

# Link to Liturgy



## Christmas Season The Holy Family

*Link to Liturgy provides fast, free, & faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life.*

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### Lessons and Discussions

**Page 6 – The Holy Family: The perfect example for families and marriages**

**Page 8 – Family: The Original Cell**

**Page 15 – Family: Our duties as parents and children**

**Page 18 - Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple**

*“Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.”*

**Page 20 – Obedience**

*“was obedient to them”*

**Page 24 – Forming our conscience**

*“But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there”*

**Page 30 – Retreat: why it can be a good thing**

*“departed for Egypt”*

**Communion Antiphon – Roman Missal**

*This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.*

*Fili, quid fecisti*

*Lk 2: 48, 49*

I

**M**Y son, why have you treated us so? \* Your father and I have been anxiously looking for you. How is it that you were seeking me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?

**Alternate options:**

- Angels We Have Heard on High
- Away in a Manger
- Once in Royal David's City
- Big Gulp (Remnant)
- Kalwaria (Remnant)

**Collect – Roman Missal**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

O God, who were pleased to give us  
the shining example of the Holy Family,  
graciously grant that we may imitate them  
in practicing the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity,  
and so, in the joy of your house,  
delight one day in eternal rewards.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

**Gospel Reading – Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 – Roman Missal –  
Cycle A**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew  
- Glory to you O Lord

When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.” Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, Out of Egypt I called my son.

When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, *He shall be called a Nazorean.*

The Gospel of the Lord.  
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

**Gospel Reading – Luke 2:22-40 – Roman Missal – Cycle B**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke  
- Glory to you O Lord

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pi-

geons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.”

The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

### **Gospel Reading – Luke 2:41-52 – Roman Missal – Cycle C**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

- Glory to you O Lord

Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they re-

- [56] Catechism of the Catholic Church 517
- [57] Catechism of the Catholic Church 532
- [58] Catechism of the Catholic Church 531
- [59] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 384
- [60] Divine Intimacy pg. 124
- [61] The Church’s Year, pg. 72
- [62] The Church’s Year pg. 72
- [63] Divine Intimacy pg. 124-125
- [64] Divine Intimacy pg. 124
- [65] John 15:15
- [66] J. Escriva, Christ is passing by, 17
- [67] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1778
- [68] The Catholic Catechism pg. 291
- [69] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 126
- [70] The Catholic Catechism pg. 291-292
- [71] The Catholic Catechism pg. 292
- [72] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1790
- [73] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1791
- [74] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1792
- [75] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 126
- [76] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1784
- [77] Psalm 119:105
- [78] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1785
- [79] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1788-89
- [80] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1802
- [81] Urbandictionary.com
- [82] Baltimore Catechism; Question 704
- [83] The Catholic Catechism pg. 293
- [84] Cycle A – Gospel Reading
- [85] Matthew 2:13
- [86] Matthew 2:14
- [87] New American Bible Notes pg. 1064
- [88] Matthew 2:15
- [89] New American Bible Notes pg. 1064
- [90] Matthew 4:1-2
- [91] Catholic Dictionary pg. 466
- [92] Catholic Dictionary pg. 466
- [93] Constitution Declaring St. Ignatius Patron of All Spiritual Exercises, July 25, 1922
- [94] Matthew 11:28-30

**“The End” Notes**

- [1] Divine Intimacy Vol. 1, pg. 96
- [2] Ibid, pg. 95
- [3] In conversation with God pg. 229
- [4] Divine Intimacy Vol. 1, pg. 95
- [5] Magnificat pg. 397
- [6] Jose Escriva, Christ is passing by, 148
- [7] Divine Intimacy Vol. 1, pg. 96
- [8] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2207
- [9] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2205
- [10] Lumen Gentium 11
- [11] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2207
- [12] Catechism of The Catholic Church 2205
- [13] Fr. John Hardon, S.J.; Basic Catholic Catechism Course; pg. 12
- [14] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2204
- [15] 1 John 2:16
- [16] Letter to Families
- [17] Divine Intimacy Vol. 1, pg. 96
- [18] Blessed Mother Teresa
- [19] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2207
- [20] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2208
- [21] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2210
- [22] Catechism of the Catholic Church 20111
- [23] Pope John Paul II; Centesimus Annus, 39
- [24] In conversation with God pg. 230
- [25] Letter to Families
- [26] Acts 2:42
- [27] Gravissimum Educationis 3
- [28] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2226
- [29] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris consortio, 60
- [30] Servant of God Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C
- [31] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2223
- [32] Sirach 30:1-2
- [33] Ephesians 6:4
- [34] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2224
- [35] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2229
- [36] Ephesians 3:14
- [37] Sirach 7:27-28
- [38] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2217
- [39] Catechism of the Catholic Church 2232
- [40] Matthew 10:37
- [41] Matthew 10:37
- [42] Catechism of the Catholic Church 534
- [43] Navarre Bible Commentaries, St. Luke, pg. 60
- [44] Goffine, The Church's Year, pg. 71
- [45] Ibid
- [46] Goffine, The Church's Year, pg. 71
- [47] Navarre Bible Commentaries, St. Luke, pg. 59
- [48] Goffine, The Church's Year, pg. 71
- [49] Ibid
- [50] Navarre Commentary, St. Luke, pg. 61
- [51] John 2:5
- [52] Catechism of the Catholic Church 471)
- [53] Catechism of the Catholic Church 472)
- [54] Divine Intimacy pg. 124
- [55] J. Escriva, Christ is passing by, 17

turned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

**Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings**

*Excerpt from Pope Paul VI*

Second, we learn about family life. May Nazareth serve as a model of what the family should be. May it show us the family's holy and enduring character and exemplifying its basic function in society: a community of love and sharing, beautiful for the problems it poses and the rewards it brings; in sum, the perfect setting for rearing children – and for this there is no substitute.

Finally, in Nazareth, the home of a craftsman's son, we learn about work and the discipline it entails. I would especially like to recognize its value – demanding yet redeeming – and to give it proper respect. I would remind everyone that work has its own dignity. On the other hand, it is not an end in itself. Its value and free character, however, derive not only from its place in the economic system, as they say, but rather from the purpose it serves.

So the Word was made manifest, as Saint John declares when, summing up all the sayings of the prophets, he announces that this is the Word through whom the whole universe was made. He says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Through him all things came into being; not one thing was created without him.* And further on he adds: *The world was made through him, and yet the world did not know him. He entered his own creation, and his own did not receive him.*

**Responsory – Office of Readings**

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for that is your duty;  
- Honor your father and mother.

Jesus returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth; there he lived and was obedient to them.  
- Honor your father and mother.

