



[If you haven't already, begin your meal with meal prayer, then take turns reading these boxes aloud, following the directions where applicable]

Gratitude

"The Christian life is above all the grateful response to a generous Father."

- Pope Francis

In the Catholic tradition, there are five types of prayer: adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. Over time, we will look at these different forms; we will begin by looking at thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a foundational form of prayer - it is only natural that we look around us and wonder "who has placed all of these good gifts in our lives?" Acknowledging the gifts in our lives leads to prayer of thanksgiving. At times, we experience blessings, when God provides for us the things that we need. At other times, we experience hardship, and God is present with us despite the suffering. In the Catechism (the teachings) of the Catholic Church, it says: "Every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving. The letters of St. Paul often begin and end with thanksgiving, and the Lord Jesus is always present in it: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"; "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (2638).

Discussion

[These questions are a spark for conversation, not a strict outline. Allow the Spirit to lead. Try to at least discuss the starred questions each week.]

- *What is one thing you are grateful for today? Be specific.
- Jesus would have lived the Jewish practices of his day, and one Jewish tradition is to name 100 blessings each day. Can you name 100 blessings as a family?
- What hardships are you are thankful for that contain a blessing or "silver lining"?
- *Gratitude is a virtue (a habit of doing good). How can we practice gratitude daily as a family so that it becomes a habit?

Circle of Grace

For Parents of Students
Grades K-12:

As a parish and a diocese, we are committed to creating and maintaining safe spaces for our youth. As a part of this commitment, our diocese participates in the "Circle of Grace" program, which teaches children about how they can help keep themselves safe and ask for help when they need it, all in age appropriate ways. This is in addition to staff and volunteer trainings and other measures on the part of adults to keep spaces safe.

Because the COR program is our method of forming children in the faith this year, the Circle of Grace lessons will take place at home. Please take a little time over the next few weeks to review the sheets provided and go through them with your child(ren). Please note that different ages have different information and activities, and some ages would benefit from working separately so that conversations can be kept age-appropriate.

Our diocese requires that parents complete a form confirming that they have reviewed these materials with their child(ren). Please return your signed sheet by Dec 1.

Activity & Prayer

[For this activity section, you will need the pick up sticks set provided by the parish. If you don't have a set, you can modify the activity using any multicolored set of items you have (such as buttons, blocks, M&Ms)]

Use the set of Pick-Up Sticks provided by the parish to play the Gratitude Game: 1) read the instructions on how to play pick-up sticks; 2) each time a stick is drawn, the player must refer to the following list to give thanks for something in the listed category, saying "Thank you God for..." :

- Red - a person you are thankful for
- Black - a place you are thankful for
- Yellow - a thing you are thankful for
- Green - something that happened that you are thankful for
- Blue - anything else you are thankful for

End your activity time with this prayer (often called the "after meal prayer" since it has traditionally been prayed at the end of meal times)

"We give thanks for all your benefits, almighty God, who lives and reigns forever. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen."

Extras

Looking for more?

- Listen or read about why Gratitude is essential in Christian life:

<https://www.ncregister.com/bl og/5-things-that-gratitude-powerfully-unleashes-in-your-life>

- Read about the Catholic origins of Thanksgiving:

<https://www.simplycatholic.com/the-origins-of-thanksgiving/>

- Have a movie night and watch "The Ultimate Gift" available on YouTube and other streaming channels such as Amazon prime, peacock, and others:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3A0z12RdXA>

Sacramental Life

This week's journal prompt for first reconciliation/communion is:
Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind (Matthew 22:36-38) - what is something you can do to love God with your heart? With your soul? With your mind? With your strength?

This week's confirmation work is about Prayer. Watch Decision Point 4.1: Why Pray? What Prayers do you know? List them. What meaning does Prayer have in your life? <https://staugustinedward.org/confirmation-preparation/>

Looking Ahead

For Next Week, Nov 16:

- Guide sheets will be provided in the bulletin and online
- There will be an additional activity sheet for next week, available to pick up at the parishes or download online
- Optional activity pages to keep little ones busy are also available to pick up at the parishes or download online

Upcoming Events:

- First Reconciliation/Communion Students - your whole family should plan to attend on Nov 16 6-8 pm at St Augustine for our first formation night.

