made available to all. What a magnificent moment, when Mary said “yes!” The Annunciation, often depicted in great artwork is the point when divinity intersected humanity, God became flesh.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Hail Holy Queen

Family Activity

1. Build a bridge with legos or building blocks. Then, using figurines from your nativity set, act out the scene of the Annunciation from today’s gospel reading. Have Mary cross the bridge and talk about how she connects the Old and New Testament.
2. Open two Bibles—one to Luke 1 and the other to 2 Samuel 7. Build a sturdy bridge with legos from one to the other. Place a statue of Mary on the bridge to show she is the bridge between the testaments.

Catechism Connection

No. 496 ““You are firmly convinced about our Lord, who is truly of the race of David according to the flesh, Son of God according to the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin...””

Quiz

In what town in Galilee did Mary live as a girl?

Family Night – Fourth Sunday of Advent

B Sunday, December 18, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Mechtildis of Edelstetten

Trained by nuns from the age of five, Mechtildis grew up a devout and exemplary maiden, much given to prayer and austerities. She was asked to take charge of the convent of Edelstetten at the age of twenty-eight. Afraid to accept at first, she complied after an injunction from Pope Anastasius IV. She met with opposition from some of the sisters, who were later removed from the convent by the bishop. She healed the sick, restored speech to the dumb and the sight of an eye to one of the nuns. At times she was rapt in ecstasies which lasted for a long period. She followed the example of the Virgin Mary in her obedience and chastity.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Why is the Annunciation such an important part in salvation history?
2. Think of someone who was obedient to God and because of his/her obedience made a difference in the world.
3. Mary was a teenager when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. Think of a person who followed Christ at a young age. Name an example of his/her good deeds.
4. Name some Old Testament characters to whom God made the promise of a savior. (David, Abraham, Adam & Eve, Isaiah.)

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Graham crackers bridges. Take a full cracker and attach quartered crackers (guard rails) to the long sides with peanut butter. Optional: Use large marshmallows as four legs under the bridge.

Closing Prayer

Mother of Mercy, dear Mary, thank you for bringing forth the Light of the World, Son of God and son of man. Pray for us that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Nazareth. (Luke 1:26)

Family Night – Christmas Day

B Sunday, December 25, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Is 52: 7-10

The earth shall see the salvation of God.

Heb 1: 1-6

Jesus is the exact representation of His Father.

Jn 1: 1-18

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Christmas Is Here

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The long awaited day has arrived for us and for all the world. The Incarnation of Christ, God with us, is the fulfillment of God's promise to send a deliverer. God himself became human in the form of Christ to show us the way, to bring us into the light. He gave us every gift we need to enter into a relationship with Him, so during this season, let us hold nothing back in our hearts but give all of ourselves back to Him.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostles Creed

Family Activity

1. Let each person choose his or her favorite Christmas carol to sing. Bring out all the instruments if anyone plays one and carol together.
2. While gifts are being exchanged, pause a moment to ask each person what they would like to give Jesus as their gift. (Be kind to a sister, go to an extra mass, etc.)

Catechism Connection

No. 436 "Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king."

Quiz

What is now realized through Jesus Christ?

Family Night – Christmas Day

B Sunday, December 25, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas, who lived in the 4th Century, was born in Lycia, a province in Asia Minor. He became a bishop of Myrna and became famous for his acts of piety and amazing miracles. He was instrumental in defeating the Arian heresy in his city. He is most well known for the story of his generosity in helping the three daughters of a poor man in Patara who could not afford a dowry for them so they could marry. St. Nicholas secretly put money in their house so that each girl was able to marry. After his death, his relics were brought to Italy, and a shrine to him was built in Constantinople. Devotion of this saint spread throughout Europe.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. "In the beginning was the Word." Who is the Word? (Jesus)
2. Why do you think the world did not understand the coming of Christ? (They were in darkness, etc.)
3. Give one sentence that summarizes the true meaning of Christmas.
4. What gifts has Jesus given us to help us understand the coming of Christ? (The Holy Spirit, the Church, etc.)

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Celebrate with a favorite recipe that has been handed down in your family at Christmas time.

Closing Prayer

Come Lord Jesus into our hearts and lives and transform us into the image of Your Father. Amen.

Quiz Answer

grace and truth. (John 1:17)

Family Night – Epiphany Sunday

B Sunday, January 08, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 60:1-6

Nations will come to the light of the Lord.

Ephesians 3:2-3a,5-6

Gentiles are partakers on the promise.

Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi visit Jesus in Bethlehem.

All Nations are Welcomed by Christ

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In the Old Testament, the promises of God are reserved mostly for the Children of Israel, but in the New Covenant, the promises are extended to all those who follow Christ. With the visit from the magi, the eternal plan of God is further revealed. This becomes a pivotal point for all the nations who once walked in darkness. The possibility to become one of God's children had not been offered to the nations until the sacrifice of Christ. Now the entire world can come and worship the true King of Kings.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Dress like kings or wisemen and process through the house to your nativity scene and put gifts before the infant Jesus.
2. Take a globe or map and name some countries that you know. Are they Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, pagan, etc.? Discuss how God has invited them all into his family.

Catechism Connection

No. 528 "In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation."

Quiz

Why didn't the Wisemen return to tell Herod where baby Jesus was?

Family Night – Epiphany Sunday

B Sunday, January 08, 2012

Saintly Examples: The Wiseman Balthazar

Though the scriptures do not name the wisemen, there are stories about them. One of them, Balthazar, is said to have been from Africa carrying the precious gift of myrrh for the Christ Child. Myrrh is a resin from the bark of trees found in Africa, which is then pressed into incense. Balthazar represents a large part of our world, the continent of Africa. It has been said that the child Jesus smiled at Balthazar when He received the gift of myrrh from this wiseman who had traveled so far to bring honor to Jesus.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. God uses people in his plan of salvation sometimes without them knowing it. How were the wisemen part of God's plan of salvation?
2. Jesus came to save all the world. How is the Church reaching out to spread the Gospel of Christ? How has the Gospel of Christ traveled around the world?
3. Some countries are very opposed to allowing the message of Christ to be proclaimed. How can the light of Jesus come to these people? (prayer, humanitarian aid, missionaries, etc.)
4. How did Satan try to stop God's plan of salvation? How does he try to stop it today?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make an ethnic treat like egg rolls, nachos or baklavah. Think of that country as you eat and remember that that country is part of God's plan to be included in God's family.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, For those I know and those whom I shall never meet, embrace them this day. For those worn from war and those who will not be fed, may my prayer extend beyond words to find a way to help even one of Your people this day. Amen.

Quiz Answer

They were warned in a dream not to return. (Matthew 2:12)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 2

B Sunday, January 15, 2012



Sunday Readings:

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19
God calls Samuel.

1 Cor. 6:13c-15a, 17-20
Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

John 1:35-42
Jesus chooses his disciples.

Listen for his Call

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Each person is called to be a disciple of Christ. The Holy Spirit invites everyone to follow Him. Only those who listen and obey become his true disciples as Peter and Andrew did. How do we hear the call of Christ? We hear Him in the Scriptures, through the Holy Father and your local priest, through Church teachings and godly friends. It is a call to service, humility, obedience and sacrifice, which in turn brings about a fulfillment that nothing else can match. The disciples did not understand everything before they followed Jesus. They trusted in who Jesus was. We also cannot know what our call will bring, so we must put all our trust in Christ.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostles Creed

Family Activity

1. Have an adult go into a far room of the house and call the name of one child. All must be listening. The one who is called must go and find who's calling. Repeat by calling each person's name.
2. Turn on all sorts of electronics such as TV, radio, stereo, children's toys, etc., all at the same time. One by one turn them off until it is silent and meditate for a moment about tuning out the world and listening to God's voice.

Catechism Connection

No. 787 "From the beginning, Jesus associated his disciples with his own life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom to them, and gave them a share in his mission, joy and suffering."

Quiz

Which disciple was chosen first?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 2

B Sunday, January 15, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. John

St. John is the author of today's gospel reading. He and his brother James, called the sons of Thunder, were fishermen and friends of Peter and Andrew. They were both called to follow Christ early in his public ministry. In John's gospel he refers to himself as the "beloved disciple." He was the only one of the Twelve Apostles who did not forsake Jesus at the time of his death. Jesus asked John to care for His Mother. After Christ's ascension, John spent most of his life in Jerusalem and Ephesus. He also wrote three Epistles and the Book of Revelation. He was banished to the Isle of Pathmos for a year by Emperor Dometian. At a very old age, John died in Ephesus where a church was erected over his tomb.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever heard the voice of God? Name some ways you can hear Him.
2. Have you listened to see if God is calling you to a religious vocation?
3. Name some important reasons to heed the call to the priesthood.
4. Name a time when your family trusted Jesus for a decision.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Dozen (or 2 dozen) assorted donuts. Can you name the 12 disciples? (Andrew, Peter, James, John, Philip, Bartholemew, Thomas, Matthew, James the Less, Simon the Zealot, Thaddaeus, Judas Iscariot.)

Closing Prayer

Speak Lord, For your servant is listening.

Quiz Answer

Andrew. (John 1:40)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 3

B Sunday, January 22, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Jonah 3:1-5,10
The Ninevites repent of their wickedness.

1 Cor. 7:29-31
Don't be attached to this world.

Mark 1:14-20
Jesus calls disciples to be fishers of men.

Jesus' Call to Conversion

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus calls his disciples to be fishers of men. He asks them to no longer look on fishing as their livelihood but to see the conversion of souls as their calling--to preach the Kingdom of God and repentance from sin. These first Apostles followed Jesus' invitation to conversion. As Blessed John Paul II told us regarding the New Evangelization, "To be Christians means to be missionaries, to be apostles. It is not enough to discover Christ—you must bring him to others! . . . You must have the courage to speak about Christ, to bear witness to your faith through a lifestyle inspired by the gospel. The harvest is great indeed for evangelization and so many workers are needed."

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Contrition

Family Activity

1. Play the card game "Go Fish." Pretend that each set you get is a group of people you have told about Jesus. The winner is the best evangelizer.
2. Demonstrate how the people of Bible times would fish. They would cast nets into the water from their boats and haul in the fish. (Use a sheet for a net), or reenact the story of Jonah and the people of Ninevah hearing God's word.

Catechism Connection

No. 541 "Now the Father's will is 'to raise up men to share in his own divine life'."

Quiz

Who is the brother of John?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 3

B Sunday, January 22, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Mark the Evangelist

St. Mark is the author of today's gospel reading. He is mentioned as John Mark in the Book of Acts and was involved with Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journeys as well as staying with Peter while in Rome. His home was a sort of headquarters for the apostles after the Lord's ascension. As a young man, St. Mark had the opportunity to hear the gospel from the Apostles and to make his conversion, also. St. Mark later lived in Alexandria and was made bishop there.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What sacrament is called the sacrament of conversion? (Reconciliation) How do conversion and repentance work together?
2. What would it have been like to hear Jesus call to follow him and then to leave all that you knew and follow him every day?
3. Not only do we have Christ as an example to live by, we have the Apostles and Saints. Think of the Twelve Apostles. What examples for living do they show?
4. Think of someone whom your family has evangelized. Think of someone who your family could evangelize.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make "fishnet" topping on a scoop of ice cream. Drizzle honey or chocolate syrup off the edge of a teaspoon over a scoop of vanilla ice cream in the pattern of a fishnet.

Closing Prayer

O God, You sent Your Son, Jesus, to bring eternal life to those who believe. I join Him in praying for laborers for Your harvest. May Your Holy Spirit inspire men and women to continue His mission through your priesthood, diaconate, religious life and lay ministry. Amen.

Quiz Answer

James. (Mark 1:19)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 4

B Sunday, January 29, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Deut. 18:15-20

Listen to the prophet whom God will raise up.

1 Cor. 7:32-35

Give undivided devotion to the Lord.

Mark 1:21-28

Jesus teaches with authority.

Christ Teaches with Authority

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus is given the authority of His Father to teach, perform miracles, cast out demons, and forgive sins. People were amazed at his miracles and teachings, and word of his miracles spread throughout the region. Those who acknowledge his authority as from God followed him. Some who did not accept that he was from God would eventually plot his death. After the resurrection, Jesus passed this authority to do miracles and teach on to his Apostles and followers. This authority now rests with the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Acceptance of God's Will

Family Activity

1. Cut pictures of people with authority (police, fathers, priests, politicians, teachers) from magazines and catalogs and make a collage. Discuss where each one receives his/her authority.
2. Look at a yearbook or school picture with a photo of your favorite teacher. Explain what it was about that person that made him/her special. Compare that teacher to Christ as a teacher.

Catechism Connection

No. 547 “Jesus accompanies his words with many ‘mighty works and wonders and signs,’ which manifest that the kingdom is present in him and attest that he was the promised Messiah.”

Quiz

What was so amazing about the way Jesus taught?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 4

B Sunday, January 29, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas was of noble lineage and was large in stature. From the age of five to thirteen he lived at the Abbey of Monte Cassino and attended school. Then he was sent to the University of Naples to study for five years. At the age of nineteen he received the habit of the Order of Preachers, but his mother strongly objected and forced him back home where he was confined for two years. He was then allowed to return to his order. St. Thomas is a Doctor of the Church and is best known for his writings, *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologiae*. These books are full of topic overviews, which answer questions about angels, the nature of God, and the nature of man. His teachings are of great value to the Church.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. When you have the authority from your parents to do something, you usually don't get into trouble. What can happen when you do things without permission? Give an example.
2. How do we know that the Church has God's authority? (It has been passed down from Christ to the Apostles, etc.)
3. How do the miracles that Jesus performed show that He had God's authority?
4. Who are the people in your life who have authority? How are you thankful for them?
5. Optional—Catechism No. 1673 details how demon possession should be dealt with today. Read this paragraph if your children are wondering about it.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Apples. (A typical gift of appreciation to a favorite teacher.)

Closing Prayer

O Seat of Divine Wisdom, and guiding Power, which empowers Your Church, may all minds know You, all hearts love You, and all tongues praise You, now and for evermore. Amen.

Quiz Answer

He taught with authority. (Mark 1:22)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 5

B Sunday, February 05, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Job speaks of his hopelessness.

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Paul heeds the commission to preach the gospel.

Mark 1:29-39

Jesus came to preach the good news.

Jesus Sets Us Free

WHAT'S THE POINT?

What is this good news which Jesus came to preach? It is a message of hope and deliverance demonstrated by God's power to heal and free people from sin and oppression. The good news is that God loves us and cares for each person so much that he became man to communicate to us on our own level. By his example, Jesus showed us how to pray in preparation for times of ministry. The power of the Holy Spirit worked through Jesus and now works through the Church to set people free from sickness, sin, and spiritual death.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Glory Be

Family Activity

1. Act out the scene of Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law and then her serving them. Use sheets and towels for costumes. Or assemble several dolls or stuffed animals and pretend they are sick and let the children be the doctor to help them.
2. Make some get well cards (or use store bought cards) and send them to a loved one or someone sick at your parish. Light a candle and pray for that person.

Catechism Connection

No. 2602 "Jesus, the word who has become flesh, shares by his human prayer in all that 'his brethren' experience; he sympathizes with their weaknesses in order to free them."

Quiz

What was wrong with Peter's mother-in-law?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 5

B Sunday, February 05, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Daniel the Stylite

St. Daniel was born in Syria in 409. At the age of forty-two he was ordained a priest and wished to become a Stylite—a person who lives on a pillar. Emperor Leo I had a series of pillars with a platform on top built for him near Constantinople. Many people were attracted there to see him as he celebrated mass and preached. He cured the sick, including St. Anatolius who came to him when he was seriously ill and was healed. He only came down from the pillar once in thirty-three years to refute a heresy before Emperor Baliscus. St. Daniel died in 493. Though his approach to spreading the gospel was different from Jesus' method, he nevertheless served Christ and the Church in this unusual fashion.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Who would you have brought to Jesus for healing if you lived during Jesus' time?
2. Why did Jesus get up so early in the morning to pray? What example does he give to us?
3. If you were sick and heard of someone sitting on a pillar who prayed for people, would you go? Would you bring someone who was sick?
4. Name some things from which Jesus can set us free. Give an example from your or someone's life.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Chicken broth or chicken noodle soup and crackers. (A food that often helps sick people feel better.)

Closing Prayer

Lord, touch my soul with Your compassion for others. Touch my heart with Your infinite love for all. Touch my mind with Your wisdom, that my mouth may proclaim the gospel. Most loving Heart of Jesus, bring me health in body and spirit that I may serve You with all my strength. Amen.

Quiz Answer

She had a fever. (Mark 1:30)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 6

B Sunday, February 12, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Lev. 13:1-2, 44-46

The leper by Jewish law was considered “unclean”.

1 Cor. 10:31-11:1

We are to imitate Christ.

Mark 1:40-45

Jesus touches a leper and heals him.

Jesus Touches the Unclean

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In the Jewish Law of Moses, a person with leprosy was considered “unclean” and no one was allowed to touch that person who must live outside the camp of the Israelites. If a person touched someone with leprosy, that person would become defiled for a day according to Jewish law, so lepers were avoided. One amazing thing about Jesus is that he was not defiled by touching lepers, rather the lepers were healed. Jesus said that he came to fulfill the law, and his healing of the leper was one such example. We are to imitate Christ’s example and reach out to the outcast as He did.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Trace around hands with pen on paper. Cut out and write “My hands can touch those in need” on them. Hang on refrigerator or mirror for a week.
2. Pair off and rub one another’s shoulders or scratch backs. Include pets if you have them. Talk about how touch is important for everyone’s health because God designed us this way.

Catechism Connection

No. 1504 “And so in the sacraments Christ continues to ‘touch’ us in order to heal us.”

Quiz

What did Jesus tell the man after he healed him of leprosy?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 6

B Sunday, February 12, 2012

Saintly Examples: Missionaries of Charity

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta founded the Missionaries of Charity in India in 1950. Their mission was to care for the poor and to love them through touch, food, and shelter. The sisters have now covered the globe into places of need. They identify with the poor by owning nothing themselves and living with little. Blessed Teresa once said, “When we touch the sick and needy, we touch the suffering body of Christ.” Her goal was to treat each person as though he/she were Jesus. In Calcutta they run the Gandhiji Prem Nivas Leprosy Centre where over 2,500 patients are treated and many of those with deformities rehabilitated.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a time when someone reached out and touched you to comfort you? How did it change your outlook? Can you think of someone who needs your touch?
2. Why could Jesus touch a leper and not become defiled when the Jewish law said touching a leper would defile you? (Jesus healed him so he was no longer a leper.)
3. What reasons may Jesus have had to tell the leper not to tell anyone?
4. Leprosy now has medicine that can cure the disease. What types of sicknesses today typically make us feel a person is “unclean” so people do not want to have contact with them?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Using a cut-out paper pattern of your hand, lay it on a flattened fruit roll-up and cut out the hand shape. Make one for everyone.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, you now have Blessed Teresa close to you. Thank you for the wonderful opportunity to view her life in this century. May we imitate her as we imitate you in spreading comfort to a hurting world. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Not to tell anyone and go show himself to the priest. (Mark 1:44)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 7

B Sunday, February 19, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 43:18-19, 21-22, 24b-25
God will remember our sins no more.