**The Holy Family: The Perfect Example for Families and Marriages – Lesson and Discussion**

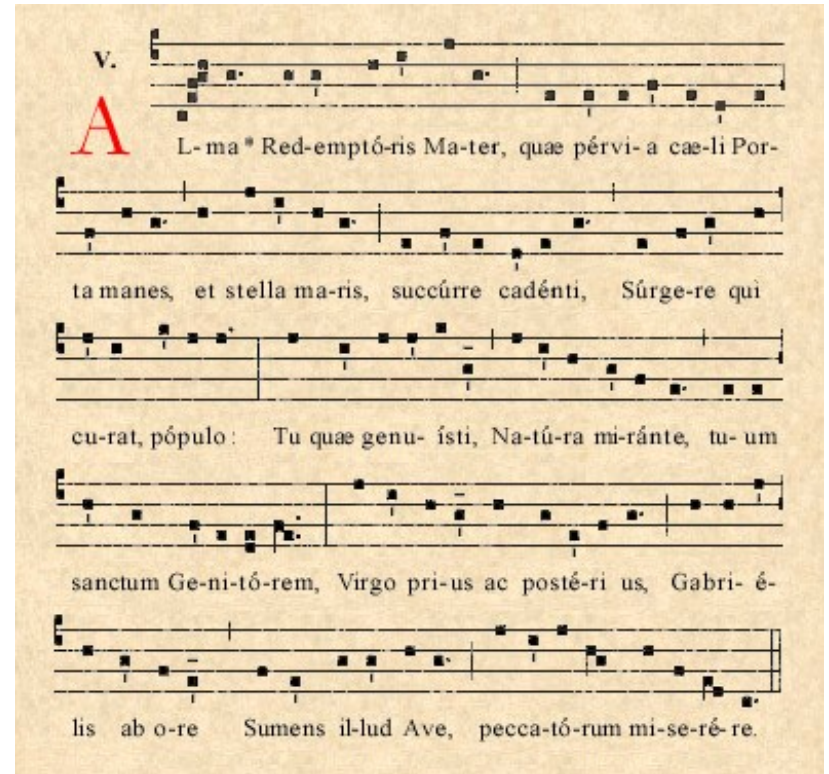
In all three readings today, we see the importance of family. The family is the center of our lives. It is our beginning, youth, and adulthood, a place in which vocations are nourished, and what we leave behind when we pass from this world. God, knowing the importance and power the family has, sent his only begotten Son into this world to be born and raised in a family. Today, as we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family, we acknowledge that in Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, we have the perfect model for our own families.

“The Church holds up the Holy Family as the model for every Christian family. First of all because the supremacy of God is strongly acknowledged: in the house of Nazareth God is always first, everything is subordinated to him: nothing outside his will is ever desired or done. Suffering is embraced in a deep spirit of faith because in every event they see the fulfillment of a divine plan painful vicissitudes do not trouble their peace precisely because everything is looked at in God’s light, because Jesus is the center of their affections, and because Mary and Joseph gravitate around him, forgetful of themselves and wholly involved in his mission.”[1]

**Who is the Holy Family?** The Holy Family includes Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

**What does God show us through the Holy Family?** God shows us many things, but probably the most important and the most incredible is that God not only wanted to dwell with us, He wanted to be a part of a family just like us. “The feast of the Holy Family... makes it clear that when the Son of God came into the world, he wanted to be part of a family group like every other man...When he became man, he wanted to be like all other men: to have a country and an earthly family: a family so simple and

**Marian Antiphon – Divine Office (Sunday Compline)**



**Alma Redemptoris Mater (English Translation)**

Loving mother of the Redeemer, open door to heaven and star of the sea, come quickly to the aid of thy people, fallen indeed but striving to stand again. To nature’s astonishment thou wert the mother of thy holy Creator without ceasing to be a virgin, and heard from Gabriel that greeting: “Hail.” Have pity on us sinners.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.  
R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made know by the message of an angel may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

Look upon my family in Your loving kindness, preserve us from danger, give us help in time of need, and grant us the grace to persevere to the end in imitation of Your holy Family, so that having revered You and loved You faithfully on earth, we may praise You eternally in heaven.

Mary, dearest Mother, to your intercession we have recourse, knowing that your Divine Son will hear your prayers. Glorious patriarch, Saint Joseph, help us by your powerful prayers and offer our prayers to Jesus through Mary's hands. Amen.

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus Christ, being subject to Mary and Joseph, You sanctified family life by Your beautiful virtues. Grant that we, with the help of Mary and Joseph, may be taught by the example of Your holy Family, and may after death enjoy its everlasting companionship.

Lord Jesus, help us ever to follow the example of Your holy Family, that in the hour of our death Your glorious Virgin Mother together with Saint Joseph may come to meet us, and we may be worthy to be received by You into the everlasting joys of heaven. You live and reign forever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

humble as not to be distinguishable exteriorly in any way from other Jewish families.”[2]

**How is the Holy Family different from other families?** The Holy Family is different because it included the only perfect human who ever lived (Mary) and the Son of God, Jesus, fully God and fully man. Jesus's first sanctification was a home.[3]

**How is the Holy Family the perfect example for families?**

While the Holy Family was in many ways like any other family, they also faced troubles and tribulations unlike any other family. “In the spirit the holy pair will embrace all the tribulations of their never easy life: the discomforts of the sudden flight to Egypt, the uncertainty attendant on settling in a strange country, the fatigues of hard work, the privation of a life of poverty, and later the anguish of losing their Son on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.”[4] Mary and Joseph lived with perfect faith and obedience to God's will. Pope Benedict XVI said, “The family is the privileged setting where every person learns to give and receive love...”[5] The Holy Family had God himself, Love Incarnate in their presence. By their humility and obedience, they show us how to obtain that perfect love.

**What did the Holy Family do?** Their family life was much like ours. St. Joseph was the head of the house, and was the provider for the home, while Mary raised Jesus. By this, “Mary sanctifies the ordinary everyday things - what some people wrongly regard as unimportant and insignificant: everyday work, looking after those closest to you, visits to friends and relatives.”[6]

**What do we learn from the Holy Family?** “If the family is not founded on Christian love, it is very difficult for it to persevere in harmony and unity of heart. Every difficulty can be overcome and accepted when we love each other, but everything becomes an enormous burden when mutual love cools. And the only love which lasts, in spite of all the differences that are possible even in a family, is the love founded on the love of God.”[7]

Tradition tells us that Saint Joseph died prior to Jesus, with both Our Lord and Lady at his side. This was the first death the Holy Family encountered. The second was the death of Jesus, in which Mother and Child, Mary and Jesus were physically separated from each other and suffered great loss. The Holy Family and our own families can only deal with such loss and difficulties through Christian love.

**MOVIE – *The Incredibles*, Dinner Scene - POP CULTURE CONNECTION 1:18**

[http://youtu.be/1CBeYt\\_LL0k](http://youtu.be/1CBeYt_LL0k)

The craziness of family life can only come to peace with the virtue of Christian love, called Charity. There are many times that we might not “feel” like loving our family. Charity is to love another for the good of that person, but there are times like in this movie clip that we don’t want to do so. Charity also entails loving others out of love for God. We can always act in love for God, regardless of our feelings or mood toward a certain thing/person. We can love our family out of love for God, and in this charity, love of God helps us to persevere in faith and dignity.

