



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

Feast of the Holy Family

This year, we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family on December 30th. This is a day when we can honor Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and look to them as a model for our own families and for our culture and values.

Pope Leo XIII said that:

- for fathers, Joseph is a model of vigilance and care.
- for mothers, Mary the Mother of God, is an example of love, modesty, submission of spirit and perfect faith.
- for children, Jesus, who was subject to His parents, is a model of obedience.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

On Jan 1, we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. In 431, there was a disagreement among theologians over the role of Mary in the Catholic Church.

In the end, the bishops declared that Mary is really the mother of Jesus and Jesus is really God. So it must be said that Mary is the Mother of God. The oldest Christian greeting of Mary was when Mary's cousin Elizabeth called her "Mother of my Lord." For centuries, Mary has been praised because she believed. She is Mother of God because of her faith in God. The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, celebrates Mary's faith and trust in God alone. The Church encourages us to imitate her faith.

- adapted from:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/saints/saints-stories-for-all-ages/solemnity-of-mary/>

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 inspires you about the Holy Family?
- *What is something you admire about Joseph, Mary, or Jesus that you would like to imitate?
- How does their example help you be a better father, mother, sibling, or child?
- How can you share your family values with your community?
- *Looking back over the year, what is one time you recall God's presence, or one thing God spoke to your heart, or one thing you'd like to thank God for?
- *Looking forward, what is one goal you have for your relationship with God in the new year?

Activity & Prayer

[For this activity section, you will need the additional resource provided by the parish. If you don't have it, you can download it on our website]

The Feast of the Holy Family is an ideal day for the family to pray together - bring out your rosary image cards and meditate together on one decade or all of the Joyful Mysteries.

Spend some quality time as a family together. Look back at your family culture commitment sheet and choose an activity from the "play together" category that your family loves to do together - playing a favorite game, having a dance party, going sledding, etc.

****Note for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day:*

It has long been a custom in Catholic churches to pray or sing the *Te Deum*, a hymn of thanksgiving written by Sts Ambrose and Augustine, on New Year's Eve, to thank God for all of the blessings received over the course of the previous year, and then to invoke His blessings for the coming year by praying or singing the *Veni, Creator Spiritus* on New Year's Day. Consider singing or praying these together - see the handout.

Extras

- Check out this reflection on the feast of the Holy Family:
<https://watch.formed.org/opening-the-word-1/season:1/videos/the-holy-family-december-29-2019>
- For the kids - a cartoon about the real meaning of Christmas:
<https://watch.formed.org/lukas-storyteller/season:1/videos/lukas-storyteller-the-true-meaning-of-christmas>
- Listen to a thought provoking speech from senator Rubio about how we are called to promote the family in our country:
<https://youtu.be/vxpCwXV5Iw8>

Sacramental Life

For both First Communion and Confirmation Students: Make a journal entry about one hope you have for your relationship with God for this new year?

Looking Ahead

For Next Week, Jan 4:

- We will celebrate Epiphany - you might want to make/purchase a king cake, and also be sure to pick up some blessed chalk from the church for your home blessing
- See the parish or website for additional handouts and coloring pages

Upcoming Events:

- Confirmation AND First Reconciliation/Communion Students - your whole family should plan to attend on Jan 11 6-8 pm at St Augustine for a formation night.