2 Cor. 1:18-22
God is faithful.

Mark 2:1-12
Jesus heals and forgives the paralytic.

Healing & Forgiveness: Signs of the Kingdom

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In the Jewish tradition, illness was thought to have been linked with sin. Jesus made it a point to show the Jewish people that in the Kingdom of God, sin and sickness could be dealt with. He first told the paralytic his sins were forgiven and then healed him as a sign that his sins were gone. This shocked the scribes, or religious teachers of Judaism, because they believed no one could forgive sin but God alone. Jesus was saying here, “I am God, and to show you I am, I will heal this man.” To those with an open heart, this was a sign that Jesus was the Son of God, and those people followed him.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Hope

Family Activity

1. Cut windows and doors in a shoe box to make a house. Make play dough people to represent Jesus, the paralytic and his friends. Cut a hole through the top of the box to lower the paralytic down. Reenact the gospel reading.
2. Take two large pieces of paper and make signs. One about healing, the other forgiveness. Draw Bible stories and write Bible verses on each one that pertains to that subject.

Catechism Connection

No. 1502 “Illness becomes a way to conversion; God’s forgiveness initiates healing.”

Quiz

What did Jesus say that made the scribes think, “It is blasphemy!”

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 7

B Sunday, February 19, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Allerius

St. Allerius, born in 930, came from a powerful Italian family. He had not been planning to go into the religious life, but after becoming ill, he vowed that he would become a monk if he were healed. In time his health returned, so keeping his vow he entered a monastery in France. Illness in his case was an opportunity to bring him closer to God. St. Allerius later became a hermit outside the city of Salerno and was joined by several others. He founded the Benedictine Abbey of La Cava and lived to the age of 120.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus decide to forgive the paralytic of his sin before he healed him?
2. The four men who lowered the paralytic in front of Jesus had great faith. They believed Jesus would help him. Demonstrate your faith by believing Jesus will heal someone -- who can you pray for?
3. How can illness become a way of conversion? (See CCC No. 1500, 1501, 1502) Name a time when you were ill and it brought you closer to God.
4. How does Jesus touch us today in the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick? Does your parish offer this on a monthly or regular basis? Who can you bring to church to receive that sacrament?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Take assorted crackers like Ritz and rectangles of cheese and insert a toothpick into one edge to make them look like a signposts to remind us of God's signs of His Kingdom. If you wish, stand them up on a flat piece of styrofoam or similar material and arrange them like signs along a roadway.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord and Savior, you are a sign to all the world of the immeasurable love of the Father. Forgive us our sins. Heal our bodies and souls so we may serve you. May we be a sign to others of your love. Amen.

Quiz Answer

"My son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5)

Family Night – First Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, February 26, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Genesis 9:8-15

God's covenant with Noah never to flood the earth again.

1 Peter 3:18-22

Baptism corresponds to the deliverance of Noah through the flood.

Mark 1:12-15

After baptism and forty days in the wilderness, Jesus' ministry begins.

Strength from Baptism

WHAT'S THE POINT?

One corresponding theme in today's readings is the deliverance of Noah and his family through the floodwaters (Baptism) and the salvation that Jesus brings through Baptism. The gospel also points out how Jesus, after his baptism, endured the forty-day trial in the wilderness and then began his public ministry. Baptism was Jesus' step of obedience necessary for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In our lives, baptism is also necessary for us to walk in godliness and resist Satan by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is able to resist temptation in contrast to Adam's inability to do so. The sin of Adam eventually led to the flooding of the earth because of humankind's great wickedness.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostles Creed

Family Activity

1. Set up and play with a toy Noah's ark set, or color pictures that depict the Flood, or draw rainbows with markers.
2. Using a set of memory cards or playing cards, lay out 20 pairs (forty cards to represent each day of Lent) and lay them face down on a table. Turning two cards up, try to match a pair. Each time a player matches a pair, name a temptation to overcome especially during Lent. (Complaining, lying, stealing, etc.)

Catechism Connection

No. 536 "The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant."

Quiz

What sign did God give to Noah that he would never flood the Earth again?

Family Night – First Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, February 26, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Bessarion

St. Bessarion was a native of Egypt who lived in the 4th century. He went to live in the wilderness where he fasted often and for long periods of time. He also performed many miracles such as bringing rain during droughts. He lived to be very old and was compared to Moses and John the Baptist who also lived in the wilderness. During St. Bessarion's time, many hermits lived in the wilderness to find a place for prayer and meditation free from the distractions of the world. Jesus also went to the desert at the beginning of his ministry and endured the temptations of Satan. As Moses fasted forty days on Mt. Sinai to receive the Law, Jesus fasted in the wilderness.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. How does Lent compare to Jesus' forty days in the wilderness? (Fasting, overcoming temptation, prayer.)
2. Why did God decide to flood the earth? How is the Flood like baptism?
3. What strength do we obtain through baptism? Why did Jesus get baptized before going into the wilderness? What areas of your life are stronger because you have been baptized?
4. Why do people go to the wilderness or a retreat center to draw closer to God? Do you remember a time you spent alone with God?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Animal crackers to represent Noah's ark. (Or no snack at all to remind us of fasting.)

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, you spoke peace to a sinful world and brought mankind the gift of reconciliation by the suffering and death you endured. Teach us to follow your example. Increase our faith, hope and charity so that we may struggle to turn hatred to love and conflict to peace. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Rainbow. (Genesis 9:13)

Family Night – Second Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, March 04, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Gen. 22:1-2,9a,10-13,15-18

Abraham is willing to sacrifice his son.

Romans 8:31b-34

God did not spare his only son.

Mark 9:2-10

Jesus is transfigured.

The Sacrifice of Christ

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Today's focus is the sacrifice God made for us: his only Son. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac at God's request was a foreshadowing of God's willingness to sacrifice Jesus for all the world. In both instances, God provided a lamb for the sacrifice. In Abraham's case, a ram was found in the thicket and substituted for Isaac, but in God's case, he sacrificed his Son, who is the perfect Lamb of God. In the gospel reading, God reaffirms his love for His Son at the Mount of Transfiguration by saying, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him."

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Acceptance of God's Will

Family Activity

1. Watch a video about the crucifixion of Christ. (Hannah-Barbara has an animated version called "The Story of Easter" which is not too graphic for younger children.)
2. Lay a rosary in the center of a table. Place a picture of a family member at each of the five decades. Pray the five sorrowful mysteries. As each mystery is announced, place a crucifix over the family member's photo to symbolize Christ taking the penalty for that person's sins.

Catechism Connection

No. 614 "It is a gift from God the Father himself, for the Father handed his Son over to sinners in order to reconcile us with himself."

Quiz

Who appeared with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration?

Family Night – Second Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, March 04, 2012

Saintly Examples: Abraham

Abraham and his wife Sarah followed God's command to leave their homeland and travel to Canaan, the land which God promised to give to their descendants. At the time, this promise seemed strange since they had no child. Finally, when they were quite advanced in age, Sarah conceived and Isaac was born. As a test of Abraham's faith, God asked him to bring his only son, Isaac, to Mt. Moriah and sacrifice him. In faith Abraham obeyed, believing that somehow God would work it out. Indeed, his faith was honored and God provided a ram in the thicket to be the sacrifice. God spoke of Abraham as his friend. God blessed him in many ways, but the greatest promise was that his seed would be the Messiah.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Explain how Jesus took the penalty for our sins. Compare this to the ram caught in the thicket which died in the place of Isaac.
2. How do love and sacrifice work together? What sacrifices have you made which show your love to your family?
3. Why did God show the disciples on the Mt. of Transfiguration that Jesus was his beloved Son?
4. Meditate on the sacrifice of Christ taking your place. How should you respond to his love?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Marshmallow Toast: Take a piece of bread and spread it with peanut butter. Take miniature marshmallows and arrange them in the shape of a lamb on the bread. Put on cookie sheet and put under the broiler. Watch closely until marshmallows turn light brown.

Closing Prayer

O Loving Jesus, meek Lamb of God, we worship you for bearing the heavy cross of our sins. We adore you, O Jesus most sorrowful; we praise and glorify you, and give thanks for your most sacred and painful sacrifice. Lead us on towards Heaven along the Way of your Cross. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Elijah and Moses. (Mark 9:4)

Family Night – Third Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, March 11, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Exodus 20:1-17
The Ten Commandments.

1 Corinthians 1:22-25
Jesus is the Power and Wisdom of God.

John 2:13-25
Jesus foretells of his death and resurrection.

Jesus' Death Brings Us the Eucharist

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The focus of Judaism was to honor God by keeping the commands God had given Moses at Mt. Sinai. Jesus tells the people in today's Gospel, by using the image of the Jewish Temple (the very center of Judaism where sacrifices were made), that he would die and rise again. Jesus then established the New Covenant by offering his own body and blood as the Lamb of God. The Mass is now the way we renew the New Covenant and receive God's grace. The Catechism tells us that the Eucharist is the summit and source of our Faith.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Hope

Family Activity

1. Search the web for information on the Passover, or use encyclopedias or library books or Bible stories about Moses. Summarize what you find out and have an older child explain it or read a paragraph about it.
2. Take a piece of cardboard and make it into the shape of the Ten Commandments. Write the commandments on it. If you wish, cut it into puzzle pieces and reassemble it.

Catechism Connection

No. 1067 "For this reason, the Church celebrates in liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation."

Quiz

What Jewish festival did Jesus go up to Jerusalem to celebrate?

Family Night – Third Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, March 11, 2012

Saintly Examples: King Solomon

Solomon, the son of David, is a direct ancestor of Christ. He was given the task by God to build the Temple in Jerusalem. For its time, the structure was very beautiful, built with cedar and overlaid with gold inside. He was able to raise the money and workers to accomplish the task, making a permanent home for the Ark of the Covenant where the presence of God dwelled. Solomon was also known for his great wisdom. In a case of two women, each accusing the other of replacing a living son with a dead one, Solomon ruled to cut the living child in half so they would be equal. One woman cried out, “No, let the other woman have him so he may live!” Solomon determined that she was the real mother and gave her the living son.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What connections are there between the Temple in Jerusalem and Christ? Why did Jesus compare himself to the Temple?
2. Name a difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant in Christ? What is the difference between the animal sacrifices in the Temple and the sacrifice of Christ?
3. Jesus is the only one who has ever been able to keep the 10 commandments. Is there one commandment that you find very hard to keep? Jesus has the power to help you overcome this problem.
4. How important is the Eucharist in the Mass? What is the Eucharist?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Matzah crackers or saltine crackers with your favorite toppings (cream cheese, apple slices, jelly). Matzah can remind us of the unleavened bread used during Passover.

Closing Prayer

We humbly beseech You, Almighty God, to grant that those whom You refresh with Your sacraments, may serve you worthily by a life well pleasing to You. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Passover. (John 2:13)

Family Night – Fourth Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, March 18, 2012



Sunday Readings:

2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23
After a time of exile, the Jewish people return to Jerusalem.

Ephesians 2:4-10
God gives the gift of His Son.

John 3:14-21
God loved the world so much He gave His only Son.

God's Gift of Love

WHAT'S THE POINT?

There is nothing more central to the Gospel than the great love of God which He showed to us through giving His only Son to atone for our sin. Without His immeasurable love, all of us would be lost and in darkness. God's gift of self-donation surpasses anything we could imagine on our own. It is a mystery, yet we can receive his gift freely. Even though we are not worthy of such a gift, God has chosen to extend it everyone, even the vilest of sinners. Let us accept his love with joy and respond to him with the gift of ourselves.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Charity

Family Activity

1. Place a crucifix in a place for all to see. Meditate for a moment on how much God loves us. Then draw a picture of your response to Him. (Hearts, person praying, person doing good to another, etc.)
2. Memorize and recite together John 3:16. Look at a globe or map of the world as you say it.

Catechism Connection

No. 219 "His love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities and will extend to his most precious gift: . . . his only Son."

Quiz

Why did God send His Son into the world?

Family Night – Fourth Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, March 18, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Polycarp

St. Polycarp is known as one of the Apostolic Fathers who were taught directly by the original apostles. St. John the Evangelist was Polycarp's teacher. Polycarp in turn trained up many holy disciples. A great persecution against the Christians arose under the rule of Marcus Aurelius. Polycarp was sought by the chief of police, who sent horsemen to his house and surrounded it. Polycarp went willingly, asking to have a time of prayer first. He was brought before a tribunal and asked to renounce Christ, to which Polycarp replied, "Eighty-six years I have served Him and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior?" He said many other things with joy and confidence to the proconsul. He then was sentenced to be burned alive. He was martyred in 155. (Butler's Lives of the Saints)

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever received a gift for which you did not feel worthy? Tell about it.
2. How does St. Polycarp show his love for Christ?
3. Name several characteristics of God's love. (immeasurable, for everyone, perfect, etc.)
4. How does the gift of God's Son make a difference in your life? What would life be without it?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Wrap heart shaped candies or cookies in small boxes. Give each person his/her own "present" to eat.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, as we abide in Your Kingdom on earth, let your way of forgiveness and love become our way of life. May we witness the healing of wrongs and suffering caused by hate and injustice. Make us instruments of Your peace. Amen.

Quiz Answer

To save the world. (John 3:17)

Family Night – Fifth Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, March 25, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Jeremiah 31:31-34
The Lord will make a new covenant.

Hebrews 5:7-9
Jesus learned obedience through what he suffered.

John 12:20-33
A grain of wheat must die before it can produce fruit.

Dying to Ourselves

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus gives us the analogy of a grain of wheat falling to the ground to die in order to bring forth fruit. He compares this to his forthcoming death and resurrection. This principle of death to new life also carries over to Christ's followers as we daily take up our crosses and follow Him, or in other words, die to ourselves. If our flesh is not crucified with Christ, we will not be obedient and will not bear fruit in His Kingdom. Jesus died for us because we were unable to save ourselves, but now that we are empowered with his Spirit through baptism, we can put ourselves aside and give our lives away to serve others.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Hope

Family Activity

1. Plant a packet of seeds (Radish seeds sprout quickly.) in containers in the house. Talk about how the seed is dead, but new life will come when it is watered. Water and put in sunny spot. Monitor the progress of the plants in the coming days before Easter.
2. Pray or meditate on the Stations of the Cross. Focus on uniting yourself in Christ's death.

Catechism Connection

No. 612 "The cup of the New Covenant . . . is . . . accepted by him (Jesus) from his Father's hands in his agony in the garden at Gethsemani, making himself 'obedient unto death.'"

Quiz

What happens to the person who loves his own life?

Family Night – Fifth Sunday of Lent

B Sunday, March 25, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. John Baptist de La Salle

St. John the Baptist de La Salle came from a noble family in France and became a priest with a prestigious position. Then he felt the call to help poor, uneducated children, so he gave up his family fortune and began training teachers. At first he did not find the work something he liked to do, but dying to himself he continued. This was the beginning of the order of Christian Brothers. He established a teacher's college and was successful at training delinquent and underprivileged boys. He was happy and fulfilled in his educational ministry. He died in 1719. (Lessons from the Saints)

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Compare Jesus' death and resurrection to the grain of wheat Jesus talks about in the Gospel reading.
2. Why is it so important to die to oneself? Read Galatians 2:20.
3. Name some ways we can daily take up our crosses and follow Christ.
4. Does dying to oneself mean that you cannot be happy? How does being obedient to Christ bring true happiness?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make chocolate pudding and put in individual cups. Cover with crushed chocolate sandwich cookies. (This will look like dirt.) Put a straw with a real or silk flower in it like a flower pot.

Closing Prayer

Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our fellow men throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them through our hands, this day their daily bread, and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen. Pope Paul VI

Quiz Answer

He loses it. (John 12:25)

Family Night – Palm Sunday

B Sunday, April 01, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 50:4-7

He was beaten and spit upon.

Philippians 2:6-11

He took on the form of a servant.

Mark 14:1-15:47

Jesus is crucified.

The Road to the Cross

WHAT'S THE POINT?

We reach the pinnacle of the gospel story in the account of Jesus' last week before his death. The week begins with the triumphal entry where the crowds coming to Jerusalem for the Passover want to hail Him as king. The words which are now repeated at every mass were spoken, "Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Shortly thereafter, Jesus institutes the Eucharist, enters his Passion and is betrayed by the kiss of one of his disciples. So much happens within these last days of his human life that one can meditate a lifetime on it without comprehending it all. The crucifixion is Christ's true triumph over sin and death.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Acceptance of God's Will

Family Activity

1. Using a picture Bible or a stations of the cross booklet, walk through your home with a crucifix and do your own Stations of the Cross, stopping to meditate on the journey to the cross.
2. Tuck the palm branches you received at church behind the crucifixes in your home. If you don't have a crucifix displayed, visit a Catholic gift shop and choose one as a family.

Catechism Connection

No. 560 "Jesus' entry into Jerusalem manifested the coming of the kingdom that the King-Messiah was going to accomplish by the Passover of his Death and Resurrection."

Quiz

What prisoner did Pilate release to the crowd instead of Jesus?

Family Night – Palm Sunday

B Sunday, April 01, 2012

Saintly Examples: Simon of Cyrene

Simon of Cyrene had gone into the city of Jerusalem just as Jesus was being brought to the place of crucifixion. Jesus was too weak to carry the cross further, so the soldiers made Simon carry it for him. This act is remembered in the 5th Station of the Cross. His assistance is now remembered through the ages. Simon had two sons, Alexander and Rufus who most likely became followers of Christ as is indicated by Mark's gospel which referred to these men as though they were well-known to the Christian readers. Certainly the moment in Simon's life of carrying Christ's cross left a lasting impression upon him and his sons.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Read CCC No. 559. At Jesus' triumphal entry, who were the people who acclaimed him? Is it easier for humble people to recognize who Jesus is?
2. How can Jesus' death be considered a triumph?
3. Pick an event in Jesus' last week and explain its importance.
4. Everyone has a road that leads to the cross, but not everyone chooses to carry it with Christ. Have you chosen to carry Christ's cross?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make something in the shape of cross using bread dough or rice krispie treats or large pretzels, etc.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, whose most dear Son, as He walked the way of the Cross, accepted the service of Simon of Cyrene to carry his physical burden for him: grant us each the grace gladly to bear one another's burdens, for the love your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Barabas. (Mark 15:11)

Family Night – Easter Sunday

B Sunday, April 08, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Acts 10:34a,37-43

God raised Jesus up on the third day.

Colossians 3:1-4

Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Mark 16:1-7

The tomb is empty. Jesus is risen!

He Is Risen!