**Family: The Original Cell – Lesson and Discussion**

As we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family let us look at what a family is, what a family does, and what a family is created for. The following questions are always important: What are you? What do you do? What are you created for? These questions in regards to family life are answered in light of the Blessed Trinity.

**What does the family do?** The family is “the original cell of social life”[8], “a sign and image of communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”[9], and is a “domestic church”.[10] The family life initiates us into a life in society.[11] More importantly, the family reflects the Father’s work of creation and partakes in giving and receiving love from God the Father. “...in the procreation and education of children it [the family] reflects the Father’s work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task.”[12] This evangelizing and missionary task is the way that the family imitates the Holy Spirit.

The family imitates the Trinity, which is the perfect community of love. Think of each person of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Father creates. **How does our family create?**

The Son prays and sacrifices. **How does our family pray and sacrifice?**

The Holy Spirit reaches out to the world being a witness to truth and evangelizing. **How does our family reach out, witnessing and evangelizing to others?**

**Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Novena to The Holy Family**

*This novena is most appropriately begun nine days before December 28, the feast of the Holy Family. It is also fitting to pray it during the month of February, which is consecrated to the Holy Family.*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

**Novena Prayer:**

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of loving Holy Church as I should, above every earthly thing, and of ever showing my love by deeds.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of openly professing as I should, with courage and without human respect, the faith that I received as your gift in holy Baptism.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of sharing as I should in the defense and propagation of the Faith when duty calls, whether by word or by the sacrifice of my possessions and my life.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of loving my family and others in mutual charity as I should, and establish us in perfect harmony of thought, will, and action, under the rule and guidance of the shepherds of the Church.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless me and grant me the grace of conforming my life fully as I should to the commandments of God’s law and those of His Holy Church, so as to live always in that charity which they set forth.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I ask in particular this special favor: (Mention your favor).

**Dedication of One’s Family:**

Most loving Jesus, by Your sublime and beautiful virtues of humility, obedience, poverty, modesty, charity, patience, and gentleness, You blessed with peace and happiness the family which You chose on earth. In Your mercy look upon my family. We belong to You, for we have received Your many blessings over many years and we entrust ourselves to Your loving care.



**and looked at the “big picture” the outcome could have been better?**

### **Hitler’s invasion of Russia**

#### **VIDEO - Hitler invades Russia - POP CULTURE CONNECTION**

**4:34** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Lix1G5Gspg>

Many people are unfamiliar with the extent of Russia’s involvement in fighting the Nazi regime. In 1941, Hitler controlled all of Europe (except England) and most of North Africa and decided to invade Russia and defeat them. Hitler should have learned from Napoleon’s failure in Russia. Although Hitler’s army was initially successful, they eventually lost momentum and were ultimately pushed back. The invasion cost Hitler much of his army and ultimately the War. In total, twelve to fifteen million soldiers’ lives were lost, not to mention the millions of civilians who died. Hitler was so determined to conquer Russia, and ultimately the whole world he lost sight of the big picture, and refused to retreat. He wanted so badly to gain the whole world that he was willing to lose his soul. **When have we wanted something so bad we were willing to give up anything for it?**

**Why do we need to “retreat” sometimes?** We need to fall back in order to gain strength. We are in constant battle with the Devil, the world, and the flesh. We must take time to recharge ourselves, and refocus on the importance of God.

**How does a “retreat” or “falling back” help us?** By falling back we realize that we are weak without God. When we go into battle alone we will be crushed. When we attempt to face the world alone, we can be bogged down by the weight of world. **Are we carrying too much on our own?** Going on retreat helps us to remember we can do nothing without God. We need to listen to the words of Christ, and follow his command when he says, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give your rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”[94]

**How far back do we have to “retreat” spiritually?** As far back as it takes us to be connected with God. We should take time out of our lives each year to go on retreat and regain strength, regain focus, and come in focus with what God wants of us.

**Think about your family: how do different members of your family imitate the Holy Trinity?** Your parents sacrifice like Christ to provide and nurture the family, many times without any thanks. Children bring life and creativity to the family, and by creating joy, imitate the Father, Creator of all. Your family as a whole may welcome others into your home, thus evangelizing like the Holy Spirit. The presence of your family in the grocery store, Mass, and other public places is a witness. The family as a whole acts as a missionary going out into the world each day. The family is perhaps the most perfect model of the Holy Trinity. There are different persons in the family, with different roles, but yet they are one family. The love shared between the two persons, mother and father, is so great that the love itself gives life. The love shared between Father and Son is so great that it is another person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

**What are all the things our families shares with each other? How can we share more?**

**What are the ways our family is selfless? How can we be more selfless?**

“The mystery of the Trinity teaches us the meaning of selfless charity because there is a constant and perfect sharing of the divine nature among the three Persons in God. The love of the Father for the Son and the Son from the Father is so perfect that within the very Godhead there comes forth the Holy Spirit as the perfect expression of love. The Trinity helps us understand Christ’s command to love one another by freely giving ourselves as persons, in order to benefit other persons and thus help in the formation on earth of something like the triune heavenly community in God.”[13] We cannot give up on our family; we must set the standard high. Our goal is to sacrifice, share, and practice charity as the Holy Trinity does, and we have the perfect model in the Holy Family of Nazareth.

**Can our family ever become more important than God?**

First, let us preface by saying the family is and should always be autonomous and given the upmost respect. The family is the original cell of society and is the most important element in society, but it is still subservient to Christ and His Church. We must remember that while the family is the image of the Blessed Trinity, it is not the Blessed Trinity. There is a temptation to place our family and sometimes even friends before and over Christ and His Church. An example of this is to neglect our obligation to Mass when our child may have a sports game. Another is not

praying or missing Mass because we have to work to provide for our family. While working to provide for our family is important, it should never take the place of going to Mass or serving our God. To place family before God is idolatry. There is a saying, “food, family, and faith”, but this saying, rightly ordered should read “faith, family, and food”. Our family is primarily fostered and practiced within family life and then it spreads to the community in the form of culture a great part of this is food, music, art, etc.

**MUSIC – Fr. Stan Fortuna “F.A.M.I.L.Y”- POP CULTURE CONNECTION 4:32** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkMGr2MFfUM>

Fr. Stan Fortuna is a priest and religious in the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. With a passion for music and the priesthood, he travels around the world to evangelize Catholics. In this song, he summarizes the essence of this lesson and what it means to be a family.

**How is the family a church?** The family is the domestic church because it should be a community of faith, hope, and charity. [14] It is the setting where we first learn our Christian faith, we receive the sacraments of initiation, we first learn to pray, and so much more.

