

FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

TOPIC: PARENTS AS THE PRIMARY EDUCATORS OF THE FAITH

REFERENCES:

CCC PASSAGES: 2223

SACRED SCRIPTURE

PRV 22:6
EPH 6:1-4

CREED

nos.
531-
534

LITURGY

nos.
1655-
1658

LIFE

nos.
2214-
2233

PRAYER

nos.
2685
&
2688

Goal(s):

- To equip parents to fulfill their God-given roles as the primary educators of the faith to their children
- To introduce the Church's teaching of the Domestic Church
- To encourage families to create a home altar or prayer corner within their homes and to pray together

OPENING PRAYER

We bless your name, O Lord,
for sending your own incarnate Son,
to become part of a family,
so that, as he lived its life,
he would experience its worries and its joys.

We ask you, Lord,
to protect and watch over this family,
so that in the strength of your grace
its members may enjoy prosperity,
possess the priceless gift of your peace,
and, as the Church alive in the home,
bear witness in this world to your glory.
We ask this though Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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ICE BREAKER

Option 1: Childhood Dream

Ask the participants to share their childhood dream (what they want/wanted to be or do when they grow/grew up) and then ask them to reflect on how this correlates with their current aspirations (if applicable). Depending on the time and amount of people in the group you may ask them just to give you one-word responses, like astronaut, ballerina, teacher, etc.

Option 2: The Time Machine

Ask the participants the following question(s): "If you were able to travel through time, what time period would you want to visit and why? If there was a person you would go back in time to meet, who would it be, and why?"



TEACH

1. Hook/Question

Seek to activate prior knowledge and experience. Watch video:



2. Introduce Topic

The Domestic Church and parents as primary educators.



3. CONTENT

Many of us have had similar experiences to those in the video we just watched. We most likely learned about our faith in some way from our family. Our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles have possibly been examples to us and shared their life of faith and relationship with Jesus with us. They have taught us prayers, shared traditions with us, and brought us to the sacraments. We are able to see that growing up in an environment that is rich in Catholic traditions, prayers, and service is very important for nurturing one's faith life.

When the Catholic Church talks about the "Domestic Church," she is speaking about this very principle. The home is where we are meant to encounter Jesus and grow in our faith, and our parishes are meant to support families in their walk of discipleship. Parents are the "primary educators" of the faith, and no one is better suited or positioned to teach the faith to their children.

This may be an easier principle to understand since many of us had the experience of learning and

working from home during the COVID-19 crisis. Most of us experienced being unable to go to church in person, instead watching and praying the Mass online together as a family at home. This reminded us that our homes are true churches—Domestic Churches—where we encounter Jesus. All of our homes are centers for education, work, enrichment, and faith. Our Catholic faith is meant to be shared and lived in the home so that our homes become places "where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, and fidelity" can grow and thrive.

Ultimately, we look to Jesus to understand what it means to be a Domestic Church. Jesus lived most of His life on earth in the hiddenness, joys, labors, and sufferings of family life (see Mt 1:18 – 2:23; Lk 1:26 – 2:52). God the Son came to us through a family, the Holy Family, and by so doing He united Himself in a certain way to every family (see St. John Paul II). Jesus is with us. His presence and grace in the sacraments makes our families Domestic Churches. Lord, help us rely on You and Your grace more, and may we share You as Mary and Joseph did—with the world!

4. FAMILY CONVERSATION

"Who in your family teaches or has taught you the most about God?"

First families reflect and discuss the question together (mute for privacy if virtual), and then catechists facilitate large group sharing (unmute).

5. MISSION

1. Introduce Mission Activities

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

2. Explain Activity

Watch [this video](#), and build a prayer corner in your home.

3. Family Sharing

Provide visual example/photo by Show 'n Telling how you have built your own home altar or prayer corner and how you have taken time to pray.

6. REVIEW & CLOSE IN PRAYER

Review briefly the goals of the lesson and remind everyone of the expectations for week 2 and 3.

Option 1: Pray together the [Our Father](#)

Option 2: Lord Jesus, may You bless each of the families gathered together today. Help us to continually grow closer to You. This we pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2016), nos. 259 & 274.

Parents always influence the moral development of their children, for better or for worse. It follows that they should take up this essential role and carry it out consciously, enthusiastically, reasonably and appropriately... The family is the first school of human values, where we learn the wise use of freedom.

St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), no. 36.

The right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others.

Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965), no. 3.*

Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking. Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered. Hence the family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor. Here, too, they find their first experience of a wholesome human society and of the Church. Finally, it is through the family that they are gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God. Let parents, then, recognize the inestimable importance a truly Christian family has for the life and progress of God's own people.