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Christianity is based on this marvelous fact of Christ's resurrection. No other religion can point to such a powerful event backed up by the manifest power of the Holy Spirit. His death took away our sins, but his resurrection brings us new life and the hope of our own resurrection. His resurrection is proof of his divine authority to give us what he has promised. We can boldly shout "Halleluia" today for this unfathomable mystery which will unite us eternally in the Trinity. Those who witnessed the empty tomb have faithfully passed this truth on to us. We are now his witnesses to tell others of new life in Christ.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Glory Be

Family Activity

1. As part of your Easter dinner, cut a head of lettuce in quarters. Remove the inner core and set the remaining part of the lettuce on a plate so it looks like an empty tomb. Pour dressing over it to eat.
2. Watch a video of the Easter story or listen to an audio of the "Halleluia Chorus."

Catechism Connection

No. 657 "The empty tomb and the linen cloths lying there signify in themselves that by God's power Christ's body had escaped the bonds of death and corruption."

Quiz

Where did the angel say Jesus would meet the disciples?

Family Night – Easter Sunday

B Sunday, April 08, 2012

Saintly Examples: Lazarus

Lazarus is the brother of Mary and Martha who lived in Bethany. Jesus was close to this family. Lazarus grew ill and his sisters summoned Jesus to come and heal him, however, Jesus delays and Lazarus dies. When Jesus finally arrives, Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days. Mary and Martha bring Jesus to the tomb where they are followed by a crowd. Jesus orders the stone to be rolled away from the tomb. After he prays, he cries with a loud voice for Lazarus to come out. Lazarus comes out alive, still wrapped in the grave cloths. Jesus demonstrates his power over death and many believed in him. Tradition says that years later, Lazarus and his sisters were sent away in a ship and landed in France. Unlike the resurrection of Jesus to a glorified body, Lazarus did face mortal death once again.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between the resurrection of Lazarus and the resurrection of Jesus? (CCC No. 646)
2. What is so important about the empty tomb? Who were those who witnessed it?
3. Because of Jesus' resurrection, what do we have to look forward to?
4. What is different about the Christian message compared to other world religions? (Our leader is still alive!)

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Eat Easter eggs as a symbol of new life. Cut hard boiled eggs in half, pop out the yolk and pretend the white is the empty tomb.

Closing Prayer

“Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us; and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!” (Ps 117)

Quiz Answer

In Galilee. (Mark 16:7)

Family Night – Second Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, April 15, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Acts 4:32-35

The believers were of one heart and soul.

1 John 5:1-6

Those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God overcome the world.

John 20:19-31

Thomas will not believe unless he sees the resurrected Christ.

“My Lord and My God!”

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The words of Thomas, “My Lord and My God!” are a proclamation of the divinity of Christ. Thomas said these words after doubting that the resurrection had occurred. Once he saw Jesus and touched him, he believed. Jesus stressed that it is better to have believed even though one has not seen. Those who physically saw Jesus after his resurrection believed, but we have not seen Him. We believe because of the testimony of the Apostles and by the power of the Holy Spirit. We also call Jesus “Lord” because we recognize that he is the Son of God and he is the King of Kings glorified in Heaven.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Family Activity

1. Assign each family member to find a household item which exemplifies “not seeing, yet believing.” (Ideas: a can of vegetables with no label—you know it’s in there but you can’t see it. A toy with a motor—you can’t see the motor, but you believe it works.)
2. Fly a kite (The wind is like God—you can’t see it, but it has power) or sit in a dark room (Though you can’t see one another, you know the others are there.)

Catechism Connection

No. 448 “In the encounter with the risen Christ, this title [Lord] becomes adoration: “My Lord and My God!”

Quiz

What was another name for Thomas?

Family Night – Second Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, April 15, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Thomas

St. Thomas was chosen by Jesus to be one of his original twelve disciples. He was most likely from the Galilee region and could possibly have been a fisherman as were several other disciples. Though his name means ‘twin’ there is no mention of his twin in the Bible. He is most well known for his doubting of the resurrection of Christ. He was not with the other apostles when Jesus first appeared to them in Jerusalem. He declared he would not believe unless he could touch the nail prints in Jesus’ hands. When Jesus appeared to him he exclaimed, “My Lord and My God!” Tradition holds that St. Thomas went to India as a missionary and was martyred there.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Jesus said, “Blessed are they who believe and have not seen.” Who are some of these people who have believed and not seen?
2. Jesus’ rising from the dead shows his sovereignty and power. What other ways did Jesus demonstrate his power on earth?
3. How do we know that Jesus is Lord today? How is his Lordship demonstrated?
4. What other important things did Jesus teach the disciples in today’s gospel reading?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Buy a variety of individual fruit pies. Have people guess what flavor they are getting before they eat it.

Closing Prayer

O Christ Jesus, we acknowledge You as Lord of All. We renew our baptismal promises renouncing Satan and all his works and pomps. We promise to lead a good Christian life and to do all in our power to uphold the truth of God and Your Church. Amen.

Quiz Answer

The Twin. (John 20:24)

Family Night – Third Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, April 22, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Acts 3:13-15,17-19

Peter and John proclaim Jesus risen from the dead.

1 John 2:1-5a

Jesus died for the sins of the whole world.

Luke 24:35-48

Jesus appears to the disciples.

Jesus' Body is Glorified

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In today's gospel reading we learn a little about what a resurrected body is like. When we are resurrected, we too will receive a body like the risen Christ. In his resurrected body, Jesus still ate and drank, and he was recognizable by the nail prints in his hands and feet. Several differences are apparent, however. His body is able to appear wherever he wishes and is not bound by time or space. Jesus says he is made of flesh and bone, but does not mention blood. His body is of a divine nature and is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Watch a video about butterflies or read a book or encyclopedia about how they change from caterpillar to butterfly. Discuss how we will be transformed into something different when we are resurrected.
2. Make a list of the differences between a mortal body and a resurrected one.

Catechism Connection

No. 645 "By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples."

Quiz

What did Jesus eat to show the disciples he was not a ghost?

Family Night – Third Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, April 22, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Catherine of Siena

In 1347, St. Catherine was born the 25th child of a wool dyer in northern Italy. At the age of six she started having mystical experiences, seeing visions of Jesus, Mary and the saints. Her parents opposed her wish not to marry, but finally they realized how serious she was and she received the Dominican habit at age 16. A few things she is known for are her writings, the “Dialogue of St. Catherine,” her influence in persuading Pope Gregory to return to Rome rather than stay in Avignon and her receiving the Stigmata. She died at the age of 33. Fifty years later, her body was found incorrupt.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between a resurrected body and an incorrupt body? (The catechism does not mention this phenomenon, but many saints are reported to be incorrupt, or their body has not decayed like most dead bodies do.)
2. How do you imagine the disciples felt after seeing the risen Lord? Remember they have seen him suffer, die and be buried only a few weeks before.
3. How do you suppose you will recognize Jesus when you see him? Some people have special visions of Christ. How can we see Jesus every day?
4. How many things can you name for which we can be thankful that Christ has made possible for us through his death and resurrection?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

“Butterfly Toast” Take four cups and put a few tablespoons of milk in each. Add several drops of food coloring to each. Using watercolor brushes, paint butterflies on slices of bread. Toast them, butter and eat.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, may we recognize you in this life in the faces of our brothers and sisters. May we persevere with your divine help until we see you face to face in eternity. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Broiled fish. (Luke 24:42-43)

Family Night – Fourth Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, April 29, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Acts 4:8-12

There is salvation in no one other than Jesus.

1 John 3:1-2

We are God's children.

John 10:11-18

Jesus is the good shepherd.

One Flock, One Shepherd

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Among the titles of Jesus, the Good Shepherd is one of the most comforting because it helps us understand how much he cares for us. He is willing to give his life for us because of his great love. The shepherd and flock image portrays Christ's protection, personal care and concern for us, his affection, guidance, and sacrifice. This portion of the gospel also shows us how important one flock is to Christ. He wants to draw everyone into the same flock so the sheep can be properly cared for. That is why He instituted the Church and asked St. Peter to "feed" his sheep. St. Peter is not a hireling who flees from the wolf, rather he is the personification of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Prayer for the Pope

Family Activity

1. Dress one family member as a shepherd and have the others be a flock of sheep following where the shepherd leads, or act out the scene of the hireling not helping the sheep when the wolf comes.
2. Read Psalm 23 and relate the images of the good shepherd to your lives. Smaller children could draw pictures of shepherd and sheep.

Catechism Connection

No. 754 "The Church is accordingly, a sheepfold, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ.

Quiz

What does a hireling do when he sees a wolf?

Family Night – Fourth Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, April 29, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Michael Garicoits

In 1797, St. Michael Garicoits was born to a peasant family in the Pyrenees Mountains. As a small boy, he was hired out as a shepherd-boy to a farmer. His desire was to become a priest, though his parents thought they were too poor to educate him. His grandmother arranged with a priest to have him enrolled in the College of Saint-Palais, where after school he worked in the bishop's kitchen to pay for his education. As a priest, he advocated frequent communion and devotion to the Sacred Heart. He later founded the Society of Priest of the Sacred Heart of Betharram which was not fully approved by the Holy See until after his death. His plan was to train priests to do mission work among the people. He died May 14, 1863.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Compare the work of a priest to the work of a shepherd and to Christ.
2. What other Old Testament leaders were shepherds? (Abraham, Jacob, David, Moses) Why do you think that is significant?
3. Why was it important to Christ that we all belong to the same flock?
4. Name some ways Christ has been a shepherd to you and your family. How has he worked through a priest or the pope to shepherd you?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Take a scoop of ice cream, custard, or vanilla pudding and place on a plate. Sprinkle with coconut. Insert three raisins for eyes and nose to look like a lamb. Make ears from white paper.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, You are our shepherd. We will be satisfied by the food and drink You have prepared for us. Thank you for giving Your life as a sacrifice for Your flock. May we follow You with thankfulness and joy. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Leaves the sheep and flees. (John 10:12)

Family Night – Fifth Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, May 06, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Acts 9:26-31

The Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus.

1 John 3:18-24

Those who keep God's commandments abide in him.

John 15:1-8

Jesus is the vine, we are the branches.

Abiding in the Risen Christ

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Today's gospel clearly defines how we are to be sustained – by abiding in Christ, by being connected to Him so we can draw life from Him. God intended for us to be a part of His Trinitarian life by grafting us into the vine, Jesus, and through adoption as His children. Without God we can do nothing. Our lives are in His hands and our every breath is dependent upon Him. By taking advantage of the sacraments instituted by Christ we are able to be connected to Him. We are then able to bear fruit for Christ because of his life within us.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Roll up a paper towel and fill a bowl of water. Compare the paper towel to us and the water to the life which Jesus offers. Place one end of paper towel in water and watch the water seep into the towel. The only way to draw life is to be connected to the source.
2. Place a trimmed piece of celery in a glass of water to which drops of blue food coloring have been added. Watch how the color spreads through the celery. Compare to abiding in the vine.

Catechism Connection

No. 308 “The truth that God is at work in all the actions of his creatures is inseparable from faith in God the Creator.”

Quiz

How can you prove to be Jesus' disciple?

Family Night – Fifth Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, May 06, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Paul

St. Paul, who was first known as Saul of Tarsus, is a wonderful example of bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. At first in opposition to the spread of Christianity, Saul was responsible for the stoning of St. Stephen. But after a miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus where the risen Jesus spoke audibly to Saul, Saul became one of the foremost missionaries of the gospel. His name was changed to Paul and he traveled throughout the Gentile world and established churches wherever he went. He suffered shipwreck, stoning, beating, and imprisonment but considered it nothing compared to the price Jesus paid for his sins.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Compare the concept of abiding in the vine to the sacrament of Holy Communion.
2. After reading CCC No. 308, how important is God's grace? What could we accomplish without it?
3. Can you think of a time when you were not abiding in Christ's life? How did you come back to him?
4. Name some people who have borne fruit for God. What do they have in common?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make fruit smoothies by mixing flavored yogurt, sliced strawberries, frozen banana, milk and ice cubes in a blender. Drink with a straw to be reminded that we must draw life from Christ.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, extend your grace to us and nourish us with your life-giving sacraments. May your commandments be our foundation and your Spirit be our strength. Help us to bear fruit for your Kingdom. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Bear fruit. (John 15:8)

Family Night – Sixth Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, May 13, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48

The Holy Spirit is poured out on the Gentiles.

1 John 4:7-10

Love is of God.

John 15:9-17

We are friends of Christ when we obey him.

The New Law of Love

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus mentions over and over throughout the Gospels to love our neighbor. He gives us this commandment along with the power of the Holy Spirit to obey it. We can love our neighbor with the help of God's Spirit. Charity is the basis for God's Kingdom and everyone should respond in charity to spread the Kingdom throughout the world. An amazing thing takes place here—Jesus puts his trust in us to obey him, and thus we become his friends, not servants but friends! We obey by putting others first, caring for the sick, loving the unlovable, taking time to listen or to tell someone the truth in love.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Hail Mary

Family Activity

1. Put together a care package to send someone in need or ill. Could include baked goods, photographs and drawn pictures, a devotional book, etc.
2. Take a walk through your neighborhood and see how many neighbors you can name. If people you don't know are in their yard, introduce yourselves.

Catechism Connection

No. 1972 "The New Law is called a law of love because it makes us act out of the love infused by the Holy Spirit . . ."

Quiz

What is Jesus' commandment?

Family Night – Sixth Sunday of Easter

B Sunday, May 13, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Maximilian Kolbe

St. Maximilian was born in Poland in 1894. He became a Franciscan priest and gathered over 800 men into a community dedicated to the Immaculata Movement. He built a monastery in Japan and then worked in India furthering the Movement. Due to poor health he returned to Poland in 1936. After the Nazi invasion of Poland, St. Maximilian was arrested but later released. Then in 1941 he was arrested again and sent to Auschwitz. There he took the place of a Jewish man sentenced to die. After two weeks of starvation in a prison cell, St. Maximilian was found alive and was then executed, but the other man survived the Holocaust to see his family again.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. In what ways have you loved your neighbor? What other things can you do to show love?
2. Think of a close friend. How important is trust between you? Compare that to the trust Jesus has in you to obey his command to love.
3. When you show love, who benefits from it?
4. What part does the Holy Spirit play in helping us love our neighbor?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Cocktail wieners wrapped in crescent roll dough and baked, or sausage links wrapped in pancakes. Symbolizes giving blankets to someone in need as an act of love.

Closing Prayer

Come Holy Spirit; Fill the hearts of Your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Love one another. (John 15:12)

Family Night – Ascension Sunday

B Sunday, May 20, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Acts 1:1-11

Jesus ascends into heaven.

Ephesians 1:17-23

Jesus sits at the right hand of God.

Mark 16:15-20

Jesus commissions the Apostles to make disciples.

Make Disciples

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The gospel reading for today contains the last recorded words of Jesus to His disciples. He commissions them to go out into the whole world to baptize and teach the gospel. He also tells them that He is with them in their efforts. Jesus has left us equipped with Holy Spirit so we can obey Jesus' commands and reach out to others in order to bring them to new life in Christ. With the promise of the Holy Spirit and the truth of the gospel, we can make a difference in the lives of others.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Prayer for the Pope

Family Activity

1. Take a helium balloon to release outside and watch it as it ascends.
2. Play a game like "Trouble" or "Candyland." Pretend the game board markers are missionaries on their journey to spread the gospel.

Catechism Connection

No. 227 "The missionary task implies a 'respectful dialogue' with those who do not yet accept the Gospel."

Quiz

What did Jesus do when He went up into heaven?

Family Night – Ascension Sunday

B Sunday, May 20, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Bernardino of Siena

St. Bernardino was born in Tuscany to a noble family. He was raised with a religious education and love from his aunt after the death of his parents. During the plague epidemic in 1400, St. Bernardino cared for those hospitalized until the epidemic was over. He was ordained a priest in 1403 and went on to become an apostle and reformer. His eloquence and zeal attracted large congregations. He traveled on several missionary journeys throughout Italy. Once he preached for fifty consecutive days. He died on the eve of the Ascension in 1444 at age sixty-four. (Butler's Lives of the Saints)

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. After hearing the last words of Jesus to his Apostles, what do you think is very important to Jesus?
2. How did St. Bernardino fulfill the commission Jesus gave his Apostles?
3. What have you or your family done that has spread the gospel message?
4. What would happen to the world and the Church if it fails in following Jesus' command of evangelization?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Crackers with cheese spread. Remember to “spread” the gospel!

Closing Prayer

Come, O Creator Spirit blest! And in our souls take up Thy rest; Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid, To fill the hearts which Thou hast made. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Sat down at the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19)

Family Night – Pentecost

B Sunday, May 27, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Acts 2:1-11

The disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:3b-7,12-13

By the Spirit we are all baptized into one body.

John 20:19-23

Jesus brings peace to the disciples.

The Sign of the Holy Spirit

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus promised his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit after his ascension into heaven. He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for this event. During the Jewish festival of Pentecost, the disciples were gathered to pray. Suddenly, tongues as of fire appeared above the disciples' heads, and they began speaking in different languages. "Fire symbolizes the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit's actions" (CCC No. 696). This powerful sign of the Spirit's coming compelled them into the streets where Jews from all nations heard the gospel proclaimed in their own languages. This event is often considered the birth of the Church.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostles Creed

Family Activity

1. Do a web search on the Jewish festival of Pentecost, or do some research to see who were the founding members of your local parish.
2. Find several pictures of people from different countries and make a collage. Pray that the gospel will continue to spread to those nations.

Catechism Connection

No. 696 "In the form of tongues 'as of fire,' the Holy Spirit rests on the disciples . . . and fills them with himself."

Quiz

What sign bewildered the multitudes gathered in Jerusalem?

Family Night – Pentecost

B Sunday, May 27, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Barnabas

St. Barnabas was among the first converts in Jerusalem due to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. He was probably among the 3000 to whom Peter preached shortly after Pentecost where a similar outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred. St. Barnabas sold his estate and gave the proceeds to the Apostles and lived in community with the group of believers in Jerusalem. St. Barnabas received a special commission from the Holy Spirit to partake in the missionary work of the Apostles along with St. Paul. St. Barnabas had been the first to receive St. Paul after Paul's conversion and vouched for Paul when the other Apostles still mistrusted Paul. Paul and Barnabas traveled together on missionary journeys, spreading the gospel to the Gentile world. Tradition says St. Barnabas was stoned in Salamis.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What are some other signs of the Holy Spirit? (see CCC Nos. 694-701)
2. Read the account of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. How does Pentecost undo the problem that occurred at the Tower of Babel?
3. In what sacraments is the Holy Spirit poured out on a person? What gifts does He give?
4. It is not uncommon for people today to speak in tongues like the disciples. This gift should be used to build up the body of Christ. Have you heard any accounts of people coming to Christ because of this sign?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Put birthday candles in cupcakes and sing "Happy Birthday" to the Church.