**Why has the family been attacked? Why is the family important?** Families are cherished and respected because they are the shadow or image of the Blessed Trinity, which is most cherished and respected. This also explains why families are attacked. There are many families in society that do not love, adore, trust, or believe in the Blessed Trinity. If they do not love, adore, trust, or believe in the Blessed Trinity, they will not respect the family, which imitates and mirrors the Blessed Trinity.

St. Angela Merici said, “Disorder in society is a result of disorder in the family”. The Devil knows the family is vitally important to society. This is why he attacks the family because the breakdown of the family leads to the breakdown/weakening of morals and society. Blessed John Paul the Great witnessed to this breakdown, and declared the year 1994 “The Year of the Family”. In a letter to families, John Paul the Great warns of the new “contemporary” family. He wrote, “The contemporary family, like families in every age, is searching for ‘fairest love’. A love which is not ‘fairest’, but reduced only to the satisfaction of concupis-

The Church officially introduced retreats during the Counter-Reformation led by St. Ignatius of Loyola. Today, priests and religious are required to go on retreat for a certain amount of days every year for their spiritual growth.[92]

**What should a retreat do for us?** As Pope Pius XI said that retreats were “where persons withdraw for a month, or for eight days, or for fewer, to put themselves into training for the perfect Christian life, may come into being and flourish everywhere more numerously”[93] Retreats are necessary for the perfect Christian life. To avoid retreats or to think that we don’t need a retreat may stem from pride, thinking that we are already “perfect” or good enough, or indicate a presumption that we are already going to Heaven and not in need of perfecting. There are numerous examples throughout history of times when pride has led to physical devastation, but spiritual pride and unwillingness to retreat in our lives can have even greater devastation—the destruction of our souls.

*(You can use one, two, or all three of these examples.)*

#### **Napoleon’s invasion of Russia**

**VIDEO - Napoleon and Russia - POP CULTURE CONNECTION 6:01** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=458Gw-Xw0u0>  
Many people know that in the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon gave his final surrender and was ultimately defeated. Less commonly known though, is that his invasion of Russia turned the tide against him. He wanted to capture Moscow so badly, he lost sight of his needs of his army. **When have we lost sight of ourselves and gave up too much for something that we wanted so badly? When we got it was it worth it? Did it keep us satisfied forever?**

#### **Robert E. Lee at Gettysburg**

**VIDEO - Gettysburg Day 1 - POP CULTURE CONNECTION 4:28** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hpn-puqnKk>  
In the most well known battle of the Civil War, Gettysburg, the first day set up the total outcome of the battle. Lee’s men had made the Union soldiers retreat back on stronger defenses of Culp’s Hill. The video shows that instead of “retreating” from the area and moving further south to gain the upper hand and have full control, Lee was determined to stay and beat the Union there. **When have we been too prideful in our decisions? Think of a situation in which if you had taken a step back**

Did I pray for others today?  
 Have I written any letters today?  
 Have I controlled my emotions when someone irritated me?  
 Have I performed any sacrifice today for someone?

**Retreat: why it can be a good thing –Lesson and Discussion]  
 [84**

*“departed for Egypt”*

In today’s Gospel reading, St. Joseph flees Palestine for Egypt. When we think of people fleeing or retreating we think of individuals or people as scared, too weak to fight back, or simply lacking in courage. Whether there is a valid reason or not, we associate retreating with weakness and ultimately defeat. However, while we may retreat because we are weak, it doesn’t necessarily mean ultimate defeat. When we take the time to fall back, reposition, and rest, we can return stronger than ever to combat Satan.

**Why did Joseph take his family to Egypt? Why is this important?** St. Joseph left for Egypt because the Angel warned him in a dream to “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.”[85] St. Joseph shows his amazing faith in God by taking his family straight to Egypt[86] without a hint of hesitation or questioning. **If God were to ask you to move away immediately, would you?**

Egypt was a traditional place of refuge for people fleeing from danger in the Palestine area.[87] Matthew includes it in his Gospel to show the fulfillment of the Old Testament, “Out of Egypt I called my son”[88], from Hosea 11:1. During the Exodus, God’s chosen people, Israel, were called out of Egypt, and like Israel, Jesus would be called out of Egypt too when King Herod died. [89]

**What is the difference between retreating and a retreat?** A retreat is a withdrawal for a certain amount of time from our usual places, and to be secluded with God in prayer, meditation, and self-examination in order to make good holy decisions in our spiritual life. Like Jesus retreating in the desert for forty days [90], we too must take time out of our lives to refocus on what God wants of us.[91]

cence[15], or to a man's and a woman's mutual ‘use’ of each other, makes persons slaves to their weaknesses.

**Do certain modern "cultural agendas" lead to this enslavement?** “There are agendas which ‘play’ on man's weaknesses, and thus make him increasingly weak and defenseless.”[16]

One way in which a cultural agenda has enslaved us is the idea that we should love “things” and accumulate a lot of “stuff”. Commercials provoke us to want and love material goods. Love by nature must be given freely and it must be able to be received. We cannot love objects because objects are unable to receive love. For example a hamburger or a car cannot receive love. Only a person can receive love. However, another modern idea is that we should use people for pleasure, for personal gain, or to get what we want, and when we reduce a person to an “object” by using others as “objects”, love is not possible.

**[See Link to Liturgy Marriage Series]**

**TV – ABC’s “Modern Family”- POP CULTURE CONNECTION**

**3:30** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5uuMr1YEyE>  
 The family is the rock of society and marriage is the rock of family. Marriages and families are based on four pillars. A marriage is to be exclusive, permanent, open to life and heterosexual. “When the life of a family is inspired by such principles, its whole life-style is well ordered: obedience to God and his laws each other, and consequently to understand each other, and to love and bring up their children with respect for God’s claims upon them.”[17] These pillars are chiseled away and completely knocked down by what is called the so-called “modern family”. The traditional family that prays together, sacrifices for each other, and shows charity is mocked. **What does this trailer of an ABC sitcom say about family life in America and how family is being attacked?**

**How is exclusivity attacked?** Members of families do not want to be with each other, but would rather spend countless hours entertaining themselves or being engrossed in their iPhones, laptops, or game systems, being with friends, and avoiding family. Adultery attacks the exclusiveness of marriage.

**How is permanence attacked?** Divorce causes instability and many times sets up a repeat cycle of another marriage and divorce. The love between husband and wife, parent and child,

and siblings needs stability to grow. Loving selflessness for father, mother, and child also needs stability to grow. Plants need a solid base and soil to grow. Permanence within family life allows each person of the family to grow in holiness and thus reach God's will for their life.

