



# FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION

## YEAR THREE

WHAT'S *OUR* STORY? – GOD'S WORD & OUR RESPONSE

## INTRODUCTION

**TOPIC: THIS YEAR FAMILIES WILL FOCUS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE LIFE OF CHRIST, ESPECIALLY THROUGH THE LENS OF LIVING THE MYSTERIES OF THE HOLY ROSARY.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE: ENCOURAGE FAMILIES AHEAD OF TIME TO BRING THEIR BIBLES AND ANY SACRAMENTALS THEY HAVE PLACED ON THEIR HOME ALTARS.**

### GOALS

- To welcome families back to Families Forming Disciples as well as any families new to FFD (e.g., Welcome Back! We've Missed You! sign with balloons and decorations)
- Create a joyful, fun, festive environment (e.g., Rosary Stations)
- Have fellowship and food (e.g., snacks/treats/ice cream/potluck)
- Families will review what it means to be a Domestic Church
- Families will explore the Holy Rosary
- Families will have their bibles and sacramentals blessed

### MATERIALS

- Welcome Back! We've Missed You! sign with balloons and decorations (and/or general welcome signage for new, first-time families)
- Snacks/treats/ice cream/potluck
- Bibles for Family Rosary Prayer Station and Closing Prayer (\*see note under Closing Prayer below)
- [Rosary Pamphlet for Children \(Alt. Link\)](#)
- Edible Rosary station treats such as M&Ms, Skittles, Hershey's Kisses, donuts
- Candles, sacramentals, poster board and markers for Family Rosary Prayer Station
- Walkable Rosary/Decade Station create by using chalk for outdoors, or paper roll and markers/paints for indoors (see below)

### OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,  
We entrust our family to You and ask for Your blessing and protection. We love You Lord Jesus with all our hearts and we ask that You help our family become more like the Holy Family. Help us to be kind, loving, and patient with one another. Give us all the grace we need to become saints and Your faithful disciples.  
Amen.

### ICE BREAKER

- Ask everyone to introduce themselves.
- What is your favorite season and why?



# TEACH

## 1. Hook/Question

Watch video: Archbishop Hartmayer's Welcome Video



## 2. Introduce Topic

The New Testament and the Life of Christ, especially through the lens of living the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary



## 3. CONTENT

It is truly a blessing to welcome you to another year of *Families Forming Disciples*. Our hope is that you are journeying together as a family, growing closer to God and to each other. God loves you and longs to live as part of your family. He calls you to be a Domestic Church!

The Church teaches that, “The family is, so to speak, [the domestic church](#).’ (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11). This means that it is in the context of the family that we first learn who God is and to prayerfully seek His will for us.”

The home is where we should learn how to pray and develop a relationship with God. The family is where we first play, discover, laugh, eat, share, serve, forgive, and love. It is a place where our hearts greatly desire to encounter Jesus and grow in our faith. Living our Catholic faith should be so much more than merely a family obligation; rather our faith should be the “source of warmth and love” in our homes. (See [Renewing Catholic Family Life, Dr. Greg Popcak](#))

Ultimately, we look to Jesus to understand what it means to be a Domestic Church, how to love each other better. 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, Letter to Families](#)). Jesus is with us.

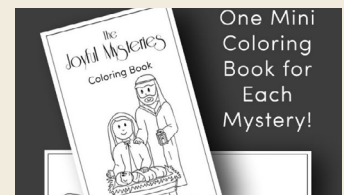
The Holy Mass is the greatest prayer of the Church. It is the work of the Holy Trinity, where Jesus Himself becomes substantially present for us in the Eucharist. We also have many other prayers and devotions in the Church meant to bring us closer to the Lord. The Rosary is one of the strongest of these prayers and devotions, especially when a family prays it together. In a way, it contains the whole Gospel, which tells the story of Jesus, since the Rosary looks to the saving mysteries of Jesus with Mary.

This year we are going to walk with the Holy Family to experience more deeply their story through learning and meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary with special attention to the New Testament and particularly the four Gospels. The Holy Rosary tells us of the significant moments of Jesus' and the Holy Family's lives. It is important that we spend time with them there, because many times in our lives we too live the same joys, sufferings and glorious moments that Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the first disciples experienced. Walking with them, we learn that sometimes God takes away our suffering. However, most often God our Father does not just take us out of difficult circumstances, but instead, like He did with His Son, Jesus, He gives us the grace to get through them. The mysteries of the Rosary, which are the mysteries of the Gospel and of God's saving love for us, help us to understand that we are not walking alone in this life. We walk the path that Jesus walked—through, with, and in Him. We are united with Him. We are surrounded by God's love as His most cherished children! We are God's family!

## ROSARY STATIONS

Create rosary-themed activity stations for families to visit together. Here are some easy rosary-themed ideas:

- **Rosary Coloring Book Station:** Choose one of the free Rosary coloring books from the links on the right. Families can begin exploring and coloring. The coloring book will be used throughout the year!
- [Edible Rosary ideas](#): Using the Rosary Pamphlet for Children and their favorite sweets, teach families the order of the prayers of the Rosary by having them create their own rosaries out of M&Ms, Skittles, Hershey's Kisses, donuts, etc... Then let them eat the treat or take it home for later!
- **Video Station:** If your parish has FORMED, watch 7 mins of Brother Francis' The Rosary: A Special Way to Pray (from 13:33-20:00)
- **Video Station:** The History of the Rosary (Let's Time Travel!) (lihm posts)
- **Family Rosary Prayer Station:**
  1. Set this station up in a quiet, comfortable space.
  2. Use a candle and a few sacramentals to create a prayerful atmosphere, but keep it simple as a family's home altar might be.
  3. Appropriate, meditative background music could be played.
  4. Ask families if they have a special intentions for which they would like to pray.
  5. Read Luke 1: 26-38.
  6. Use the Rosary for Children Pamphlet to lead the families in one decade of the Rosary.



- **Walkable Rosary or Decade of the Rosary Station:**

Use the ideas from the images below to design a large rosary or decade of the rosary for families to walk on as they pray the prayers that represent each bead. (We recommend starting with a decade for younger children.) You can use a long paper roll and markers or paints, or chalk if you are doing the activity outdoors.



## 4. CLOSING PRAYER

### Blessing of Family Bibles & Home Altar sacramentals

- All families are encouraged to bring a bible to be blessed, especially new families who did not have their bibles blessed during Year 2.
- Sacramental items from the families' home altars can be blessed at the same time.
- Providing each family a chance to share about one of the items they brought with the larger group may be a good way to welcome new families into the FFD community, as well as an opportunity for current families to share.
- \*Families can either bring their own bibles or parishes can provide the families with a bible.
- If families are expected to bring their own bibles, make sure you send a few reminders before the gathering.
- Also, it's a good idea to have a few extra bibles on hand just in case a family forgets.
- Pray Blessing of Family Bibles & Home Altar Sacramentals

Father in heaven,  
 we praise You for sending Your Spirit  
 into our hearts to teach us to pray.  
 Bless these bibles and sacramentals,  
 and teach us to use them  
 as an aid to sincere and devoted prayer.  
 May we continue to grow in prayer,

and be pleasing to You in our lives.  
 All praise and glory are Yours, Father,  
 through Christ our Savior,  
 in the Holy Spirit,  
 God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Adapted from <https://www.catholicdoors.com/>

- Ask families to place their blessed bibles on their home altars and remind them to bring their bibles to all of the sessions.

## REMIND

Remind families about the next meeting date and time.