Closing Prayer

Oh God, you taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending them the light of your Holy Spirit. In that same Spirit give us right judgment and the joy of your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Speaking in tongues. (Acts 2:6)

Family Night – Holy Trinity

B Sunday, June 03, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Deut. 4:32-34,39-40
There is no other God.

Romans 8:14-17
As sons of God we cry, "Abba, Father."

Matthew 28:16-20
Make disciples and baptize in the name of the Triune God.

Trinity Revealed in Baptism

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Today's gospel reading is often called the "Great Commission." Jesus instructs his disciples to spread the word of the gospel to every nation and bring these people into God's kingdom through baptism, not only in the name of the Father but also in the name of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity is named in this passage, stressing the importance of our relationship to each one and to all of them as one. It has been God's desire from the beginning to be in relationship with his created children, and now that the sacrifice for man's sin has been paid through the death of Christ, the way is open through baptism to enter into that relationship.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Glory Be

Family Activity

1. Try to toss coins into a bowl from several feet away. (If you have foreign coins this would be even better.) Let the coins represent people from all nations entering the Kingdom of God.
2. To demonstrate the idea of three in one, use water in the form of ice, liquid and steam.

Catechism Connection

No. 249 "From the beginning, the revealed truth of the Holy Trinity has been at the very root of the Church's living faith, principally by means of baptism."

Quiz

How long will Jesus be with us?

Family Night – Holy Trinity

B Sunday, June 03, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Martin of Tours

St. Martin was born of pagan parents in what is now Hungary. Because his father was a veteran, Martin was forced into the army at fifteen against his will. Martin had been a catechumen for Christian baptism since the age of ten. At the time, people prepared for several years to become a Christian. St. Martin gave half his cloak to a shivering beggar and that evening had a dream of Christ wearing the beggar's cloak. He was baptized soon after this dream. After leaving the army, St. Martin preached and performed miracles. He was made Bishop of Tours around 371 AD. St. Martin fought hard against the many heresies that denied Christ's divinity. During this era, the doctrine of the Trinity was clarified through councils to defend against heresies.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are recognized at baptism? How has baptism brought you into a relationship with the Trinity?
2. What is the origin of each person of the Trinity? (Think of the Creed or read CCC No. 254)
3. Make a sign of the cross. Think of each member of the Trinity and talk about the function or "unique personal properties" of each one. (Father -- Creator; Son -- became man; Spirit -- dwells in man, etc.)
4. How is our understanding of God as Trinity different from the Old Testament understanding of God?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Triple berry treat. Mix three kinds of berries together and sprinkle with sugar.

Closing Prayer

Love of Jesus fill us; Holy Spirit guide us; will of the Father be done. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Always. (Matthew 28:20)

Family Night – Corpus Christi

B Sunday, June 10, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Exodus 24:3-8

Moses ratifies the covenant by sprinkling blood on the Israelites.

Hebrews 9:11-15

Christ is the sacrifice of the New Covenant.

Mark 14:12-16,22-26

Jesus speaks the words of consecration.

The Eucharist

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The Eucharist, which means “thanksgiving,” is known as the “source and summit” of our faith. It is the central focus of our faith because Jesus initiated it for our nourishment. By partaking of Christ, His body is unified on earth and in heaven. He instructed his followers to do this as a memorial until He returns. In this way we are continually reminded of our redemption. Jesus’ words spoken during the Passover meal with His disciples are repeated by the priests during each mass when the ordinary species of bread and wine are changed into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Hope

Family Activity

1. Thankfulness game. Each person should write as many things for which he/she is thankful. After three minutes, compare lists and check off items others also have. The person with the most left on their list wins.
2. Write a thank you prayer. Have each member contribute to it. Each person should make his own copy to take along to the next mass and pray it after communion.

Catechism Connection

No. 1333 “At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that . . . become Christ’s Body and Blood.”

Quiz

Where did Jesus go to eat the Passover?

Family Night – Corpus Christi

B Sunday, June 10, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Philip Neri

St. Philip Neri was born in Florence, Italy, in 1515. After a mystical conversion experience at the age of 29, he went to Rome where he studied theology for a time and then helped the sick in hospitals, cared for needy pilgrims and went on to become a priest. He became well known as a confessor and could read the thoughts of those in the confessional. He held many conferences and discussions for those who had conversions of their heart. He raised money to rebuild the church of Chiesa Nuova. On the feast of Corpus Christi in 1595 he heard confessions as usual but around midnight he succumbed to a hemorrhage and died at the age of eighty.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Name several other names for the Lord's Supper. (See CCC 1328-1332)
2. When we partake of the Eucharist, what should we be thankful for? What should we be reminded of?
3. What similarities are there between bread and Jesus' body and between wine and Jesus' blood? In light of the Passover meal, why does Jesus want us to eat his body and drink his blood? (In the Passover meal, each person had to consume the Passover lamb.)
4. Talk about your first communion and what you can remember about it that was special.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Poll the family to find out what their favorite snack is. Make it and be sure they are thankful!

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, May you be praised forever for the sacrifice of your most holy Body and Blood, which nourishes your Church. May we have a deeper appreciation of your love each time we partake of this Blessed Sacrament. Amen.

Quiz Answer

A large upper room. (Mark 14:15)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 11

B Sunday, June 17, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Though the nation of Israel was small, the Lord would help it to be important.

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

No matter where we are we should try to please the Lord.

Mark 4:26-34

Jesus tells the parable of the mustard seed.

The Kingdom of God Will Grow

WHAT'S THE POINT?

As Jesus teaches parables about the Kingdom of God, in this week's gospel he emphasizes that though the Kingdom started small, it would spread into something very large, from a tiny seed to a large tree. We are living in a time when the Kingdom of God has spread over all the earth like the large mustard shrub whose branches have made a place for birds to dwell. It is God who has done this through his Holy Spirit, but he has used many people before us to help the Kingdom grow. We can be a part of the growth of the Kingdom of God in our generation.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostles' Creed

Family Activity

1. Story Telling Time—Tell your own parable. Pick one of the following topics or one of your own topics and try to make a story (parable) that would illustrate it. Work together with your ideas! "It is important to look before you leap," "You can't judge a book by its cover," "The first shall become last"
2. Get some bubbles and blow them around the yard. Pretend they are seeds to be scattered and planted to make the Kingdom of God spread. If you have a giant bubble maker, all the better!

Catechism Connection

No. 546 "Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables. One must enter the kingdom, that is, become a disciple of Christ, in order to 'know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.'"

Quiz

What is the name of the type of story that Jesus used in his teachings?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 11

B Sunday, June 17, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Canisius

St. Canisius was instrumental in spreading the truths of the Catholic faith throughout Germany during the time of the Protestant Reformation. St. Canisius was born in what is today Holland and he was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1543. He was known as an influential teacher and preacher who travel throughout the German-speaking world. He wrote a book which became known as the “German Catechism” that explained the Catholic faith in German. He led many Protestants back to the Catholic Faith through his teachings. He was recognized a saint in 1925 by Pope Pius XI and as a Doctor of the Church.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Compare how the message of the One True God has spread from the Old Testament small nation of Israel to the big Catholic Church of today.
2. Why do you think Jesus liked to teach in parables? Is it easier for you to remember something your parents tell you if they tell you a story to illustrate it?
3. How are we a part of the Kingdom of God?
4. Name people who have helped to spread the Kingdom of God around the world.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make or buy soft pretzels and dip them in mustard.

Closing Prayer

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy.” Amen. (Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi)

Quiz Answer

Parables. (Mark 4:33)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 12

B Sunday, June 24, 2012



The Wind & Sea Obey Christ

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In the gospel reading of the Jesus calming the storm we can answer the question of the disciples, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?” Who other than God himself who made the boundaries of the seas and created the wind to blow? This miracle of Jesus proclaims Him as the creator of all things. It was no effort for him to calm the storm. He only had to say to the storm to be calm and it obeyed, just as on the days of creation they were spoken into being. We believe He is capable of creating the entire world, we should also believe He is capable of caring for us.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Sunday Readings:

Job 38:1,8-11

God speaks to Job of how He set boundaries on the sea.

2 Corinthians 4:14-17

Paul exhorts us to keep the eternal in mind, not just the temporal.

Mark 4:14-17

Jesus calms the storm on the Sea of Galilee.

Family Activity

1. In the gospel reading, four questions are asked. Find the four questions and answer them among yourselves.
2. Make some boats out of recycled materials like pop cans or Styrofoam. Tie a string to it and float in a swimming pool, tub or pond. Make waves and see whose boat floats best.

Catechism Connection

No. 291 “The New Testament reveals that God created everything by the eternal Word, his beloved Son.”

Quiz

Who was in the boat with Jesus?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 12

B Sunday, June 24, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Erasmus

St. Erasmus or St. Elmo was a bishop and martyr in the 4th Century, and is the patron saint of sailors and those suffering from cramp and colic. He is also known as one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, a group of saints who were invoked during times of crisis, especially during the Black Plague of the mid-thirteen hundreds. Little is known of St. Elmo, but sailors prayed for his intercession and believed the phenomenon known as St. Elmo's fire was a sign of his protection. St. Elmo's fire appears as a blue light on the mastheads of large ships before and after storms.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Why was it so easy for Jesus to calm the storm?
2. Have you ever been frightened in a storm? How did you react to it?
3. Does it surprise you that Jesus was asleep in the boat during this fierce storm? Why or why not?
4. Think about the Bible account of creation. What were some of things God made? Meditate a moment that Jesus was there at the creation of the world with God the Father.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Take canned pear halves and set in individual serving bowls to look like a boat. Pour pear juice into bowl to look like the sea. Create masts and sails with toothpicks and paper if desired.

Closing Prayer

My Jesus, my Friend, walk with me today. Hand in hand, guide me to learn and to know what is good. Thank You, Jesus, for the special love You have for me. Amen.

Quiz Answer

The Disciples. (Mark 4:34)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 13

B Sunday, July 01, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24
God created man for eternity.

2 Cor. 8:7,9,13-15
He became poor so we may become rich.

Mark 5:21-43
Jesus heals the sick and raises the dead.

Touching the Hem of His Garment

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In the time of Jesus, Jewish men wore a four-cornered garment with tassels on each corner. Each tassel, or tzit-tzit, was tied in such a way as to signify all the commands God had given to Moses, 613 in all. These tassels had to be visible. More than likely, the woman with the flow of blood touched one of Jesus' tzit-tzit. Because she was considered unclean due to her type of illness, she ran a big risk in touching Jesus. Ordinarily she would have caused Jesus to become unclean also, but the opposite happened; she became clean. God in His mercy healed her.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Find a picture of a Jewish prayer shawl. Modern day prayer shawls also have the four tzit-tzit. (Check the library, encyclopedia or Internet.)
2. Make your own tzit-tzit like tassel. Take several strands of kite string, each representing a characteristic of Jesus. Dye them different colors if you wish and intertwine them. Hang them from rear view mirror or doorknob to remind you of Jesus.

Catechism Connection

No. 547 "Jesus accompanies his words with many 'mighty works and wonders and signs,' . . ."

Quiz

How long had the woman with the flow of blood been sick?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 13

B Sunday, July 01, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Magdalen of Canossa

St. Magdalen was born in Verona in March of 1774. She was raised by her uncles and suffered a painful illness in her childhood. She decided to become a nun and entered the Carmel, but then returned home where she had a vision of Our Lady and six religious sisters helping women and children in rags in hospitals. After this she secured an abandoned convent and turned into a house for poor girls. St. Magdalen and her followers founded similar places in northern Italy and eventually they became an order called Daughters of Charity. Their mission was to help to poorest of the poor. St. Magdalen is a followed Jesus' wonderful example of helping the needy.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. The gospel reading today is a wonderful example of God Himself coming down to walk among his creation. What acts of mercy does He perform in this passage?
2. What kind of special clothing did Jewish men wear in Jesus' day? What did the tassels on their garment represent?
3. How does God show his mercy to us today?
4. Jesus told the woman whom he healed that she had great faith. How did she demonstrate her faith in Jesus?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Take string licorice and tie several knots in it to resemble a tzit-tzit (the tassel from Jesus' garment). Then eat it.

Closing Prayer

Lord, touch us with Your compassion for others. Touch our hearts with Your courage and infinite love for all. Most loving Heart of Jesus, bring us health in body and spirit that we may serve You with all our strength. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Twelve years. (Mark 5:25)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 14

B Sunday, July 08, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Ezekiel 2:2-5

God tells Ezekiel to speak to the nation of Israel.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Paul realizes he is strengthened by his weaknesses.

Mark 6:1-6

Jesus is rejected by the people in his hometown.

Jesus the Prophet

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In today's gospel reading, the people in his home region of Nazareth would not believe Jesus had power and authority because they knew Him merely as the son of a carpenter. Jesus then says, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." These words often hold true when we try to share God's truth with family members. They will often reject our words, whereas a friend or stranger is more apt to listen. In the Old Testament also, when God sent many prophets to warn the Israelites to turn from their sins, the prophets were often imprisoned or killed. This fate also befell Jesus, the great prophet among his own people.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Acceptance of God's Will

Family Activity

1. Look through the book of Ezekiel and find one example of Ezekiel's warnings to the Israelites and one example of encouragement to the Israelites. (See "Saintly Example" section for more explanation.)
2. Using two magnets, demonstrate positive and negative attraction. Two positive sides will repel like people may do when they are presented with truth.

Catechism Connection

No. 436 "Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet and king."

Quiz

Where was Jesus teaching in today's gospel reading?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 14

B Sunday, July 08, 2012

Saintly Examples: Ezekiel

Ezekiel was an Old Testament prophet from the priestly line of Zadok. He lived in Jerusalem until he was taken with other captives into Babylonian exile by King Nebuchadnezzar. He wrote the book of Ezekiel, which contains his warnings to Jerusalem to repent before the deportation occurred. His warnings and prophecies went unheeded and the Temple was destroyed in 586 BC. Part of the book of Ezekiel also contains messages of hope and courage to those who became exiles. Like many of the Old Testament prophets, the people did not accept his words, though later generations have seen Ezekiel's influence on the imagery of the Apocalypse and the doctrines of immortality and the resurrection.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Why didn't the people in Nazareth believe that Jesus was special?
2. Can you name a time when you shared a truth with a family member and they disagreed?
3. The Catechism says Jesus was prophet, priest and king. What examples can you think of from Jesus' life which show these three things? What sorts of things did Jesus prophecy that have come true?
4. Is there someone in your family who tells you the truth and teaches you about spiritual things? How do you respond to what they say?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

If you know your ethnic heritage, chose a food from your "hometown" background. If not, make any sort of ethnic snack such as egg rolls, nachos, baklava, etc.

Closing Prayer

O God of goodness and mercy, to Your fatherly guidance we commend our family, our household and all our belongings. We commit all to Your love and keeping; fill this house with Your blessings even as You filled the holy House of Nazareth with Your presence. Amen.

Quiz Answer

In the synagogue. (Mark 6:2)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 15

B Sunday, July 15, 2012



Jesus Chooses Ordinary People

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Often we expect great things to be done by the rich or famous, but in the Kingdom of God, it is the other way around. The poor and meek are the ones chosen to do great things for God. In this Sunday's readings, we learn that Amos, a lowly herdsman, was chosen to be a prophet. St. Paul tells us in Ephesians that we all are chosen to lead a holy life. Even if we don't change the world, we still can affect those around us for good. Jesus chose twelve average men, who went on to do great things with the power of the Holy Spirit. It is God within us that can accomplish the impossible. Each of us is able to fulfill the call.

Sunday Readings:

Amos 7:12-15

Amos obeys God's call to prophesy to Israel.

Ephesians 1:3-14

God chose us from the foundation of the world to be holy.

Mark 6:7-13

Jesus gives his disciples His authority.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostle's Creed

Family Activity

1. Play a card game but make the face cards worth less than the numbered cards. Or play so the lowest score is the winner.
2. Make playdough out of ordinary ingredients: 1 C flour, 1 C salt, 2 t cream of tartar; mix in saucepan; add 1 C water and 1 T vegetable oil; cook and stir 3 minutes; knead on wax paper; cool slightly; mold into shapes; store in airtight container.

Catechism Connection

No. 725 "And the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana and the first disciples."

Quiz

What did Jesus tell the disciples to take with them on their journey?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 15

B Sunday, July 15, 2012

Saintly Examples: Amos

Amos lived during the Old Testament time when the country of Israel had split into two countries: Judah to the south and Israel to the north around 750BC. He had been a shepherd and a pruner of sycamore trees before God called him to prophesy against the sins of the northern kingdom of Israel. His prophecies are recorded in the book of Amos. Oppression of the poor by the wealthy was a particular problem, which Amos spoke against. God was more interested in justice than with ritualistic sacrifices. Not much else is said about Amos, but like many chosen by God, he was a humble man.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of an example of someone you know who has become a priest or entered a convent? Were you surprised?
2. If God has chosen us from the foundation of the world to be holy, how should that affect our lives?
3. Have you ever chosen teams for a sport? If Jesus was choosing the team, do you think he'd pick people the same way we would?
4. Jesus equipped his disciples with the Holy Spirit before he sent them out. How does he equip us today?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Choose something ordinary like crackers and cheese or popcorn.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, Prepare my heart for your service. Bring me to a greater understanding of your calling on my life. I will respond with joy and gratitude to follow in your holy footsteps. Amen.

Quiz Answer

A staff. (Mark 6:8)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 16

B Sunday, July 22, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Jeremiah 23:1-6

God will raise up a faithful Shepherd.

Ephesians 2:13-18

Jesus came to bring peace to both Jews and Gentiles.

Mark 6:30-34

Jesus has great love and compassion for the crowds.

Jesus Never Turns People Away

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus understood his mission on earth. Among the many reasons he came was to teach and shepherd the people with whom he came in contact. Even when he and the disciples were exhausted because of the demands of the people on their time, Jesus continued to show compassion to all. He had planned to go to a secluded area to rest with his disciples, but a huge throng found them. Instead of telling them he was tired, he taught them and cared for them. God had promised to raise up a true Shepherd in Israel, and Jesus here demonstrates the fulfillment of that promise. Following his example, we can be kind to others even when we are inconvenienced.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Charity

Family Activity

1. Act out scenes of a busy activity being interrupted by someone in need. Emphasize how to respond in kindness.
2. Blindfold members of the family and put different scents before them such as fresh flowers, garlic, perfume, fish. The goal will be to see who can react positively with "less than savory" scents.

Catechism Connection

No. 2093 "The first commandment enjoins us to love God above everything and all creatures for him and because of him."

