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IDEAS FOR LIVING BETTER FROM THE FAMILY LIFE OFFICE

Family Ritual

Mary's Birthday - September 8

Celebrating birthdays show how special we each are. Celebrate Mary's day by everyone wearing something blue. Hold hands and pray a "Hail Mary" together.



A Sign to Others

Most of us will be quick to say that our marriage is not perfect. Our lives declare that perfection is not a requirement. Mother Teresa told us, "God does not expect us to be perfect; he calls us to be faithful." We can rely on God to fill up what is lacking in each of us, and we rely on our vows to one another. We work at being married, in the ordinary course of life. That is all that can be asked of any married couple. Take note of how people view you as a couple, of the sign that you can be to them. If some bad habits have crept into your ways of relating to one another—negative humor, taking one another for granted—look for ways to treat your spouse with more kindness and respect.

When we call Christian marriage a sacrament, we are not only talking about the grace the couple receives to live out their promises, we are saying our marriage is a sign of God's love.

What married couple has been a sign of God's love to you? Send them a note of appreciation. May God's love shine through you.



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A Prayer for Life

Loving God, Creator of all, we recognize that life is a gift from you. Open our hearts to your Holy Spirit and renew in us a deep respect for all persons: the family, the unborn, the young, the adult, the sick, the disabled, the dying, the homeless, the unemployed, and the oppressed in any way. Bless all of us in our diocese and instill in us a deep love for your gift of life. Through the intercession of Mary, Mother and Virgin, may all our words and actions foster reverence for human life. May we be true witnesses to the truth that all life is precious and has sublime dignity. Lead our nation and our world to this understanding so that we may be a people dedicated to the protection of all your sons and daughters. We ask this through your son Jesus Christ, the Word who became flesh and lived among us.

Amen

Dare to be Different

Helen Lowrie Marshall

"Dare to be different; life is so full
 Of people who follow the same push and pull.
 Poor, plodding people who, other than name,
 Try to pretend they're exactly the same.

God made us different; there never will be,
 A replica soul of you or me.
 The charm, the glory of all creation
 Rests on this very deviation.

Your charm, your own glory, too.
 Lies in being uniquely you—
 Lies in being true to your best,
 That part of you different than all the rest."

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"Apple Seeds"
 Fr. Brian Cavanaugh, T.O.R.

Families and the Gospel

September 1

Lk 14: 1, 7-14

In today's gospel, Jesus used a meal as a place to teach. Too often family meals are rushed, eaten in shifts or in the hypnotic glow of a TV. Meals are sacred times where we listen, share, appreciate and instruct. Jesus promises: "You will be blessed." Don't lose the opportunity.

September 8

Lk 14: 25-33

Today's gospel speaks about a king and a builder who failed to plan properly; one met with ridicule and the other met defeat. Don't fall in the important relationships in your life. Commit yourself to them. Don't leave it to chance. What specific steps can you take to enhance those relationships? When we fail to plan, we plan to fail.

September 15

Lk 15: 1-32

Show me a family without a "lost relationship" and I'll show you a family that isn't cleaning the skeletons from the closet. Maybe that person hasn't run away or left home; they sort of "drifted" away. Conversation with them is superficial and forced. In today's gospel Jesus challenges us to bring that "lost sheep" back home. Like Jesus we have to "welcome sinners and eat with them."

September 22

Lk 16: 1-13

Today's gospel has a tip for parents: "Whoever is faithful in very little is faithful also in much." Fidelity is a learned behavior. It is never too early to teach our children to be faithful to their promises, chores, and responsibilities. Of course the best teacher is the example of our own lives.

September 29

Lk 16: 19-31

The rich man in today's gospel was condemned to a "place of torment" because he never noticed poor Lazarus starving at his door. When he asked that an angel go and warn his five brothers to change their ways, it is clear that the whole family was going through life insensitive to others' needs. It was a family disease. Is your family learning to be sensitive to the poor and less fortunate? Today's gospel is a warning!



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A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

LEAD WITH HEART

"The word encouragement has its root in the Latin word *cor*, meaning 'heart'. When leaders encourage others, though recognition and celebration, they inspire them with courage—with heart. When we encourage others, we give them heart. And when we give heart to others, we give love."

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Baptism Beyond Babyhood

A baptism Sunday at church is an excellent opportunity to talk to your kids about what the sacrament means. Kids love hearing about themselves as babies, so use that as your ticket into the conversation.

Tell them about their baptism day.

What was the significance of their outfit? Tell the story how they behaved—did they cry when the water was poured? Did you have a party afterward?

Explain why you had them baptized.

Talk about the hopes you had for them when they were so small. Did you imagine them going to church with you? What did you hope for their faith?

Baptismal gifts—decade later.

If you socked away your child's baptismal gift money, consider using \$20.00 or so to buy some age-appropriate spiritual reading. Take your child to a religious gift store and give them a budget to pick out something they'd use now.

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AT Home With Our Faith

Catholic 101

Confirmation.

My daughter just asked me what Confirmation is—and I found that I couldn't quite explain it. Can you tell me more about this sacrament?

Confirmation, like Baptism; is a sacrament of initiation. Confirmation is the completion of Baptism; in the early church it was the end of the baptismal liturgy, which then led to Eucharist. Confirmation is associated with fullness of gifts of the Holy Spirit (listed at our blog, homefaith.com) given to the church at Pentecost. (Of course, you also get the spirit in Baptism.) The idea of Confirmation as a transition to an adult faith is more modern interpretation. Confirmation roots us more deeply as a child of God and unites us more closely to Christ. It increases in us the gifts of the Holy Spirit and gives us a special strength to spread the faith by word and action as a true witness of Christ

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