**How is openness to life attacked?** Many families are only open to children on their terms, and based on how children will affect their lifestyle. Many say they don't have time or money for children. "I think the world today is upside down. Everybody seems to be in such a terrible rush, anxious for greater development and greater riches and so on. There is much suffering because there is so very little love in homes and in family life. We have no time for our children, we have no time for each other; there is no time to enjoy each other. In the home begins the disruption of the peace of the world." [18] We have to learn that while we do need to feed and clothe our children, we don't have to get them the latest fashions, the latest iPhone, or over-indulge them. We need to give them something that will carry on for the rest of their lives, their Catholic faith. The openness to life has greatly been opposed due to the contraceptive mentality that has risen in our society. When a couple decides to contracept, they are blocking life.

**How is heterosexuality attacked?** Homosexual marriage is one of the biggest agendas in modern society. Marriage, the most basic unit in society, an exclusive and permanent relationship between one man and one woman, is being attacked to the point that people want to redefine the very word "marriage".

There is a saying, "It takes a village to raise a child". This quote is sometimes used in such a way that it releases the family of its first and primary obligation and responsibility as caregiver of its children. The quote is stating that, the primary people to raising a child is not the mother and family but instead several different people. **How does the Church help families to fight against these cultural attacks?** The Catechism states that "the family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society." [19] The Church advocates that a family should raise its members to be able to take care of those who need help when other families are in need of help. [20]

### Hope

Do I immediately say a short prayer when I find myself getting discouraged?  
Do I daily say a short act of hope?  
Do I dwell on my worries instead of dismissing them from my mind?  
Do I fail in the virtue of hope by my attachment to the things of this world?  
Do I try to see God's providence in everything that "happens" in my life?  
Do I try to see everything from the viewpoint of eternity?  
Am I confident that, with God's grace, I will be saved?  
Do I allow myself to worry about my past life and thus weaken my hope in God's mercy?  
Do I try to combine every fully deliberate action with at least a momentary prayer for divine help?  
How often today have I complained, even internally?

### Charity

Have I told God today that I love Him?  
Do I tell Jesus that I love Him with my whole heart?  
Do I take the occasion to tell God that I love Him whenever I experience something I naturally dislike?  
Have I capitalized on the difficulties today to tell God that I love Him just because He sent me the trial or misunderstanding?  
Do I see God's love for me in allowing me to prove my love for Him in the crosses He sent me today?  
Have I seen God's grace to prove my love for Him in every person whom I met today?  
Have I failed in charity by speaking unkindly about others?  
Have I dwelt on what I considered someone's unkindness toward me today?  
Is there someone that I consciously avoid because I dislike the person?  
Did I try to carry on a conversation today with someone who is difficult to talk to?  
Have I been stubborn in asserting my own will?  
How thoughtful have I been today in doing some small favor for someone?  
Have I allowed my mood to prevent me from being thoughtful of others today?  
Am I given to dwelling on other people's weaknesses or faults?  
Have I been cheerful today in my dealings with others?  
Do I control my uncharitable thoughts as soon as they arise in my mind?

We are in danger when we do not educate our conscience, because we will not know what is right or wrong, good or bad. Our consciences are not infallible, but rather require development and careful training in God's law. When we ignore or go against our consciences, they become weak. Like any alarm we can press the snooze button or worse, the alarm can become muted, and can become so dulled that not even a criminal knows they are wrong.[83]

**Activity - Examination of Conscience -**

Catholics should do an Examination of Conscience not only right before they go to Confession, but daily. During Night Prayer, we are to take a brief time and think of our day when we might have sinned against God. Examining our consciences helps us grow to know ourselves better in what we do, don't do, and what we know is right, wrong, good, and bad.

Please see the *Family Prayer Book* on the main page online of this packet. There are three examination of conscience in the book—two for adults, one for children.

There are many different kinds of examinations. Most follow the Ten Commandments. The one provided is a little different, and can be used in a more daily setting and is based on the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

**Faith**

Do I make an honest effort to grow in the virtue of faith by daily mental prayer on the mysteries of the faith as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ?

Do I make at least a short act of faith every day?

Do I pray daily for an increase of faith?

Do I ever tempt God by relying on my own strength to cope with the trials in my life?

Do I unnecessarily read or listen to those who oppose or belittle what I know are truths of my Catholic faith?

What have I done today to externally profess my faith?

Have I allowed human respect to keep me from giving expression to my faith?

Do I make a serious effort to resolve difficulties that may arise about my faith?

Do I ever defend my faith, prudently and charitably, when someone says something contrary to what I know is to be believed?

Have I helped someone overcome a difficulty against the faith?

The Church also seeks out the support to strengthen marriage and family through civil authority. As it states, "Civil authority should consider it a grave duty 'to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity.'"[21] This means the government has a duty to protect the family, the right to a family, and the practice of one's faith in the family, protect the health and security of one's family.[22]

**How do we sanctify our families?** To sanctify literally means to "make holy". It is within the family that each life should be made holy. Unfortunately, today's families do not always make holiness a priority, or even a fleeting thought. In some ways, holiness can even be damaged, destroyed, and unwelcome within the family. "It is necessary to go back to seeing the family as the sanctuary of life. The family is indeed sacred: it is the place in which life, the gift of God can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life"[23]

We sanctify our families when we connect to the Holy Family which all of us are connected to the one true God. Husband and wife should live as Mary and Joseph where a holy affection, a true selflessness only wanting and desiring each other's happiness.[24] Like Mary and Joseph's home, Jesus was the center of their home.

**Is our home like this? Is Jesus the center of our family? Do we live only for ourselves or for our family members?**

"Only if the truth about freedom and the communion of persons in marriage and in the family can regain its splendor, will the building of the civilization of love truly begin and will it then be possible to speak concretely—as the Council did—about "promoting the dignity of marriage and the family".[25]

**TV AD - Family Game Night - POP CULTURE CONNECTION 0:32** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V59e68fOc5k>

**VIDEO - Let's fix dinner family together- POP CULTURE CONNECTION 1:39** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjbKbM8u7Xo>

When we come together as a family for simple pleasure like a family game night or dinner at the kitchen table, we can bring Christ to one another right in our own households.

**How often do we eat dinner together as a family? How often as a family, do we do activities together? If the answer is “hardly at all”, what is something I can do to bring our family closer?**

The family dinner table is a place that can bring life to simple traditions that give stability and normalcy in our chaotic and unstable world. One easy tradition to start is simply sharing what happened in your day. Family members can also take turns cooking the meal or cleaning up after dinner, which would nourish a spirit of sacrifice and charity. Families can also pray together before and after meals. Traditions take hold when they have a central gathering point and time, making mealtime the perfect place!

A dinnertime tradition of the Franciscan Friars of Renewal is to have one member of the community read the Gospel passage for the next day, which helps everyone focus on Christ, imitate Christ, and prepare to embrace the reading the next day when they listen and mediate on the reading at Mass. We must begin to build tradition, especially Catholic tradition and culture within the family. After all, the family is the domestic Church. If the local Church, the parish, never gathered together, they would never be able to practice and live the Catholic traditions and cultures that have been handed down from the time of the Apostles.