Quiz

What did the people do when they saw Jesus going off in a boat?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 16

B Sunday, July 22, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Camillus De Lellis

St. Camillus was born in 1550 in Italy. He grew to be extremely tall and suffered from a painful disease in his leg, which afflicted him all his life. He was addicted to gambling and lost everything he owned. He then accepted work as a laborer among the Capuchins and finally repented of his past life, fell on his knees and asked God for mercy. From there he worked at the hospital of San Giacomo for incurables in Rome where he had once been treated for his legs. He became the superintendent of the hospital due to his great charity and ability. He was grieved by the treatment the hospital workers gave the patients so he gathered people of compassion to serve the sick. He accepted holy orders and formed an order, which served the sick with affection and diligence.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a time when someone needed you but you told him you couldn't help? What could you have done differently?
2. What should our attitude be if we are interrupted while we are "taking a break"?
3. Can you think of a time when Jesus was turned away by others? (Bethlehem at the inn with Mary and Joseph) How is Jesus turned away by us today?
4. How is Jesus like a shepherd?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make sweet and sour sauce for dipping egg rolls or cocktail wieners. (Be sweet even when life is sour.) Melt one jar of grape jelly and one jar of cocktail sauce on stovetop.

Closing Prayer

The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing. He brings me to cool pastures and living water. Even in the worst of times, I will not fear because He is with me. His goodness and mercy will be with me always. Amen.

Quiz Answer

They ran ahead to where he was going. (Mark 6:33)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 17

B Sunday, July 29, 2012



Sunday Readings:

2 Kings 4:42-44
Elisha multiplies bread for a crowd.

Ephesians 4:1-6
We are united in the Spirit and in one body.

John 6:1-15
Jesus feeds the five thousand.

Jesus Feeds the 5000

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus' multiplication of the loaves and fishes is a wonderful foreshadowing of the Eucharist. His disciples distribute the bread, much like our priests distribute the host to us today. There was enough bread to feed everyone there, just as there is enough of Christ to feed all who come to him at mass. This miracle showed Jesus had divine authority and also affirmed that he was the Messiah. The Jews of Jesus' day knew many Old Testament prophecies and messianic figures like the prophet Elisha who also multiplied bread for a crowd. Jesus' miracles were a clear statement to those who chose to believe that he was the Son of God.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Compare the two accounts of bread being multiplied in the first and third readings. Smaller children could draw a picture of these scenes.
2. Using thawed bread dough let each member of the family form a small loaf on a cookie sheet. After it rises and bakes, put the bread in a basket to use as a centerpiece to remind you of Jesus' miracle. (Loaves can be dried in the oven at 200 degrees to prevent spoilage.)

Catechism Connection

No. 547 "Jesus accompanies his words with many 'mighty works and wonders and sign,' which. . .attest that he was the promised Messiah."

Quiz

How many baskets of bread were left over after Jesus fed the five thousand?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 17

B Sunday, July 29, 2012

Saintly Examples: Fr. Pietro from Praga

According to tradition, in 1263 a Bohemian priest, Pietro from Praga, doubted the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He made a pilgrimage to Rome and stopped in Bolsena to celebrate Mass. A Eucharistic miracle occurred when blood gushed from the host and stained the corporal and some stones at the base of the altar. Pietro went to Orvieto to inform Pope Urban IV about the event. The Pope sent Bishop Giacomo to Bolsena to take the blood-stained cloth in solemn procession to the Cathedral of Orvieto, where it is still kept. This event may have persuaded Pope Urban IV to initiate the feast of Corpus Christi. Every year, on June 19, the proofs of the miracle, the cloth and altar stone, are exposed to the public.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Name two reasons Jesus performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes.
2. Jesus performed miracles to help people believe he was God's Son. Why do you think God performed a Eucharistic miracle for Fr. Pietro?
3. How can our understanding of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist make a difference in our lives?
4. When the disciples saw the bread multiplying, they probably remembered the account of Elisha doing the same thing many years before. Jesus was not only doing a miracle; he was claiming to be the Messiah by linking himself to the Old Testament prophet Elisha who was also a messianic figure. How do you think they felt when they realized this?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Tear up bread and use a dipper for spinach dip, or make a dozen cinnamon rolls representing the twelve baskets collected in the Gospel reading.

Closing Prayer

Closing prayer: Holy Lord, Your Divine presence in the Eucharist fills me with awe. I am not worthy to receive you, but say the word and I shall be healed. As I receive you, change me forever and bring me closer to you. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Twelve. (John 6:13)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 18

B Sunday, August 05, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Exodus 16:2-4,12-15
God provides manna to the Children of Israel.

Ephesians 4:17,20-24
Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

John 6:24-35
Jesus tells the crowds that He is the bread of life.

Lord, Give Us this Bread

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The request of the people who followed Jesus after his multiplication of the loaves and fish, “Lord, evermore give us this bread,” is answered for them and us in the gospel reading. Jesus spends time explaining to the crowd that He is the true bread that has come down from heaven. He is beginning to tell them of the Eucharist, of his body and blood that will be sacrificed so believers will never hunger or thirst again. Though the crowd was thinking in physical terms, Jesus was speaking of the sacrament of his body and blood that would feed His people forever.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Glory Be

Family Activity

1. Take a piece of goose down from a pillow or jacket and play a game where everyone tries to keep the down afloat by blowing on it and keeping it in the air. The down can remind us of bread falling from heaven.
2. Add water to a small amount of dry Ivory Snow soap powder until the mixture is thick like the consistency of finger paint. Draw a wilderness scene and then dot the Ivory Snow mixture onto the picture illustrating the story of the manna from Exodus 16.

Catechism Connection

No. 1094 “This catechesis unveils what lay hidden under the letter of the Old Testament: the mystery of Christ. . . Thus. . . manna in the desert prefigured the Eucharist, ‘the true bread from heaven.’”

Quiz

Why did the crowds follow Jesus?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 18

B Sunday, August 05, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

St. Margaret Mary was born in 1647 in France to a family of seven children. At age eight she was sent to a school of the Poor Clares after the death of her father. In 1671 she entered the Visitation convent and made her profession the next year. She received a revelation of Jesus in 1675 as she was kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament. This led to the establishing of the Sacred Heart devotion, which includes receiving Holy Communion on nine consecutive First Fridays. She was met with strong opposition by her community, but eventually the devotion spread throughout France. While taken ill in 1690, some of her last words were, “I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of Jesus.” She was canonized in 1920.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus mean when he says, “Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you”?
2. God is concerned about feeding us in more than one way. Name some ways he feeds us. (Physically, spiritually, sacramentally, etc.)
3. God gave the Children of Israel manna as a sign that He would take care of them. What sign did God give to the Church that He will take care of us which is even better than a sign? (His Son, who gives life to the world, the Eucharist, etc.)
4. There have been others sent by God to help God’s people, such as Moses. What makes Jesus different? (He is the Messiah, the Son of God, he is the true bread, he is the fulfillment of what Moses represented, etc.)

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make bread pudding or eat some type of snack made with bread such as toast, French toast, bagels, etc.

Closing Prayer

O Sacrament most holy,/O Sacrament divine,/All praise and all thanksgiving/Be every moment Thine. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Because they ate and were filled. (John 6:26)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 19

B Sunday, August 12, 2012



Bread for the Journey

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus offered up his own flesh as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. In today's gospel, Jesus calls himself the "bread of life." He is speaking of himself in the Eucharist, which will become available to all his followers after his death. If we do not eat of that bread, we do not have the life of Christ in us. We are unable to feed ourselves spiritually, but Jesus can feed us his own flesh to nourish us. When we pray 'give us this day our daily bread' we are asking for the living bread of Christ. God supplies this and all our needs. He supplies all we need for our pilgrimage here on earth.

Opening Prayer: Our Father

Sunday Readings:

1 Kings 19:4-8
God provides water and bread for Elijah to strengthen him.

Ephesians 4:30-5:2
Put aside evil and be kind to one another.

John 6:41-51
Jesus tells the Jews that his flesh is the bread of life.

Family Activity

1. Pack some sandwiches and go on a short hike. Stop and eat the sandwiches and walk home. Talk about how the bread gives our physical body energy, just as the Eucharist gives life to our souls.
2. Play a board game where game pieces have to travel in order to win, such as Candyland or Life. Add a different dimension to the game by adding the importance of attending mass along the way.

Catechism Connection

No. 2837 "The Eucharist is our daily bread. . . the readings. . .the hymns. . .All these are necessities for our pilgrimage."

Quiz

What did Jesus say that upset the Jews?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 19

B Sunday, August 12, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Bruno

St. Bruno was born in Cologne around 1030. He taught for eighteen years at the school of Rheims. Later, St. Bruno and six friends left the distractions of the world and went to the desert of Chartreuse, where they founded the order of Carthusians. They were basically hermits and their chief work was copying books. Pope Urban II heard of St. Bruno's great holiness and summoned him to come and assist him. He then established two more hermitages. Before he died, he made a public confession of his life and faith to the monks gathered at his bedside, which they wrote down. He affirmed his faith in Trinity and in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. During that century two heresies against the real presence troubled the Church and St. Bruno spoke out against them.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does the Eucharist give us strength?
2. Name some similarities between a person's life and taking a journey.
3. What does it mean, 'give us this day our daily bread'? Why do we need 'daily' bread?
4. How can the other portions of the mass, such as the readings and hymns, strengthen us spiritually?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make S'mores with graham crackers, roasted marshmallows and chocolate candy, or any family treat that you eat while camping or away from home.

Closing Prayer

Dear Father, as we, your pilgrim church on earth, make our way toward our eternal destiny with You, strengthen us through the intercession of St. Bruno and our Holy Mother, that we may partake of Your holy Eucharist with a clean heart and a pure desire to follow You. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Jesus said he was the bread that came down from heaven. (John 6:41)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 20

B Sunday, August 19, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Proverbs 9:1-6
Walk in the way of wisdom.

Ephesians 5:15-20
Be filled with the Spirit and give thanks for everything.

John 6:51-58
Jesus gives his own flesh and blood.

Jesus Offers Eternal Life

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In the Old Testament, the Children of Israel were fed manna from heaven as they wandered with Moses in the wilderness. In the gospel reading, Jesus is explaining to the Jews that he is the supernatural manna or bread from heaven. They are disturbed by his words. Jesus tells them that only those who the Father has drawn will follow Jesus. Jesus offered eternal life to all who heard him speak, but many people would not accept that He was “living bread.” Jesus’ disciples did believe what Jesus was saying and received the gift he offered -- Himself. What greater offer than to be with Jesus forever.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Acceptance of God’s Will

Family Activity

1. Using a picture Bible, read the Bible story of manna falling from heaven. (Exodus chapter 16.) Relate and compare Jesus as the “living bread”, which we eat today, to the manna of the Israelites.
2. Do some mathematical equations that do not end, such as dividing 3 into 100 or writing out pi as examples of forever or eternal. Use calculators or do them long hand on paper.

Catechism Connection

Catechism Connection: No. 1023 “Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ.”

Quiz

Those who eat Jesus’ flesh and drink his blood have what?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 20

B Sunday, August 19, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Joseph Cafasso

St. Joseph was born in Italy in 1811 and ordained a priest in 1833. This very kind man had a wonderful influence on the life of St. John Bosco and helped him found the Salesians. He encouraged others to found ministries also. In his time it was the practice to hang prisoners in public. This he found disgusting and did all he could to help the condemned. St. Joseph Cafasso went to them and heard their confessions. He stayed with them, telling them of God's love and mercy until they died. He helped over sixty convicted men. All repented and died in the peace of Jesus. St. Joseph once said, "I have been made for heaven and heaven for me." St. Joseph understood God's plan to have mankind spend eternity with Him.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. How long is "eternal life"? Discuss the reality of eternity.
2. What can we do to help others prepare for eternity?
3. Does your local church expose the Blessed Sacrament for adoration? Has your family ever spend time adoring the Blessed Sacrament? How does Jesus strengthen you while you adore Him?
4. It's hard to fully grasp the answer, but why does Jesus want to be with us forever? What will heaven be like? (Read Catechism section on "Heaven" #1023 to 1029)

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Heat a loaf of garlic bread. (Garlic is supposed to have properties that prolong human life, though not eternally.)

Closing Prayer

I desire to love you, my Lord, my Light, my God and my All. What have I in heaven, O God, what do I want besides you on earth? You are the God of my heart; you are my inheritance for eternity. Amen. (St. Paschal Baylon)

Quiz Answer

Eternal life. (John 6:54)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 21

B Sunday, August 26, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Joshua 24:1-2a,15-17,18b

The Israelites affirm they will serve the Lord.

Ephesians 5:2a,25-32

Husbands and wives should love and respect each other.

John 6:60-69

Peter affirms his belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

Does Jesus Offend You?

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In today's gospel reading we see that many were offended by Jesus' teaching that he was the bread that came from heaven. Many decided not to follow him anymore, but Peter and the other Apostles continued to follow Christ, even Judas, whom Jesus knew would betray him. It is interesting that Jesus gave Judas every opportunity to believe and to follow, and yet Judas turned his back on Christ. Jesus gives us many opportunities also to follow him, but we can balk at what he tells us to do. Are we offended that he asks us to give him all that we have? Are we offended when he asks us to forgive those who hurt us? If Jesus' words offend us, we need to repent.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostle's Creed

Family Activity

1. Play "Follow the leader." Compare game to Jesus' disciples following Him.
2. Make a list of several statements Jesus made in the gospels (may use Sermon on the Mount passage Matthew chapters 5-7) and discuss how some may be offended by his words.

Catechism Connection

No. 1336 "The Eucharist and the Cross are stumbling blocks."

Quiz

Jesus said that the words which he had spoken are ____ and ____.

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 21

B Sunday, August 26, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Edmund

St. Edmund became a king in England in 855 at the age of fourteen. He was a virtuous man and a successful ruler. In 866 what is now England was invaded by the Danes, who came plundering, burning and enslaving people as they went. St. Edmund fought against them. The Danish leader, Ingvar, sent proposals to St. Edmund, which he refused because the terms were prejudicial to religion. St. Edmund declared religion was dearer to him than his life and he would not offend God with Ingvar's offer. St. Edmund was captured, tied to a tree and whipped. Then he was shot through with arrows and beheaded. His martyrdom occurred in 870.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What has Jesus asked you to do that you felt was too hard or that you did not want to obey?
2. Name some reasons that the Eucharist can be an offense to some people. (They don't want to believe it is actually the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus.)
3. Do you think Judas Iscariot would have acted differently if Jesus would have given him another chance to believe? (No. Jesus gave him many chances.)
4. What are some of the things Christians do that may be offensive to those who don't believe in Christ?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

How about a stinky snack that some may find offensive? Try onion or garlic flavored chips or limburger cheese on crackers.

Closing Prayer

Enlighten my heart with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit; grant that I may always be obedient to Thy commandments; suffer me not to be separated from Thee, O God, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the same Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.
(St. Edmund)

Quiz Answer

Spirit and life. (John 6:63)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 22

B Sunday, September 02, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-8
Observing God's statutes and ordinances brings life.

James 1:17-18,21b-22,27
Be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23
Jesus teaches that purity of heart is more important than traditions.

Don't Look on the Outside

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In today's gospel reading, Jesus is focused on showing his disciples that outward displays of religious traditions do not make a person righteous. It is what is in the inside of a person's heart that God looks at. Our sinful nature wants to think evil, to steal, murder, hate and covet. These are the things God wants to change in us. If we attend Church every week and still harbor all these evil things in our hearts, then we are like the Pharisees, of whom Jesus spoke. He said, "This people honors me with their lips but their heart is far from me."

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Prayer for Purity of Body & Mind

Family Activity

1. Fill a pretty bottle with vinegar or something that smells pungent. Ask family members if they would like a drink from the bottle. After one smell, they'll decide it's not any good for drinking. Compare the outside of the bottle to the content inside.
2. Play "Simon Says." We must obey the words of God, not just hear the words.

Catechism Connection

No. 2517 "The struggle against carnal covetousness entails purifying the heart and practicing temperance."

Quiz

What tradition did the Pharisees perform before eating a meal?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 22

B Sunday, September 02, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Vincent de Paul

St. Vincent was born in France around 1580 and was trained by Franciscans. He was ordained a priest in 1600. During a sea voyage in 1605, he was attacked by African pirates and was taken as a slave to Tunis. He was a captive for two years until he was able to escape. After his return to France, he began to preach missions and he founded a congregation, which became Lazarists. St. Vincent was concerned with practicing charity. He cared for all people from children to the aged. In the midst of his work his soul was always intimately united with God. His life displayed a heart of charity. He died at the age of eighty.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a religious practice that you may have done that looked good on the outside, yet your attitude was wrong at the time?
2. What are some ways we can purify our hearts?
3. It takes more than just listening to God's word to change us. We must obey what God tells us. Give an example of someone who listens to God's teachings but doesn't change. Give an example of someone who listens and does change.
4. Look up the term "hypocrite" in the dictionary. Why did Jesus call the Pharisees hypocrites?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Cream puffs or jelly filled doughnuts. We want what's on the inside to be sweet.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, purify our hearts. Let them be like fine gold or precious silver. Help us to remove all wicked thoughts and desire from our hearts so that we may never be separated from You. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Washing their hands in a ritual fashion. (Mark 7:3)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 23

B Sunday, September 09, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 35:4-7a
God will send salvation and healing.

James 2:1-5
Rich and poor are welcome in God's kingdom.

Mark 7:31-37
Jesus heals a deaf man.

Signs & Wonders

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Today's first reading prophesies the coming of salvation and healing. To demonstrate that Jesus is the one about whom Isaiah spoke, Jesus healed many and performed miracles. In today's gospel reading, Jesus heals a deaf and dumb man by placing his fingers in the man's ears and putting spit on the man's tongue, and saying, "Be opened." At that time, people believed that the spit of the messiah would have healing power, so the healing of the deaf man powerfully pointed to Christ as the Messiah. This inspired many to believe and follow Him.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Watch a short video with the sound muted for part of it. Then turn the sound on and see how much different it is when you can hear it; or reenact the scene of Jesus healing the deaf and mute man.
2. Name some signs and wonders recorded in the Bible that happened during the life of Christ (Appearance of angels; transfiguration; walking on water; raising people from the dead). Illustrate one of these and let smaller children color them.

Catechism Connection

No. 1151 "He (Jesus) performs healings and illustrates his preaching with physical signs or symbolic gestures."

Quiz

What did Jesus put on the deaf man's tongue?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 23

B Sunday, September 09, 2012

Saintly Examples: Angels

Angels are eternal beings, which were created by God. In several instances in the Bible, we find they relayed important messages from God to people such as Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and Abraham and Sarah. They appeared in similar form to that of humans. Many times their mission was to minister aid to people, as they did with Jesus in the wilderness after he fasted forty days. At other times, God often used the angels as a sign to mankind, especially surrounding the life of Christ, pointing to Christ as the promised deliverer of Israel. At Christ's Second Coming, angels may once again be used as a sign or as messengers to us. The book of Revelation tells us they will blow trumpets to announce his coming.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What do you think the people of Jesus' day thought when Jesus healed the deaf man?
2. Are there certain signs and wonders which Jesus performed in the Bible that have boosted your faith? If so, which ones?
3. What signs do we see of Christ today? (Eucharist, reconciliation, healings, conversions)
4. Why is it important that Jesus demonstrate his power with signs and wonders?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Cut star or angel shapes out of cheese or salami and put on crackers or cocktail bread.

