

Sharing the Faith in the Home

Schools are closed and students are doing schoolwork at home - make sure you include Religion class!

Students in St. Mary's School, of course, have received work from their teachers. Mary Ellen Jackson (mjackson@charlestdiocese.org) and Joan Labone (jlabone@charlestdiocese.org) have reached out to families with children in our parish Sunday classes. But, of course *all parents* – not just those with children in school – should be sharing the faith at home *all year long*. And of course *all Catholics* should be sharing the good news of Christ with those they love.



Pope Francis suggested that this time at home due to the virus is “a beautiful opportunity to creatively rediscover affection.” “May the Lord,” he prayed, “help [families] to discover new ways, new expressions of love, of living together in this new situation.”

Some ideas to strengthen your faith ... and to help you share it

What makes Catholic Families Different? This article can guide you to find ways to put the faith first in your family.
<https://catholicexchange.com/what-makes-catholic-families-different>

Home prayer space / home altar

There is a long tradition for Catholic families to have home altars / prayer areas, and now is a great time for you to put one together! It can be as simple or as elaborate as you want, and ought to be personalized to your family and its needs.

you can start with:

- a crucifix (it can be hung on the wall above)
- a statue or image of Mary
- your bible
- your rosary
- a candle
- then ... personalize it as you wish! Each member could contribute some religious item to add - perhaps the picture of a favorite saint. Perhaps have a place to keep written intentions.
- finally ... allow this area to help you put yourself in the presence of God for prayer. On Sunday, you can put your tablet / computer/ cell phone right there on your altar to watch Mass!



[For more on home altars](http://catholicmom.com/2012/12/23/home-altar-ideas/) - <http://catholicmom.com/2012/12/23/home-altar-ideas/>

send in picture of your home prayer space to be shared on facebook mjackson@charlestdiocese.org

Schedule family prayer time

Things like morning and bedtime prayer, grace-at-meals, family bible reading, family praise and worship time help families invite God into their homes – do whatever works in your family. But do something! It's important for families to pray together.

During prayer time, let each family member add his or her own intention. Perhaps let different family members lead prayers. Even in the toughest of times, make sure prayer includes praising and thanking God for his care for us.



[For more on prayer in the home - https://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithonthecouch/2018/08/prayer-power-a-new-study-reveals-the-true-meaning-of-the-family-that-prays-together-stays-together/](https://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithonthecouch/2018/08/prayer-power-a-new-study-reveals-the-true-meaning-of-the-family-that-prays-together-stays-together/)

Share Meals Together



Meals are an important part of family life. A study done by the University of Michigan discovered that the amount of time children spent eating meals at home was the single biggest predictor of better academic achievement and fewer behavioral problems. Mealtime was more influential than time spent in school, studying, attending religious services, or playing sports. (*The Secret of Happy Families* by Bruce Feiler)

- Turn off the TV and put away cell phones.
- Sit together at a table, pray together, and share the meal as well as yourselves.
- Have conversations.
- Share your day – the good parts and the difficult parts.
- Ask probing questions.
- Give the children time to answer questions and to share.
- Share with your children something about your childhood, or about your parents; tell stories.
- A great way to end on a good note is to ask each person present to tell one positive thing the Lord did for him or her, and then end with a prayer of thanksgiving for all the gifts he has given.

[For more on family meals - https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/01/12/the-most-important-thing-you-can-do-with-your-kids-eat-dinner-with-them/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/01/12/the-most-important-thing-you-can-do-with-your-kids-eat-dinner-with-them/)

Recreate Together



The children have their school to do, and parents have lots of work, too, *but take some time out to just have fun*. Matthew Kelly suggests blocking out time in your calendar to ‘waste time’ with your family. Go for a walk. Play cards. Make a model. Play a board game. Toss a ball in the yard. Whatever everyone can do together! Pull out those old dusty games, bicycles, baseball gloves, and have fun together!

Be creative about planning a date night with your spouse. Walk around the block. Sit on the porch sipping wine after the kids go to bed. Relive your early courtship through conversation.

Studies show improving any relationship is as easy as actively showing interest in the other person or sharing with them – get to know your spouse and your children as through new eyes.



These are just some ideas – send in other ideas or pictures of your home altar to mjackson@charlestandiocese.org, I’ll share then on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/stmarysaikendre>

For more ideas

To read more about the home as the domestic church, read <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithonthecouch/2020/03/the-church-at-home-celebrating-the-liturgy-of-domestic-church-life/>