The online main page of this packet contains a document called the *Family Prayer Book*. The family, since it is the domestic Church, should imitate the Church. The Church from the beginning as we see in the Acts of the Apostles did four things: those who were baptized “devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the community, to the breaking of the bread, and to prayer.”[26] The family then should:

1. Be devoted to the teachings of the Apostles, which are the teachings of the Church. Both parents and children should be in catechism (instruction) classes at their local parish or within group approved by the parish or diocese. The teachings of the Church should be taught and discussed often during the day and week. Reading and listening to spiritual lessons should be a part of family life. The family can make a commitment to read

God’s law (revealed law) does not shine on our consciences, we will be without necessary formation that allows us to think and act according to God’s will and law.

“The education of the conscience is a lifelong task”. [76] Besides the teaching of the Church, our consciences are formed by the Word of God which is the light of our path [77], practice in our faith and prayer life, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the witness or advice of others, and examination of our consciences (preferably in front of a Crucifix). [78] We are the clay and God is the Potter. As in all things, we are formed by repetitive actions, so by repeating our liturgy, prayers, and beliefs, and daily living out virtues, we are formed into what God wills us to be.

“To know right from wrong, we should look to interpreting the data, seeking the advice of reliable people, and the help of the Holy Spirit. There are some things rules of thumb when deciding what applies in every case: One may never do evil so that good may result from it The Gold Rule: ‘Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.’ Charity always proceeds by way of respect for one’s neighbor and his conscience: ‘Thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience...you sin against Christ.’ Therefore “it is right not to...do anything that makes your brother stumble.” [79]

Thus, we must assimilate our consciences in faith and prayer and put it into practice in order to form our moral consciences. [80]

**CARTOON “Spidey Sense” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION**  
**0:23**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOa\\_ddYRTCE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOa_ddYRTCE)

**Why do we need to form our consciences?**

Our consciences are like internal alarm clocks. When our intellects and knowledge informs us that something is wrong or bad, our consciences should sound off to warn us of the danger. This is like a “Spidey sense” which is, “derived from the comic book superhero Spiderman, it is generally used to mean a vague but strong sense of something being wrong, dangerous, suspicious, a security situation.” [81] Our consciences have this sense that is given by God. This sense is strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gift of counsel above all the others “warns us of the deceits of the devil, and of the dangers to salvation.” [82]

**TURE CONNECTION - 2:38**

<http://youtu.be/5abaO1-e58c>

Although we can judge actions we must look at all the details or we can make the wrong judgment as is seen in these clips.

**Should we act when conscience tells us something is right or wrong?**

Yes, we are obligated to not only act on but also obey. In fact, it is crucial to follow our consciences. We must follow our conscience because it's the closest norm we have to know what is right and what is wrong.[71] **What if we act against our consciences?** If we deliberately act against our consciences, we would condemn ourselves.[72]

**What should we do if we are in doubt?** We are to refrain from any action if we are unsure or have doubt in regards to the morality of the action. However, we must not stay in doubt or ignorance. If someone was breaking a rule of the road, and was pulled over by a police officer, the person could say, "but officer, I didn't know the rule" The officer could reply, "It is your job to know the rule". If we are going to drive, it is our responsibility to know the rules of the road. In the same way to live our Catholic faith to the full, to truly live with a good conscience, it is our obligation to know the law, both natural law and moral law. We must take action to find out what is true and good. If we don't, then we are culpable for the evil we commit.[73]

If we fail to educate ourselves in the prayers, beliefs, and morals of the Church, we can fall in the following ways: "Ignorance of Christ and his Gospel, bad example given by others, enslavement to one's passions, assertion of a mistaken notion, rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching, lack of conversion and of charity."[74] A study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is crucial to love and knowledge of the prayers, beliefs, and morals of Christ and His Church.

**How do we form our consciences? How can we know right from wrong?**

Our consciences are formed by principles, "known to the mind, either from the light of natural reason reflecting on the data of creation, or from divine faith responding to God's supernatural revelation."[75] In other words, our consciences are formed by the natural reason we are all born with and God's revelation through His Church. Since Christ founded the Church and is infallible in regards to faith and morals, we can take great solace in relying on Her wisdom and guidance in forming our consciences. If the light of natural reason (natural law) and

the Saint of the Day out loud at either breakfast of dinner. The family can also make a commitment to read the Gospel for that day or in preparation of the next day.

2. Be devoted to the community. The first community is the family. Families should do things in common so as to better unite, bond, discover themselves, and practice patience and charity toward each other. The family should also be a part of the parish community, neighborhood community, and larger community, as they are able.

3. Be devoted to the breaking of the Bread. Attendance at Mass is essential to the life of the family and should be the highlight of each week. If possible, attend Daily Mass as a family or at the least individual members. It is only at the Mass that the family can receive the grace necessary to perform its duties.

4. Be devoted to prayer. There are many ways a family can pray. What's important, though, is that the family be devoted to prayer, and prays in common. Here are a few ideas using the *Family Prayer Book*. The family can choose 4-5 prayers to say each day in the morning or evening. . If said in the morning these could be the Morning Offering (#19), Angel of God (#5), St. Michael Prayer (#6) and one chosen each day by a different family member. It is important to pick a time and stick with it. This time might be before everyone leaves in the morning or when everyone gets home in the evening. Prayers can also be said at every meal and when the family is in the car before leaving for a destination. The family table and vehicle are great times because everyone is in close quarters and are usually focused.

Making a commitment to the teachings of Christ and His Church, community, liturgy, and prayer will keep the family holy. A holy family has a much better chance of being a happy family, since it is holiness that ultimately makes us happy.

**Family: Our duties as parents and children – Lesson and Discussion**

**What is the state of familiar roles today?** In today's culture, the family is not only weakened by an attack on the exclusivity, permanence, and morality of marriage, but also in shifting roles in the family. Instead parental authority and children's respect of mother and father, we more often see parents trying to be

children’s “buddies” and the children acting as authority figure and families usurping traditional familial roles.

**What are the duties of the parents?** The first and primary role of a parent is to give children moral and spiritual formation. “The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.”[27] This education should begin in the earliest years, and shown not only in words, but also in action—how spouses treat each other and their children.[28] Parents should reflect on the words of Pope John Paul the Great: **“Do you teach your children the Christian prayers? Do you prepare them, in conjunction with the priests, for the sacraments that they receive when they are young – Confession, Communion and Confirmation? Do you encourage them, when they are sick, to think of Christ suffering, to invoke the aid of the Blessed Virgin and the saints? Do you say the family Rosary together...? Do you pray with your children, with the whole domestic community, at least sometimes?** Your example of honesty in thought and action, joined to some common prayer, is a lesson for life and an act of worship of singular value. In this way you bring peace to your homes: Pax huic domui. Remember, it is thus that you build up the Church.”[29] Father Peyton’s famous phrase “the family that prays together, stays together”[30] is very true. It requires fortitude from the parents to make time to pray and teach the prayers of our faith to their children. Another grave responsibility for the parents is to create a home that is suitable for them and their children.