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, we reverence you for the mighty power and holy signs which you have performed. Help our faith to grow as a result of believing the miracles you have done for us. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Quiz Answer

His spit. (Mark 7:33)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 24

B Sunday, September 16, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 50:5-9a
The Lord is our helper.

James 2:14-18
We must have works to show our faith.

Mark 8:27-35
To follow Christ we must deny ourselves.

Christ First

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Today's gospel provides a powerful message on the importance of putting Christ first. We are warned of the folly of trying to attain the world at the expense of losing our soul. We are instructed to take up our cross and follow Christ, for by doing this we'll have life. The Kingdom of God is opposite of the way we understand the world. Suffering is redemptive; dying for Christ is life; the poor are rich in faith; Christ's death brings life. Jesus hoped his disciples would understand this as he spoke of his coming death. But even Peter could not accept his words and Jesus had to rebuke him.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Hope

Family Activity

1. Sit in a circle and have one person say, "Christ first." Then the second person must say "Christ first" and add to the list a daily activity. The next person repeats the list and adds another activity. Keep going in the circle until someone can no longer repeat the entire list.
2. Decorate an index card with the words "Put Christ First" to be put on a mirror or the refrigerator as a reminder.

Catechism Connection

No. 2545 "All Christ's faithful are to 'direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect charity by the use of worldly things. . .'"

Quiz

Who did Peter say that Jesus was?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 24

B Sunday, September 16, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. John Ogilvie

St. John was born in Scotland and was raised as a Calvinist. At seventeen he learned all he could about Catholicism and joined the Catholic Church. He became a priest in 1610. At the time it was forbidden for priests to say mass in Great Britain under King James, but St. John went to Glasgow because there were secret Catholics there and also people who wished to be reconciled to the Church. On one trip, he celebrated mass for five would-be converts; however, one of these people had ill intentions. This man led St. John to the archbishop's where he was tortured for several days. They wished for St. John to recant his faith, but he would not so he was condemned for high treason and was hung in 1615.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Name a way in which you denied yourself this week and put Christ first.
2. What are some worldly things that can get in the way of following Christ?
3. Think of a saint or someone you know who has given up worldly things to follow Christ.
4. Do you think it is hard to put Christ first? Does TV and magazines and friends make it harder for you to put Christ first?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make a layered snack such as parfaits, pizza, sundaes or sandwiches to be reminded that in all that we do, the first “layer” must be Christ.

Closing Prayer

Dearest Lord, be first in our hearts, first in our thoughts, first in our actions and first in our desire. May all we do be filtered through the lens of Christ. Amen.

Quiz Answer

You are the Christ. (Mark 8:29)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 25

B Sunday, September 23, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Wisdom 2:12,17-20
Ungodly men oppose righteousness.

James 3:16-4:3
God's wisdom contrasts with man's ambition.

Mark 9:30-37
Jesus teaches his disciples that the first shall be last.

Who Is the Greatest?

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus tells his disciples that the greatest is servant of all. It's not a matter of status, but of serving others. Jesus also foretells of his upcoming death, which becomes the greatest service of all. He puts aside his status as King of kings and gives his life for our ransom. Jesus is the ultimate example of humility and service, and because he has shown us, we also can serve others. Jesus takes a child and teaches that we must receive this humble child in order to truly receive Christ. We can't cater to whom the world says are important people. We must be willing to serve and accept everyone equally.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Acceptance of God's Will

Family Activity

1. Put a surprise behind a door and have the family line up at the door. Then let the last one in line go in first to discover the surprise. (Parents, don't tell children ahead of time the object of the activity is for the last to be first.)
2. Take the youngest child and have the rest of the family describe the godly characteristics which that child possesses. Repeat with each member of the family.

Catechism Connection

No. 601 "Indeed Jesus himself explained the meaning of his life and death in light of God's suffering servant."

Quiz

What were the disciples discussing on the way to Capernaum?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 25

B Sunday, September 23, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Maria Goretti

St. Maria Goretti is one of the youngest saints of the Church. She was born in 1890. Her father died of malaria so her mother was left to care for her five children. Maria was helpful and encouraging to her mother. When Maria was almost twelve years old, a neighbor boy of eighteen saw her sitting on the steps mending shirts, and he assaulted her. Not wanting to surrender her virginity, she struggled to get away. Her attacker then stabbed her and mortally wounded her. At the hospital she received holy viaticum and forgave her attacker who many years later repented of his sin and begged forgiveness from Maria's mother.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. The disciples thought that the Kingdom of God would honor those who were powerful so they argued as to who was greater. Do you think they were surprised when Jesus told them a servant is great in the Kingdom of God?
2. Can you think of an example of someone forsaking his or her important status to go and serve the poor?
3. Have you ever tried to do something so you would look more important to others?
4. Have you ever tried to do something great in order to help someone else?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

In honor of the children we serve, pick one of their favorite snacks.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, Your humility is overwhelming and humbles us. We worship You for Your mercy and love which You poured out for us upon the Cross. Help our country to honor the life of children, especially the unborn. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Who was the greatest. (Mark 9:34)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 26

B Sunday, September 30, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Numbers 11:25-29

Moses wishes that all God's people were filled with God's spirit.

James 5:1-6

The Lord hears the cry of the oppressed.

Mark 9:39-48

Jesus says we must remove anything that hinders us from entering heaven.

Removing Stumbling Blocks

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In today's gospel reading, Jesus stresses how important it is to get rid of anything that may keep you from entering heaven. In Bible literature, when something was repeated three times it was done so for extreme emphasis. When Jesus repeats his admonition three times, he is not advocating that we mutilate ourselves by cutting off our hands, rather he is emphasizing how important it is to abstain from sins, which separate us from Him. Jesus also stresses that it is very serious if we cause others to stumble. Our daily actions are significant and do not go unnoticed by God.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Contrition

Family Activity

1. Before family night begins, write down 3 sins (such as gossip, stealing, lying). Below that, write 5 temptations per each sin that a person may face. Have the family members match the temptation to the sin.
2. Place several cushions, shoes, toys, etc. in a hallway. The object is to clear the path by removing the obstacles. Have family members mention a virtue to resist temptation as he/she removes an obstacle. Hand out a reward when the hallway is cleared.

Catechism Connection

No. 953 "...the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion."

Quiz

How does Jesus describe hell?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 26

B Sunday, September 30, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Augustine

St. Augustine lived during the 5th century and became a doctor of the Church. He learned rhetoric and philosophy, which led him to the reading of the life of St. Antony. He suddenly was made aware of the stumbling block in his life, which kept him from chastity. He wished to change but didn't know what to do until he read St. Paul's epistles, which admonishes us not to be drunk, contentious, envious and immoral. He removed these obstacles from his life and was baptized in 387. He later wrote a book Confessions where he explains the errors of his conduct. He exhibited humility and contrition. His mother, St. Monica, had prayed for his conversion for several years.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of activities may cause your friends or someone else to stumble?
2. Name something in your life that is a temptation to you. How do you resist it?
3. What sacraments can help us resist evil?
4. How can we help our friends if we see they are struggling with sin?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Get crackers or snacks individually wrapped (preferably ones that are hard to open) and talk about "Removing obstacles" as you unwrap them.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, let nothing in life or death ever separate us from You. We renew our promises made in Baptism, and dedicate ourselves to Your love and service. Grant that we may detest sin more than death itself, and resist temptation. Amen.

Quiz Answer

"Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:48)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 27

B Sunday, October 07, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Genesis 2:18-24

God creates Eve as a companion for Adam.

Hebrews 2:9-11

Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brethren.

Mark 10:2-16

Jesus teaches that married couples should not divorce.

The Two Shall Become One

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus answers the Pharisees' question regarding divorce by telling them that when God joins husband and wife together, they should not separate. In this He explains to us the sacrament of marriage, where a man and a woman become one flesh. This sacrament is for our good, for the good of the family and the good of the Church. Within this sacrament, God wishes for mankind to join Him in creation and to actually make more eternal beings. What a privilege to cooperate in creation. The sacrament of marriage is also a sign to the Church of how Christ is inseparably united with His Church and will never leave or forsake her.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Prayer for Purity

Family Activity

1. Take a paper cut-out of a man and a woman. Glue them together and talk of the analogy of two becoming one. Explain how difficult it would be to take them apart without ripping them up after the glue dries.
2. Interview grandparents or older couple and ask them about some of the challenges they have face together.

Catechism Connection

No. 1627 "This consent that binds the spouses to each other finds its fulfillment in the two 'becoming one flesh'."

Quiz

Why does a man leave his parents?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 27

B Sunday, October 07, 2012

Saintly Examples: Adam and Eve

God created the first couple to live together in mutual friendship. Eve was given to Adam to be his partner. God spoke to them directly until after they disobeyed God's command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Though they were expelled from paradise into a world of pain, work and suffering, they remained together. They experienced the murder of one son and the banishment of another. Through all this they had the hope that God would send a redeemer through them. As our first parents, they are an example of how God originally intended life to be and of the holy relationship between a man and a woman.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Name some results when a couple divorces.
2. Jesus teaches that marriage reflects His love for the Church (Ephesians 5), and He elevated marriage to a sacrament. How important is marriage to Jesus?
3. What do children learn about God by watching their parents?
4. How does the secular media (TV, movie, etc.) portray marriage in contrast with the Christian understanding of marriage?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Chocolate covered raisins, pop tarts or any snack that combines two types of ingredients that is stuck together.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, grant that my spouse and I may have a true and understanding love for each other. Grant that we may be filled with faith and trust. Give us the grace to live with each other in peace and harmony. Help us forgive one another's failings and grant us patience. Amen.

Quiz Answer

To be joined to his wife. (Mark 10:7)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 28

B Sunday, October 14, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Wisdom 7:7-11
Solomon prayed for wisdom.

Hebrews 4:12-13
God sees everything.

Mark 10:17-30
Jesus asks the rich young ruler to leave his riches and follow Him.

All Things Are Possible

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus asks the rich young ruler to give up his riches to follow Him. This saddened the young man greatly. He wanted to follow Jesus, but the idea of leaving his wealth made him turn away. The disciples were shocked when Jesus said the rich find it difficult to enter God's Kingdom. The disciples wanted to know who could possibly enter the Kingdom if not the rich. Jesus uses the analogy of a burdened camel trying to crawl through the eye of a needle. He then encourages them that with God it is possible for all people to enter God's Kingdom because God can help them with his grace, mercy and miracles.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Take a needle and inspect how small the eye of it is. Discuss how difficult it would be for a camel to crawl through it.
2. Take a tour through the house to see what items could be donated or sold to give to the poor.

Catechism Connection

No. 308 "Still less can a creature attain its ultimate end without the help of God's grace."

Quiz

What makes it difficult to enter the Kingdom of God?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 28

B Sunday, October 14, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Antony the Abbot

St. Antony lived in the 4th century. After his parents died he was left with a large estate. When he heard the portion of scripture read in church about the rich young ruler, St. Antony sold all he had and gave it to the poor. He then became a hermit and lived an austere life. He traveled to Alexandria to refute the Arian heresy where he also converted many and performed miracles. He wrote encouraging letters to many monasteries and also warned the emperor Constantine and his sons of the coming judgment. He was known for his humility, charity and prayerfulness. He lived to be 105 years old.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Is it possible for rich people to enter the Kingdom of God? Why is it hard for them?
2. In comparison to many other countries, the US is very rich. Is it hard for Americans to follow Jesus?
3. Name someone who has left everything to follow Jesus.
4. What promise does Jesus give those who leave everything to follow Him? (Mark 10:30)

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make popcorn with the family. First show everyone the unpopped corn and say, “Can this little bit fill up a whole bowl?” It looks like it’s not possible, but with heat it is possible.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, give us Your grace so we may be able to forsake all in this world to follow You. Thank you for the gift of eternal life, which You have so lovingly offered us. Help us to see that we need You much more than we need the things of this life. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Trusting in riches. (Mark 10:24)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 29

B Sunday, October 21, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 53:10-11
God's Servant will bear our iniquities.

Hebrews 4:14-16
We can receive mercy and grace through Christ.

Mark 10:35-45
Jesus came to serve and to save.

The Mission of Christ

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In the gospel reading today we discover the reason Jesus came in the flesh: to serve and to die as a ransom for many. Two disciples requested to be placed on either side of Christ in the Kingdom, which Jesus was to establish. Jesus pointed out that He could not promise them such a thing and then He emphasized that His Kingdom involved service, not rank. Jesus was the prime example of service. His entire ministry was spent reaching out to those in need and ultimately sacrificing His life for the sake of the whole world. The mission of all Christians should be to emulate Christ through service and sacrifice.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Charity

Family Activity

1. List off several occupations that are based on service. Discuss how these emulate Christ. Smaller children can draw pictures of their favorite occupation.
2. Go through the cupboards and collect a bag of groceries to donate to a local food shelf.

Catechism Connection

No. 608 “Christ’s whole life expresses his mission: ‘to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.’”

Quiz

Which disciples asked to be at Christ’s right and left hand?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 29

B Sunday, October 21, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Martin de Porres

St. Martin was born in Lima, Peru, in 1579. At fifteen, St. Martin took the habit of the third order of St. Dominic and he eventually became a professed lay-brother of the Friars Preachers. He spent his life serving the sick and establishing an orphanage and foundling hospital. He distributed alms for the poor and took special care of slaves brought from Africa. He was practical and frugal with the money he raised for the poor. His life of service is a great example of Christian love. (Butler's Lives of the Saints)

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does your priest imitate Christ?
2. Ask the children what they want to be when they grow up. Emphasize jobs that include service to others.
3. In what ways have you served others this week? What can you do extra this week to be of service to your family?
4. How do service and sacrifice work together?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Potato chips or tortilla chips with dips. Serve one another by dipping a chip and handing to another family member.

Closing Prayer

To you St. Martin de Porres we prayerfully lift up our hearts filled with serene confidence and devotion. Mindful of your unbounded and helpful charity to all levels of society and also of your meekness and humility of heart, we offer our petitions to you. (Add your intentions)

Quiz Answer

James and John. (Mark 10:35)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 30

B Sunday, October 28, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Jeremiah 31:7-9

The Lord will gather the blind and lame together.

Hebrews 5:1-6

Jesus is our high priest.

Mark 10:46-52

Jesus heals a blind man.

Jesus Hears Our Prayers

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In today's gospel, Jesus hears the request of a blind man and heals him. Jesus points out that it is the man's faith that has healed him. The blind man believed that if only Jesus could hear his request, Jesus would heal him, so he cried out loudly so Jesus wouldn't pass him by. The plea of the blind man has become a wonderful prayer of the Church, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us!" Jesus so kindly asks him what He can do for him. He was genuinely interested in what the man wanted. Jesus cares for us in the same way, and so we can approach Jesus with faith that He hears us.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Hope

Family Activity

1. Talk about intentions prayed during mass for which you have seen an answer.
2. Pray a chaplet of the Divine Mercy. (found in most Catholic prayer books)

Catechism Connection

No. 2616 "Jesus hears the prayer of faith, expressed in words or in silence."

Quiz

In what city did the blind man live?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 30

B Sunday, October 28, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Teresa of Avila

“Granting that we are always in the presence of God, yet it seems to me that those who pray are in his presence in a very different sense; for they, as it were, see that he is looking upon them, while others may be for days together without even once recollecting that God sees them.” These are words of St. Teresa of Avila, a doctor of the Church. She was born in 1515 and joined the religious life in her teens. She learned how to pray and she had visions and interior communications with God. She founded seventeen Carmelite convents and wrote books on the spirit of prayer for her nuns and also for the Church. She lived to be sixty-five years old.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Name some different forms of prayer which you have prayed. (Songs, written prayers, vocal prayers, meditation prayers, rosary, etc.)
2. Using the story of the healing of the blind man, explain how we know Jesus hears us.
3. What does faith have to do with healing?
4. What other people in the Bible were healed by Jesus when they asked for his help?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Trace praying hand shapes onto pie dough and cut out. Sprinkle with butter, cinnamon and sugar, then bake.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner! Amen.

Quiz Answer

Jericho. (Mark 10:46)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 31

B Sunday, November 04, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Deuteronomy 6:2-6
Be careful to obey God's commands.

Hebrews 7:23-28
Jesus our high priest is made perfect.

Mark 12:28b-34
Jesus tells what is the greatest commandment.

Loving God & Neighbor

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In this important gospel passage, Jesus quotes the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus where Moses instructs the people on the commandments of God. He links together the importance of loving God to that of loving our neighbor. Loving our neighbor is our example of how much we love God. Our gratitude and love for God are wrapped up in our daily life displayed by how we treat those around us. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta always told people to see Jesus in everyone. Each person is created in God's image and we must treat each person with dignity and kindness.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Charity

Family Activity

1. List off several things you do which demonstrate that you love (care for) yourself. How many of these things do you do for your neighbor?
2. Find pictures from magazines or newspapers that depict people showing love to their neighbor. If the children wish, they can cut them out and paste the pictures on construction paper.

Catechism Connection

No. 2083 "The commandments then make explicit the response of love that man is called to give to his God."

Quiz

Fill in the blanks: You shall love the Lord your God with all your ____ and with all your ____ and with all your ____ and with all your ____.

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 31

B Sunday, November 04, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Bertilla Boscardin

St. Bertilla was born in 1888. She was accepted by the Sisters of St. Dorothy in Vicenza at the age of 16. She worked in the scullery, bakehouse and laundry, and then learned to be a nurse so she could work in the municipal hospital. She was very devoted to helping the sick, though she became sick herself and suffered greatly. For a time she served at a military hospital. It was said that she became too attached to her patients. When she died, crowds flocked to her grave. She cared for others even though she was in great pain. She was made a saint in 1961.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. How would the world be different if everyone treated each other as they treat themselves?
2. Think of examples of how you can show God that you love him with each of the following: heart, soul, mind and strength.
3. What one thing can you do in your family or improve upon to show each other God's love?
4. If we truly loved God with all our minds, soul, heart and strength, what types of things would no longer be a problem or stumbling block for us?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make some cookies and eat some of them for your snack and bring some of them to your neighbor.

Closing Prayer

Lord, let our lives be a reflection of your love. Let us see you in everyone we meet and help us to treat others as we would treat you. Draw us close to your loving heart. Amen.

Quiz Answer

heart, soul, mind, strength. (Mark 12:30)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 32

B Sunday, November 11, 2012



Sunday Readings:

1 Kings 17:10-16

Elijah performs a miracle for the widow of Zaraheth.

Hebrews 9:24-28

Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.

Mark 12:38-44

A widow donates all she has to the Temple.

The Richness of Poverty

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The gospel reading today is a beautiful example of humility and generosity. A poor widow puts into the Temple treasury two small coins worth nearly nothing in the eyes of everyone else except Jesus who is watching. He could see that she was willingly giving everything she had. He greatly admired her for this, and certainly her reward is great in heaven for such selflessness. Others were parading into the Temple area and making a show of their large bags of money, but their generosity was pale in comparison to the woman who gave all she had. May we be careful not to congratulate ourselves for a deed that cost us very little.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Hope

Family Activity

1. Reenact the gospel reading of the widow who puts her coins in the Temple treasury.
2. Sit in a room in the house that has few possessions. Give the children a small amount of money and tell them to pretend that is all the money the family has. Talk about how life would be different. Encourage the children that God would care for them even if that is all they had.

Catechism Connection

No. 2445 “Love for the poor is incompatible with immoderate love of riches or their selfish use:”

Quiz

How much was the widow’s offering worth?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 32

B Sunday, November 11, 2012

Saintly Examples: The Widow of Zarapheth

The book of 1 Kings gives us a glimpse of the life of the widow of Zarapheth. She was a friend to the prophet Elijah during the time Elijah was hiding from King Ahab. The widow is an example of someone who, though living in extreme poverty, was willing to give all she had to Elijah to feed him. Elijah meets her at the gate where she is gathering sticks to make a fire to prepare the last meal for herself and her son. At Elijah's request, she prepares him a cake first from her last bit of flour and oil. Because of this act of extreme generosity and faith, a miracle occurred and the cruse of oil and the jar of meal were able to feed her, her son and Elijah for many days.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Using the widow's gift at the Temple as your example, discuss how Jesus views the worth of money.
2. Jesus was very proud of the widow who showed her love for God by giving all she had. Can you think of something you have done for which Jesus may be pleased?
3. Would you be able to trust God to sustain you if all your possession and money were gone?
4. Was Jesus impressed by the wealthy who gave lots of money to the Temple? Are we impressed by those who have lots of money?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Dip bread in a dish of olive oil in remembrance of the cruse of oil and jar of meal, which miraculously did not run out. Sprinkle parmesan cheese into the oil for flavor.

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father who sees the intent of our hearts, stir us to give beyond our selfishness. Forgive us for our pride in many possessions. Exchange our pride for the awareness of the needs of those around us. Amen.

Quiz Answer

A penny. (Mark 12:42)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 33

B Sunday, November 18, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Daniel 12:1-3

Those whose names are written in the book shall be delivered.

Hebrews 10:1-14,18

Christ replaces sacrifices with His forgiveness.

Mark 13:24-32

Christ will return at an hour which no man knows.

Jesus Will Return

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In today's gospel, Jesus foretells His return to earth in power and glory. He tells us to be prepared because no one knows the hour when He will return, though He mentions several things that will occur in the last days. The catechism has an excellent overview of what will happen before Christ's return in paragraphs 668-677. The Church is to be a witness of Christ in the last days and must continue in faith until the Kingdom of Christ comes in its fullness. Evil will forever be subjected to Him and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Until that glorious day, we must remain steadfast in faith and proclaim it to the world.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostle's Creed

Family Activity

1. Ask the children about their favorite adventure book or movie. Compare that to the great story of salvation and the coming of Christ to save his Church from evil and take her to be with Him forever. The exciting part about Jesus is that He is real!
2. Play Twenty Questions. Have people guess certain Bible events.

Catechism Connection

No. 671 “. . . Christ's reign is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled ‘with power and great glory’ by the king's return to earth.”

Quiz

Who knows when Jesus will return?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 33

B Sunday, November 18, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Michael the Archangel

The Bible tells us that St. Michael is “one of the chief princes,” and leader of the forces of heaven. He is spoken of in the book of Daniel in conjunction with the terrible tribulation that will come upon Israel. Michael fights for the deliverance of those whose names are written in the book. St. Michael was certainly involved in the battle of the good angels against Satan and his followers when Satan was cast down from heaven. The Church has always looked to St. Michael for protection against Satan.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever heard of a group that predicts the exact date when Jesus will return? How can you know that they are wrong?
2. What part of the Apostles Creed mentions Christ's return? This is part of what Christians believe. How should we live our lives to reflect that belief?
3. How is the Church a witness to Christ?
4. Why should we not be afraid of the events that are to come when Jesus returns?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Eat energy or power bars to represent the return of Christ in power and glory.

Closing Prayer

Maranatha! Lord Jesus come in glory! Amen.

Quiz Answer

Only the Father. (Mark 13:32)

Family Night – Solemnity of The Lord

B Sunday, November 25, 2012



Sunday Readings:

Daniel 7:13-14
God's Kingdom shall never pass away.

Revelation 1:5-8
The Lord is the beginning and the end.

John 18:33b-37
Jesus tells Pilate he came into the world to witness to the truth.

Christ the King!

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In the gospel reading today, Jesus stands before Pilate. He does not directly answer Pilate's question, "Are you the King of the Jews," but he does state his mission clearly. He says He came to bear witness to the truth. He came as the Divine Son to reveal the glory of the Father to us. He tells Pilate that he has a kingdom, but it is not an earthly one. The reading from Daniel tells us that this kingdom will be everlasting. God's kingdom on earth has endured for thousands of years with Christ at its head. Those who hear the voice of Christ follow him in truth and also are witnesses to that truth.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Glory Be

Family Activity

1. List several events that have happened in your family and ask the children what they know about (or can witness about) that event. (Weddings, births, school achievements, sports events.) Explain how we can witness to the truth of Christ just as we can witness to the truth of the events in our lives.
2. Build a castle with legos or building blocks and talk about the Kingdom of God both on earth and in heaven.

Catechism Connection

No. 2471 "In situations that require witness to the faith, the Christian must profess it without equivocation, after the example of St. Paul before his judges."

Quiz

Is Jesus' kingdom of this world?

Family Night – Solemnity of The Lord

B Sunday, November 25, 2012

Saintly Examples: St. Leonard of Port Maurice

St. Leonard was born in Italy in 1676 and joined the Friars Minor in 1697. After ordination St. Leonard contracted tuberculosis and was sent home to recover. He made a vow that if he recovered he would dedicate his life to missions and to the conversion of sinners. He did recover and kept his vow, spending the next 40 years preaching at retreats and parish missions throughout Italy. His missions would last over two weeks, and he often stayed an additional week to hear confessions. He promoted the Stations of the Cross and preached regularly on the Holy Name of Jesus. He also established "houses of recollection" where people could spend time in prayer. He is the patron saint of parish mission preachers.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. How can we know what is truth? (Jesus bears witness to the truth. CCC No. 217.)
2. Name others who have borne witness to the truth of the resurrection.
3. As Jesus stood before Pilate, we see Jesus answer questions with great confidence because he understood his mission on earth. How can Jesus be our example when others question our faith? How can St. Leonard of Port Maurice be our example?
4. Read CCC No. 549 and discuss what part of God's kingdom can we see on the earth now.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Using individual size pie shells, decorate them to look like crowns by sticking hard candy "gems" on with frosting. Fill centers with pudding and eat. Cupcakes could be decorated instead.

Closing Prayer

Almighty God who has brought truth into the world, bring us into your everlasting kingdom so we may be with you for eternity. Praise to the One to whom every knee shall bow, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Quiz Answer

No. It's is not of this world. (John 18:36)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 23

A Sunday, September 04, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Ezekiel 33:7-9
God tells Ezekiel to warn the wicked.

Romans 13:8-10
Love does no evil to its neighbor.

Matthew 18:15-20
Jesus tells us what to do when someone sins against us.

Responding in Love

WHAT'S THE POINT?

We are often eager to tell everyone about how someone has sinned, but Jesus tells us how to handle these situations properly. To sum it up, we are to respond in love. Many times, love means correction for the good of the other person. Jesus outlines for us a way to approach someone who has sinned against us which is not demeaning or unfair. Jesus also gives authority to the apostles to reconcile sinners back to the Church through confession.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Contrition

Family Activity

1. Draw illustrations of the different steps one should take to reconcile someone back to God and the Church, according to today's gospel reading.
2. Plan your next visit to confession as a family. Go out for ice cream together afterwards.

Catechism Connection

No. 1444 "In imparting to his apostles his own power to forgive sins the Lord also gives them authority to reconcile sinners with the Church."

Quiz

If someone sins against you, what should you do first?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 23

A Sunday, September 04, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Cyprian

St. Cyprian was born in Carthage around the year 200. He converted to Christianity in his middle age and became a priest and then Bishop of Carthage in 248. He wrote a treatise on the unity of the Church following a schism. During this era, many schismatics were excommunicated and many heresies and controversies arose. He spent much time settling the issue of how to receive back into the Church those who abandoned it during times of persecution. He was martyred in 258 because he would not sacrifice to the pagan gods during the persecution of Valerian.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. How would you handle the situation if someone you knew stole something from the store?
2. How can correction be the same as love?
3. Why is it so important to approach a wrong-doer with his/her offense? Why not just forget about it?
4. Can you think of a time when you were corrected for which you are glad now?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make a heart-shaped snack such as cookies or anything for which you have a heart-shaped mold, or cut a heart shape from a piece of bread, toast it and sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar. This can remind us to treat others with love.

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, keep us from sin and offending you. May we show love and mercy to others as you have shown it to us. Give us boldness to help others turn from their sins and to keep our own lives holy. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Tell him his fault, between you and him alone. (Matthew 18:15)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 24

A Sunday, September 11, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Sirach 27:30-28:9

Forgive your neighbor, so you will be forgiven.

Romans 14:7-9

We belong to the Lord.

Matthew 18:21-35

Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

Unlimited Forgiveness

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The scripture readings point out the vastness of God's forgiveness. It is hard to comprehend such total forgiveness, but that is what is required of us also. If we are unable to forgive the small offenses of others when we have been forgiven everything, we bring the consequences of unforgiveness upon ourselves. The parable in Matthew describes the person who refuses to forgive as being handed over to the torturers.

Unforgiveness is the root of so much pain in our culture. God has so graciously forgiven us, but He has also given us the ability to forgive others. We need to make it part of daily life to "forgive those who trespass against us." By doing this we will more fully participate in the life of the Trinity.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Charity

Family Activity

1. Take a chalkboard or dry erase board. Have family members write on the board sins that are most commonly committed by people. Erase them all to demonstrate how Jesus forgives us.
2. "I Forgive You Tag" Play tag in the yard. Instead of saying, "You're it!" say, "I forgive you!"

Catechism Connection

No. 982 "There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive."

Quiz

How much is 70 x 7?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 24

A Sunday, September 11, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Jane Frances de Chantal

St. Jane was married to a baron and they had four children. Her husband was shot accidentally in a hunting accident, but before he died, he forgave the man who shot him saying, “Don’t commit the sin of hating yourself when you have done nothing wrong.” Jane found it a struggle to forgive the man, but she took steps to do so. She started by greeting the man in the street and then finally inviting him to her home. She was able to forgive the man completely and became godmother to his child. St. Francis de Sales became her director and best friend. She founded the Visitation order for women who were rejected by other orders due to age or poor health.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. When was the last time you forgave someone?
2. How can the sacrament of reconciliation help us to forgive others?
3. Can you think of a time when you did not forgive someone? What happened to that relationship?
4. Since forgiveness is a decision of the will, why should we not rely on feelings to forgive?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Pop 1/3 cup of popcorn. Then illustrate how many 7x70 equals by comparing the total of 490 to the bowl of popcorn, which contains about that amount. (1/3 cup equals about 500 kernels of corn.) Each piece of popcorn can remind us that we should forgive.

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your unlimited forgiveness toward us. Give us the strength to reach out to those who have hurt us; may we forgive them and restore our relationships. Make us aware of those who we need to forgive. Amen.

Quiz Answer

490

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 25

A Sunday, September 18, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 55:6-9

God's ways are not our ways.

Phil. 1:20c-24,27a

To live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Matthew 20:1-16a

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity.

God is Generous to All

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Our Father rewards us generously for our service to Him. At times, however, we compare ourselves with our brothers and sisters and feel we are working harder or being “holier” than they, yet it seems they have more blessings from God. God’s grace flows generously to everyone, even though none of us deserve it. We need to rejoice in his love for us and rejoice in his love for others. We need to serve God in response to his generosity and not out of an attitude of “what’s in it for me?”

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostles’ Creed

Family Activity

1. Assign each child a certain task -- some easy, some difficult. Reward them each with the same prize or amount of money. See how they react and then compare their attitudes to the gospel reading.
2. Surprise each family member with a gift certificate or special act of loving service to demonstrate God’s generosity to us.

Catechism Connection

No. 2833 “In the Beatitudes ‘poverty’ is the virtue of sharing; it calls us to communicate and share both material and spiritual goods, not by coercion but out of love...”

Quiz

In Matthew’s parable, who was paid the most for their work?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 25

A Sunday, September 18, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Therese of Lisieux

St. Therese joined the Carmelite order at the age of fifteen. She surrendered her life to Jesus and so fully wanted to please him because of his love for her that she made her every action a sacrifice of love for him. She understood the generosity of God's love and her responses were recorded in her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*. She said, "It is not the riches and glory, even the glory of Heaven, that my heart seeks; what I ask for is Love;" and, "What pleases God -- better than the most generous aspirations -- is to see me love my littleness and my poverty; my blind trust in His Mercy. This is my only treasure." She died at the age of 24 and has since been named a Doctor of the Church.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. How has God shown generosity to you and your family?
2. Each servant showed a willing attitude to work. What task, large or small, can you do with a good attitude?
3. Can you think of a time when someone was generous toward you when you did not deserve it?
4. Comparing what we have received with what others get takes the joy out of receiving our portion. Can you think of a time when this happened to you?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Cut a pie or cake into equal size pieces. Give everyone the same generous-size serving even if the child is very small. This will demonstrate that God wants to give much to all his family.

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for bestowing abundant blessings upon our family. Help us to look to you as our source and not compare what we have with others. Lord, give us a servant's heart, willing to serve you out of love. Amen.

Quiz Answer

They each received one denarius. (Mt. 20:10)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 26

A Sunday, September 25, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Ezekiel 18:25-28

If the wicked repent, their lives will be spared.

Phil. 2:1-11

In humility, put others first.

Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus tells a parable about repentance.

Repentance

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Repentance is a major theme throughout the scriptures. The Old Testament prophets continually warn not only the Hebrews, but neighboring nations to turn from evil and do good, in other words make a 180 degree turn. Repentance is more than being sorry for what we have done; it is a total turn from the path of sin to the path of righteousness. We need to resolve to change our ways, not just confess them over and over. In the Gospel parable, Jesus clearly shows us that just saying we will obey is not enough. We must put action to our repentance and do what is right.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Contrition

Family Activity

1. “Repentance Game” Have each member of the family in turn walk toward a dark closet (representing sin). Before he/she arrives say, “Repent!” at which he/she should turn 180 degrees and run the other direction toward a light or crucifix.
2. Take a compass and make a 180 degree arc. Illustrate each side of the arc with a scene of repentance. (Example: One side show children fighting: other side show children sharing or hugging.)

Catechism Connection

No. 588 “Against those among them ‘who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others’, Jesus affirmed: ‘I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance’.”

Quiz

In Matthew’s parable, to whom did Jesus compare the first son?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 26

A Sunday, September 25, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Augustine

St. Augustine was born in North Africa in 354. He studied different philosophies and lived an immoral lifestyle. Through reading an epistle of St. Paul, he was convicted of his sins and converted to the Church. He lived in community with his mother, St. Monica, and others where he wrote several books. He became bishop of Hippo and a Doctor of the Church. “What man is he, who, weighing his own infirmity, dares to ascribe his purity and innocency to his own strength; that so he should love Thee the less, as if he had less needed Thy mercy, whereby Thou remittest sins to those that turn to Thee?” (The Confessions).

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever agreed to do something but didn't do it?
2. When it comes to repentance, why isn't saying you're sorry enough?
3. In his parable, Jesus compared the chief priests and elders to the son who did not obey. Jesus was telling them that though they looked good on the outside they were in need of inner repentance. Have you heard a news story of a crime committed by someone who appeared to be a nice person?
4. The tax collectors and harlots looked bad on the outside, but many of them repented and turned from their sinful lifestyles after hearing the teachings of Jesus. Do you know of anyone who has turned from an evil lifestyle to follow Jesus?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Cookies or candy that are made of two layers. One side can represent the unrepentant side and the other can represent the repentant side.

Closing Prayer

Turn us, O God of Hosts, show us Thy countenance, and we shall be whole. For whithersoever the soul of man turns itself, unless toward Thee, it is riveted upon sorrows, yea though it is riveted on things beautiful.” Amen. (St. Augustine, The Confessions)

Quiz Answer

Tax collectors and harlots (sinners). Mt. 21:31

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 27

A Sunday, October 02, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 5:1-7

Israel is the vineyard of the Lord.

Phil. 4:6-9

Rather than worrying, pray with thanksgiving.

Matthew 21:33-43

Jesus tells a parable about a vineyard.

Bearing Fruit

WHAT'S THE POINT?

God's creation revolves around its ability to bear fruit. From plants to animals and people, God established them to be fruitful. Beyond just physical fruit bearing, God wants people to bear spiritual fruit by developing His kind of character through giving, loving, and maturing. The image of the vineyard in the Bible often stands for the nation of Israel with God as the vinedresser. To get grapevines to bear fruit, they must be pruned. God often had to prune the nation of Israel to keep it from growing wild and disobedient. This is also how God must occasionally deal with our hearts.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Acceptance of God's Will

Family Activity

1. Go into your yard and prune back a bush or bring a branch into the house and prune off twigs to illustrate how we must be pruned of unproductive habits and attitudes.
2. "Seed sorting." Gather several seeds and match them to a picture of their corresponding flower, tree or plant. (Seed packets work well for this.)

Catechism Connection

No. 755 "The Church is a cultivated field, the tillage of God."

Quiz

In Matthew's parable, who is the owner of the vineyard?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 27

A Sunday, October 02, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Pius X

St. Pius X reigned as pope from 1903-1914. Among his acts were to put an end to any right of civil powers to interfere with papal elections, to condemn Modernism, and “to renew all things in Christ,” especially the Eucharist. This allowed children to receive the Eucharist upon reaching the age of reason and facilitated the communion of the sick. He encouraged daily Bible reading, commissioned the codification of canon law, and founded the Biblical Institute for scriptural studies. St. Pius X emphasized that “the folly of the Cross,” simplicity of life, and humility of heart are the highest wisdom and the indispensable conditions of a perfect Christian life, for they are the very source of all apostolic fruitfulness. (Butler’s Lives of the Saints)

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt that God was pruning away something in your life for the purpose of producing fruit? What was it? What was the result?
2. How has the fruitfulness of St. Pius X or another saint benefited the Church?
3. Name someone in your family who has produced spiritual fruit. How did it benefit your family?
4. How can we prepare ourselves to be ready when the “owner of the vineyard” returns (Christ’s second coming)?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Bowl of grapes or fruit salad.