**What should the household be like?** The home should be of “tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule”[31]

**What does the Church say about disciplining a child?** First and foremost, parents should be paragons of virtue for their children. Remember, with children, it’s often “monkey see monkey do”. Children mirror the actions of the parents. In the person of Jesus Christ we see the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father, and in the same way, parents see their own virtues or vices in their children. If the parents are living a life of sin, it is hard for the child to be expected to live a life of righteousness.

Scripture tells us, “He who loves his son will not spare the rod... He who disciplines his son will profit by him.”[32] Also, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the

St. Joseph, in deciding what was best for his family, had to have had a well-formed conscience. Think for moment of the difficult decisions and situations he faced. He was told that his betrothed, Mary, conceived the Messiah immaculately. . An angel in a dream told him to take his brand new family hundreds of miles to Egypt to escape Herod. Soon after, he obeyed another angel in another dream to move back to Nazareth, even though he feared the new ruler, who had slaughtered the Holy Innocents. His conscience had to guide him in making the right choices for himself and his family.

**What is a conscience?** The Catechism states, “Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed.”[67], or as St. Thomas Aquinas put it simply, “conscience is the mind of man passing moral judgment.”[68]

**Who has a conscience?** All of us! Our conscience should not be based on feelings, emotions, or our will, but as the Catechism states, on intellect and reason. An action is right or wrong based on objective principles, not because we want it that way or feel it should another way.[69] If our consciences were strictly emotional, then we would fall into relativism, where one person’s preference is no better than anyone else’s. Since our consciences use intellect, it is our right and duty to pass moral judgments. [70] Truth cannot contradict truth.

**What does it mean to pass judgment?** To pass judgment can mean many things. The world will try and use Scripture to say we are not allowed to pass judgment on others. The judgment Jesus speaks of in Scripture is final judgment of someone’s soul; whether they will end up in Heaven or Hell. However, a person can pass judgment if it is based on someone’s actions and using our intellect and will. There are three things to always consider when we use our intellect and reason. We look at the action, the intention of the person, and the circumstance in which the person is in. Actions can always be judged; an action is either good or evil. What we cannot always judge is the intention of a person and we cannot always know the full circumstance they are in. God is author of all hearts and this is why He is the perfect judge. He not only can judge actions, but He knows in totality each person’s intent and circumstance.

**TV AD - Don't judge too quickly - Ameriquest - POP CUL-**



ders its fulfillment.”[64] For example, if a parent was trying to force their child to be on birth control, the child can in good conscience refuse to take it, or if a coach demands that a teammate miss Mass to play a game, he or she should not listen to them and should fulfill their Sunday obligation to Mass. Although the government says abortion is legal, because we know it is a grave sin, we can peacefully protest it and not adhere to or support the law. However, when our parents tells us to clean our rooms, the local government tells us we must wear a seat belt, or our boss asks us to do extra work for an upcoming project (all morally acceptable requests), we should be obedient.

**How do we remain obedient?** Many people have a difficult time with obedience. Many think that if I am obedient than I am no better than a dog who is obedient to his master. What we must realize we are all obedient to someone or something. For us, we are obedient to God who does not treat us like dogs, but rather with dignity. We are created in His image and likeness. Jesus said to His apostles and says to us, “I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.”[65] If we feel like slaves rather than friends this might be because we are not listening or understanding the words that Jesus has spoken to us. When we know the will of God, then we know what our Master is doing and are no longer slaves but friends and can truly pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

“We have to love God so as to love his will and desire to respond to his calls. They come to us through the duties of our ordinary life – duties of state, profession, work, family, social life, our own and other people’s difficulties, friendship, eagerness to do what is right and just.”[66] We can remain close to Him by offering up our daily struggles for the true love and adoration for God. We must strive to live the life of Christ did as we read in the Gospel—to grow in wisdom and age in order to grow in favor with God and man. We do this by staying close to God, His Church, and our Family. Our obedience to Christ and His Church encompasses our worship at liturgies, morality, and studying/spreading the Church’s teaching.

#### **Forming our conscience – Lesson and Discussion**

*“But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there”*

discipline and instruction of the Lord”.[33] The Church says when needed, it is good to discipline our children in order to teach them to “avoid the compromising and degrading influences which threaten human societies.”[34]

**Can a parent choose their child’s schooling?** Yes. As stated in the Catechism, “parents have the right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions”.[35]

**What are the duties of the child?** Children, too, have duties in the family, and they extend beyond cleaning bedrooms and basic chores. A child’s first and foremost duty is to know that “the divine fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood”[36] and to honor their parents always.

**Why do we have to respect our parents?** We should respect our parents for the simple fact that they brought us into existence. Out of their mutual love in uniting as one, God reciprocates the love back to them in the creation of children. With their love and hard work, they are able to raise us to function in the world around us. Sirach reminds us, “With all your heart honor your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that through your parents you were born; what can you give back to them that equals their gift to you?”[37]

**Do children really have to follow everything their parents say?** As long as a child lives under the roof of their parents house they must honor, follow, and obey their parents. However, if the parents were to ask the child to do something that was morally wrong, then the child may not consent to it.[38] For example, if a parent asked their child to rake the leaves, the child must honor and obey their parents by completing the task. However, if the parents were to skip Mass, and the child is of age and can find their own way to Mass, they must disobey this order and find a way to get to Mass.

**Is the family the most important thing?** While family is extremely important, it is not the absolute. Our first vocation is to follow Jesus Christ. When children grow, they begin to discover their unique vocation. Children must accept their vocation and parents should accept their children’s growth in this vocation. . [39] As Jesus said, “He who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”[40][41]

**[See Link to Liturgy Marriage Series]****Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple – Lesson and Discussion**

*“Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.”*

*This lesson is based on the Cycle C, Gospel Reading*

“The finding of Jesus in the temple is the only event that breaks the silence of the Gospels about the hidden years of Jesus. Here Jesus lets us catch a glimpse of the mystery of his total consecration to a mission that flows from his divine sonship...”[42]

**Why did Jesus go with His parents to the temple in Jerusalem?** Jesus and his relatives travelled to the temple to make the Passover pilgrimage. “Only males aged twelve and upwards were required to make this journey.”[43] A deeper meaning behind it was “Because God commanded that all the male Israelites should appear, three times a year on certain festivals, and offer sacrifice to Him in the temple; Jesus fulfilled this commandment to set us an example that we, according to the will of the holy Catholic Church, should willingly and devoutly be present at the services of the Church on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Neither the distance from the church nor the difficulties of the way should prevent our attendance, since Jesus did not shun a three days’ journey to the temple.”[44] **What are the difficulties or obstacles for the modern family to attend Mass? Should these difficulties and obstacles really keep us from our obligation and opportunity to attend Mass? What can be done to remove these obstacles?**