Closing Prayer

Generous Lord, You have once more brought the year full circle, through planting and growing and ripening to harvest time. Help us to produce spiritual fruit so we can reap a plentiful harvest in the autumn of our lifetime: a harvest that we will be able to enjoy forever and ever, where no blight can spoil any part of it. Amen.

Quiz Answer

God. (Mt. 21:43)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 28

A Sunday, October 09, 2011



God Supplies Our Needs

WHAT'S THE POINT?

God knows each of us intimately and is able to provide for us out of his riches in heaven. His greatest gift was to offer His Son as a sacrifice for our sins so we may enjoy the life of the Trinity for eternity. God invites us to the wedding banquet, and we will be welcome there if we are abiding in Christ, or as the Matthew parable images “wearing wedding garments.” God is aware of our physical needs and has provided the earth with abundance to feed and clothe us. God provides for us in every area of our lives, especially our spiritual needs through the sacraments of the Church.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 25:6-10a

The Messiah will hold a banquet on Mt. Zion.

Phil. 4:12-14, 19-20

The Lord will supply our needs.

Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus tells a parable about a wedding feast.

Family Activity

1. Watch a video of your wedding or look at your photo album. Compare your wedding to the feast God has invited us to.
2. Clip pictures from magazines, newspapers or catalogs that depict God’s provision for our needs. Glue onto construction paper to make a collage or booklet.

Catechism Connection

No. 305 “Jesus asks for childlike abandonment to the providence of our heavenly Father who takes care of his children’s smallest needs.”

Quiz

In Matthew’s parable, who was the wedding feast for?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 28

A Sunday, October 09, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Mary Di Rosa

This Italian young woman engaged in many social good works. She looked after the spiritual welfare of her father's female employees, helped at the hospital during a severe cholera epidemic, supervised a poorhouse for abandoned girls and began a school for deaf girls. She then founded the Handmaids of Charity in 1850 whose mission it was to care for the souls as well as the temporal needs of others. They ministered to the men wounded on the battlefields as well as civilian victims and prisoners. Her life is an example of how the hand of God can be extended to others to meet their needs.

(Butler's Lives of the Saints)

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. The text in Isaiah is a prophecy about the Messiah. (The "mountain of the Lord" is Mt. Zion or Jerusalem) Read it and compare the prophecy to where and how Jesus died and what his death accomplished.
2. How has God supplied your family's needs?
3. God can use us to help supply the needs of others. How has your family helped someone else?
4. Name a sacrament and tell how it meets our spiritual need.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Put out an assortment of snacks in pretty bowls and trays on a table set with a white table cloth and candles to remind you of a wedding feast.

Closing Prayer

O God, almighty and merciful, grant us through the sacrifice of your Holy Son, joy and peace, a holier life, time to do penance, grace and consolation of the Holy Spirit, and perseverance in good works. Amen.

Quiz Answer

The king's son. (Mt. 22:2)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 29

A Sunday, October 16, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

There is no other besides God.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b

Paul remembers the faithful work of the Thessalonians.

Matthew 22:15-21

Jesus tells the Pharisees to give God His due.

GIVING GOD WHAT IS DUE HIM

WHAT'S THE POINT?

God is very clear in the scriptures that he is the one and true God. In Old Testament times, the concept of many gods was normal, so to further reveal Himself to mankind, God molded Israel into a nation to follow the One God. In the Matthew reading, Jesus speaks out to the Pharisees that God should be given what is due Him, namely, lives of holiness with thankful hearts and mouths full of praise. Often times we want to think of serving God in material terms separate from our hearts. Jesus' point is that since we are created in His image, our entire lives should be given to Him.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Prayer for Purity of Body and Mind

Family Activity

1. Cover one side of a quarter with a piece of paper marked "God," and the other side saying "Caesar." Take turns flipping the coin. If the "God" side is up, give an example of giving to God (like praise or thanksgiving.) If the Caesar side is up, mention a civil law (like taxes and traffic signals.)
2. Set plastic containers on the floor with one labeled "God." Stand back and take turns tossing coins into them. The one who gets the most coins in the "God" container wins.

Catechism Connection

No. 2097 "The worship of the one God sets man free from turning in on himself, from the slavery of sin and the idolatry of the world."

Quiz

Whose face was on the coin that the Pharisees showed Jesus?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 29

A Sunday, October 16, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Albert the Great

St. Albert, a Doctor of the Church from the thirteenth century, wrote much and was an authority on a variety of subjects such as geography, biology, and philosophy. One of his students was St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Albert reflects Jesus' teaching on giving God what He is due in this statement: "Nothing richer can be offered to God than a good will; for the good will is the originator of all good and is the mother of all virtues; whosoever begins to have that good will have secured all the help he needs for living well." Jesus was continually giving this message to the Pharisees in his parables and teachings, but they would not accept it and plotted his death instead.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Jesus told the Pharisees to render to Caesar those things that have Caesar's image on them, only to illustrate that they should give their whole lives to Christ because they are created in the image of God. You are created in the image of God, therefore give your whole life to him. How can we more completely give our lives to Christ?
2. Name some things that society has made into a false god.
3. The Matthew parable is often used to support obedience to governing authorities. How important is it to obey civil laws as well as God's laws as long as they don't conflict?
4. Name a culture where they worship many gods. Compare that to the truth of one God.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Caesar salad or vegetables dipped in Caesar dressing. Or make or buy people-shaped cookies to symbolize giving our whole selves to God. Everything, even those things give to Caesar, belong to God.

Closing Prayer

I offer you, Lord, my thoughts: to be fixed on you; my words: to have you for their theme; my actions: to reflect my love for you; my sufferings: to be endured for your greater glory. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Caesar's face. (Matthew 22:21)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 30

A Sunday, October 23, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Exodus 22:20-26

Kind treatment of orphans, widows and the poor.

1 Thes. 5c-10

Imitate Christ who died for us.

Matthew 22:34-40

Love God and love your neighbor.

Loving God and Neighbor

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The words of Jesus in today's gospel sum up the commandments that God gave to the Hebrews at Mount Sinai: to love God and your neighbor. Jesus explained to them that all of God's revelation in the books of Moses and the Prophets depend on how we love God and neighbor. The rest of the law cannot be fulfilled unless we first worship God and attend to the needs of others. We express our love for God in the way we treat others. God created us in families and communities to give each of us the opportunity to exercise the love of the Trinity.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Apostles' Creed

Family Activity

1. Build a tower of blocks with a base of two blocks representing love of God and love of neighbor. Have someone pull out one or both of the bottom blocks, demonstrating how God's plan for us hinges on love.
2. Play a game or sport that takes two pieces of equipment to make up the game (i.e. softball needs ball and bat) to show how both pieces of equipment are necessary to play, similar to how loving God and neighbor go together.

Catechism Connection

No. 2055 "The Decalogue must be interpreted in the light of this twofold yet single commandment of love, the fullness of the Law:"

Quiz

How much should we love God?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 30

A Sunday, October 23, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Edith Stein

“For the Christian there is no such thing as a ‘stranger.’ There is only the neighbor—the person who happens to be next to us, the person most in need of our help. Whether he is related to us or not, whether we ‘like’ him or not, doesn’t make any difference.” These are the words of Edith Stein also known as St. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross. She was born in 1891 Poland to a large Jewish family. She was an outstanding student well versed in philosophy. An interest in the Catholic faith led her to be baptized in 1922 in Germany and later entered the Cologne Carmel. Because of Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany, St. Edith was sent to Holland, but when the Nazis conquered Holland, she was arrested and sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz where she was killed in the gas chambers in 1942.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Think of a situation that would have turned out differently if someone had loved his neighbor the way he had loved himself.
2. When it comes to caring for yourself, what do think about most often and how can you do those things for your neighbor?
3. God tells us to be especially caring for the defenseless like the widow and orphans. Why?
4. It has been said that the least you do for someone else is the measure of how much you love God. How can you increase your love for God?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Oreo cookies. The oreo is made of two parts: the chocolate outer part and the creme. It takes both to make the cookie, symbolizing how you can't love God separate from loving your neighbor.

Closing Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me by Your Most Sacred Body and Blood from all sins and from every evil. Make me always cling to Your commandments, and never permit me to be separated from You. May I love others as You have loved me. Amen.

Quiz Answer

With all your heart, soul and mind. (Matthew 22:37)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 31

A Sunday, October 30, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Malachi 1:14b-2:2b,8-10

A warning to priests who will not humble themselves.

1 Thes. 2:7b-9,13

Paul shares his life with others.

Matthew 23:1-12

The greatest among you is your servant.

Greatness through Humility

WHAT'S THE POINT?

By the standard of this world, greatness is measured by material success or physical achievement, but in God's Kingdom, greatness is measured by humility. The example of the humility of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta and her mission to love the unlovable caught the attention of the world, but when she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work, in her humility she would not accept it. We should serve others in humility and leave greatness as something for God to bestow, rather than a goal to be reached. Priests and teachers are called to a high standard of humility and service because God has chosen them for the task of overseeing his flock, but all of God's children are expected to treat others as more important than themselves.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Glory Be

Family Activity

1. Sit on the floor in a line or circle and scratch or rub each other's backs to demonstrate humble service.
2. (Only an adult should do this) Take a balloon and begin to blow it up. Before each puff, brag about yourself. Keep it up until it pops as an example of what happens when you exalt yourself.

Catechism Connection

No. 526 "To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom. For this we must humble ourselves and become little."

Quiz

What happens to a person who exalts himself?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 31

A Sunday, October 30, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Vincent Ferrer

St. Vincent Ferrer lived during the 14th Century during an unfortunate time when the papacy was split. St. Vincent made efforts to reconcile the problem of three men claiming to be the pope by urging Benedict XIII to resign in order to elect a new pope, however Benedict refused. King Ferdinand of Castile supported St. Vincent in his declaration that Benedict was hindering the unity of the Church and the faithful were justified in withdrawing their allegiance. Benedict was then deposed. St. Vincent once said, “Whoever will proudly dispute and contradict will always stand outside the door. Christ, the master of humility, manifests his truth only to the humble and hides himself from the proud.”

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Name some people who the world terms as great. Compare them to God's model of greatness.
2. What deed can you think of that someone did recently which God would see as great?
3. Why is it important that priests serve in humility?
4. In what ways can we be a better servant at home, work and school?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Watch refrigerator biscuits rise in the oven as they bake. Watch how the humble leavening causes the dough to rise (become greater). Bake, eat and enjoy it with butter and honey or jelly.

Closing Prayer

Eternal God, please bless our priests, who represent you on this earth. Please strengthen our priests, who shepherd your flock, that they may be examples of your Truth and guide us always on the path to you. We ask these things of You, our Eternal Priest. Amen.

Quiz Answer

He will be humbled. (Matthew 23:12)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 32

A Sunday, November 06, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Wisdom 6:12-16
Seek wisdom.

1 Thes. 4:13-18
Christ will return to resurrect us.

Matthew 25:1-13
Jesus tells the parable of the wise virgins who keep their lamps lit.

Be Prepared for Christ's Coming

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus has promised us he will return in glory to receive us, but he also cautions us to be prepared. In the gospel parable, five young women awaiting the bridegroom are caught without enough oil for their lamps so they are not prepared for his arrival. Oil is often used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit throughout the scriptures. We are urged to rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and for the power for living daily in holiness. Scripture mentions several times that we do not know the exact time of Christ's return, however we can be prepared for it by choosing to trust Christ with our lives and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us everyday.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Hail Mary

Family Activity

1. List off the many preparations your family does to get ready for Christmas (Christ's first coming.) Adults can list things like decorating and parties; children may mention their "wish list." Then make a list of how we should prepare for his Second Coming.
2. Play Hide-and-Seek. Be sure the person who is "it" says, "Ready or not, here I come!" before looking for the others.

Catechism Connection

No. 672 "According to the Lord, the present time is ... a time still marked by "distress" ... and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching."

Quiz

How many virgins were wise?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 32

A Sunday, November 06, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Clare of Assisi

St. Clare founded the Poor Clares. Her family first resisted her wish to become a nun, but with the help of St. Francis of Assisi she was able to take the habit at the age of fifteen. The rule of the monasteries of her nuns throughout Italy, Germany and France was to wear nothing on their feet, sleep on the ground, abstain from meat, to speak only when necessary and possess no property. Her sister, St. Agnes joined her, as well as other young women who wanted to be brides of Jesus. They were very happy, because Our Lord was close to them all the time. St. Clare once said, “Our labor here is brief, but the reward is eternal. Do not be disturbed by the clamor of the world, which passes like a shadow. Do not let the false delights of a deceptive world deceive you.”

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Over the centuries, many people have tried to predict the date of Christ's return but have been wrong. Why do you think God has kept the exact time of Jesus return a mystery?
2. Read the Sunday reading from Wisdom and apply it to a current issue in world events. (Wisdom is found by those who seek her.)
3. In Confirmation we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. (See CCC No. 1303) What gifts does the Holy Spirit give us that will help us to prepare for Christ's coming?
4. How should we spend our time if we want to prepare ourselves for Christ's return?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make or buy large cookies, which will represent oil lamps. Take a sugar cube, soak it in peppermint extract and place onto cookie. Light the sugar cube (it will burn for 30 seconds or so) like an oil lamp. (Eat the cookie but not the sugar cube.)

Closing Prayer

O my God! While recalling the wasted years that are past, I believe that You, Lord, can in an instant turn this loss to gain. Please restore to me the time lost, giving me Your grace, both now and in the future, that I may appear before You in "wedding garments." Amen. (St. Teresa of Avila)

Quiz Answer

Five. (Matthew 25:2)

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 33

A Sunday, November 13, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31
Praise for a faithful wife.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Walk as children of the light.

Matthew 25:14-30
Jesus tells the parable of the talents.

Faithfulness

WHAT'S THE POINT?

In relationships with others, faithfulness is key. In marriage, in friendships, in religious vocations - all of these will not last without faithfulness. In Jesus' parable of the talents, Jesus shows how if we are faithful with what we have been given, we will be rewarded, but if we squander the gifts God has given us, even what we do have will be taken away. The reading from Proverbs praises a faithful wife, not only for her purity, but also for her industriousness and her help to the poor. As Christ as our model, God calls us all to be faithful people. This week, take inventory of all the gifts God has given you, then think of ways to faithfully use them.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Act of Faith

Family Activity

1. Take the family out to the mailbox and bring in the mail. Talk about the faithfulness of the postal workers to deliver mail every day.
2. "Talent" show. Have each family member use one of his/her talents. Sing, recite a poem, play musical instrument or pantomime. Little ones can count to ten, recite a prayer or just twirl in a circle!

Catechism Connection

No. 1832 "The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory."

Quiz

What excuse did the third servant give for not "using his talent"?

Family Night – Ordinary Time Week 33

A Sunday, November 13, 2011

Saintly Examples: St. Anthony Mary Claret

St. Anthony Claret is an example of faithful service to the Lord from a young age. He entered seminary at twenty-one and was ordained a priest in 1835. He had a passion for missions and founded the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. During his life St. Anthony used his talent to preach 10,000 sermons and publish 200 books for the instruction of clergy and people. Though political conditions in Spain made it difficult for St. Anthony, he continued to serve the Church until his death in 1870. He once said, “Our Lord has created persons for all states in life, and in all of them we see people who have achieved sanctity by fulfilling their obligations well.” (Butler’s Lives of the Saints)

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Name a commitment you have made and kept.
2. Take inventory of each family member’s gifts and discuss ways of faithfully using them. Have each member of the family name one talent they see in each family member.
3. What area of your life can you dedicate more fully to the service of God and his Church?
4. Compare the fruits of faithfulness with the results of unfaithfulness.

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Make or buy cupcakes or large cookies. Let each person in the family decorate his snack with decorator’s frosting to exhibit his talent.

Closing Prayer

Eternal Father, I beseech Thee to grant me holy perseverance unto death. Through the merits of Jesus Christ, I beg for myself and for all the just, the grace never again to be separated from Thy love, but to love Thee forever, in time and eternity. Amen. (St. Alphonsus De Liguori)

Quiz Answer

He was afraid. (Matthew 25:25)

Family Night – Solemnity of The Lord

A Sunday, November 20, 2011



Sunday Readings:

Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17

The Lord will search for his sheep.

1 Cor. 15:20-26,28

Christ will give his kingdom to his Father.

Matthew 25:31-46

Christ returns to reward his sheep.

Christ the King

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Everyone has an inclination to esteem or worship a great leader, musician, or actor. We are created to worship God, but rather than asking us to spend all our time bowing down to Him, he tells us to go out and help others - that is how we show Him our worship. By Jesus' humble life on earth and his instruction, God shows us the way to enter his kingdom. At the end of the age, Jesus will judge between those who showed active love and those who did not. The Catholic Church calls such love the corporal works of mercy. We must practice these to be found worthy to enter into God's eternal rest.

Opening Prayer: Our Father or Glory Be

Family Activity

1. Have members of the family represent the needy people listed in the Matthew reading (hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, sick, imprisoned), and have the rest of the family give them what they need. Props such as food, water, and clothing could be used.
2. "Corporal Works of Mercy Charades" Write the seven works of mercy found in CCC No. 2447 on slips of paper. Each person can draw a piece of paper and then act out that work of mercy for the others to guess.

Catechism Connection

No. 544 "Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom."

Quiz

How many groups will Jesus divide the nations into when he returns?

Family Night – Solemnity of The Lord

A Sunday, November 20, 2011

Saintly Examples: King David

David, the second King of Israel (around 1000 BC), is Israel's most esteemed king. He was considered a great leader and deliverer of his people, a foreshadow of the Messiah to come. God promised David that someone from his lineage would forever sit on the throne. Jesus is called the Son of David and is the promised one. Not only is Jesus a direct descendant of David, but his life paralleled David in many ways. Before becoming a king, David was a humble shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. God was pleased with David, calling him a man after God's own heart. God audibly spoke at Christ's baptism that He was well pleased with his Son.

Let's Talk About It: Discussion Questions

1. Compare the ideals of the Kingdom of God to the ideals of the world.
2. Read the corporal works of mercy listed in CCC No. 2447. How important are they within the Catholic faith?
3. Give some examples of how you have performed some of these works of mercy. Give some examples of others things you could do, especially during the upcoming season of Advent.
4. How does selfishness get in the way of entering God's kingdom and performing the corporal works of mercy?

Family Commitment

(Fill in your commitment here)

Snack

Take two triangle-shaped crackers or toasted bread cut into triangles and arrange one piece on top of the other to form a Star of David. Stick the triangles together with cheese spread or cream cheese. Make several stars.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, teach me to be generous, to serve You as You deserve, to give without counting the cost, to fight without fretting at my wounds, to labor without seeking rest, to spend myself without looking for any reward other than that of knowing that I do Your holy will. Amen.

Quiz Answer

Two. (Matthew 25:32)

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