**Why does the Gospel say “according to the custom of the feast”?** “That we may understand, that like Mary and Joseph, we should be punctual in observing the ecclesiastical festivals and holy usages, and like true Catholics, should observe them. Parents should require their children at an early age to take part in prayer, attend church and school, and see that they conduct themselves quietly and reverently while there. Mary and Joseph took the holy Child Jesus with them to the temple.”[45]

**Why did Jesus remain in Jerusalem?** “Because of His love of prayer and communion with His Heavenly Father, and to show, even then, some rays of His divinity, by which to make known

commands. Thus obedience to God is without limit, whereas obedience to human beings is limited by higher laws that must not be transgressed, and by the competency or authority of the one who gives the orders. As a virtue, it is pleasing to God because it means that sacrifice of one’s will out of love for God.”[59]

**Who do we have to be obedient to above anything and anyone?** God. “He must hold the first place in our lives, and we must obey Him regardless of all other considerations, even if it means sacrificing the rights of nature and of blood.”[60] Many times we are tempted to put “blood” or family before God, but as affirmed previously in this packet, putting family before God is a form of idolatry. Family, although important, is always subservient to God.

**Why should we be obedient to God?** God is always pleased with us when we are obedient to Him and His Church. **Why do we have to be obedient to the Church?** “We must be obedient to the Church, because Christ Himself with His holy Spirit lives in her, and governs her, and has said: Who hears not the Church, let him be to thee a heathen and a publican, therefore, shut out from eternal life.”[61]

We too must obey our friends and family (assuming the actions are morally acceptable) **Why do we have to be obedient to our friends and family?** We must be obedient to our parents because God has placed them over us, and “we are indebted to them, under Him, for life and many benefits. Those children who do not assist their parents when they are old, poor, and helpless, or are ashamed of them, have reason to be afraid, since even Christ Jesus, the God-Man, was obedient and subject in all things to His poor mother, and to humble mechanic who was only His foster-father.”[62] “Giving precedence to the rights of God does not imply that we neglect our duties toward our neighbor. Today’s Feast calls our attention to these obligations, and especially to those concerning our family, natural or religious, inviting us to follow the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth.”[63]

**What if our friends or family order us to do something bad?** We ignore the order. If a family member, friends, or authority figure asks us to sin, we can and should ignore that order. “Yielding to relatives and friends is no longer a virtue – and may even be sinful – if it leads us away from the will of God or hin-

his wife and children and thus provide for them. The mother must be obedient to the needs of her husband and children. Finally, the children, as the offspring of love from the parents, must be obedient to them.

Obedience is necessary in all vocations; therefore it is necessary for children to learn this virtue first at home, so that it will serve them well throughout life and into whatever state in life God calls them to. In marriage, they will have to be obedient to their spouse. In religious life, they will have to be obedient to their superior. There is a beautiful story of Saint Teresa of Avila, who was in her room writing a letter when the bell for vespers (evening prayer) rang in the convent. She immediately put her pen down and went to the chapel. She was only one letter away from finishing her letter. In fact she was signing her name, which read, "Teres". Her obedience to her superior was more important than finishing the writing of her name.

**Why is Jesus so obedient?** The Catechism has a few key passages that will help answer this question. The first is that Jesus is obedient because of humanity's disobedience, "his hidden life which by his submission atones for our disobedience"[56] "Jesus' obedience to his mother and legal father fulfills the fourth commandment perfectly and was the temporal image of his filial obedience to his Father in heaven. The everyday obedience of Jesus to Joseph and Mary both announced and anticipated the obedience of Holy Thursday: 'Not my will...' the obedience of Christ in the daily routine of his hidden life was already inaugurating his work of restoring that the disobedience of Adam had destroyed." [57]

"During the greater part of his life Jesus shared the condition of the vast majority of human beings: a daily life spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labor. His religious life was that of a Jew obedient to the law of God, a life in the community. From this whole period it is revealed to us that Jesus was 'obedient' to his parents and that he 'increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.'" [58]

**What is obedience?** Obedience is the "moral virtue that inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the right to command. Material obedience is merely to carry out the physical action commanded; formal obedience is to perform an action precisely because it is commanded by a legitimate superior. The extent of obedience is as wide as the authority of the person who

that He had come for the glory of His Father, and to procure our salvation. The glory of God and the salvation of our souls should be our chief object in life." [46]

**How could Mary and Joseph lose Jesus?** "On pilgrimages to Jerusalem, the Jews used to go in two groups – one of men, the other of women. Children could go with either group. This explains how they could go a day's journey before they discovered the Child was missing when the families regrouped to camp." [47]

**MOVIE – Home Alone 2 Trailer – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:11**

[http://youtu.be/z\\_An3W-oO2k](http://youtu.be/z_An3W-oO2k)

In the sequel to the first movie, the announcer speaks of how the family is far apart, but loves to stick together. This is just like the Holy Family, although miles apart they yearn to stick together.

**TV Show - FRIENDS – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:42**

<http://youtu.be/29g6sQOAH90>

On Thanksgiving, the group runs out of the apartment to see a giant float. Upon returning they realize they are locked out, thinking that each of the others had the key. It was an honest mistake. Similarly, Joseph and Mary probably assumed the other had Jesus.

**Why did Mary and Joseph search so hard for Jesus?**

"Because they were fearful lest they should lose Him Whom they loved so exceedingly. We should learn from this, how careful we should be not to lose Jesus by sin, or having lost Him, how anxiously we should seek by penance to find Him. The parents of Jesus, by their diligent search and inquiries for the divine Infant, teach and rebuke those parents who care less for the Christian education of their children than for their temporal advantages, who pay no attention to the persons with whom their children associate, nor to the places which they frequent, whether they learn things that are useful to them, and who for the sake of some temporal advantage permit their children sinful intimacy with evil-minded persons. From these parents God will one day demand the souls of their children with severest justice." [48]

**Why was the child Jesus found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking questions?**

Jesus teaches us to seek the knowledge necessary for our salvation, and attend carefully to sermons' instructions on Christian doc-

trine. We should by no means be ashamed to ask questions of our pastors when we are in doubt, and should listen to their answers. Was Christ, the Eternal Wisdom, ashamed to ask questions and to answer? Why should we ignorant people hesitate? It is regretful that a person who has many important things concerning their spiritual welfare on his or her mind, through pride and false shame, would rather go to perdition than to ask advice, solely for fear of showing ignorance.[49]

#### **Why does Mary ask, “Son, why have you done this to us?”**

While Mary knew Jesus was the Son of God, as one commentary says, “there was no reason why it should include detailed knowledge of all the sacrifices God would ask of her, nor of how Christ would go about his mission of redemption: that was something she would discover as time went by, contemplating her Sons’ life.”[50] Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen explains Mary’s question upon finding Jesus by comparing it to the Wedding at Cana. When Jesus was found in the temple at age 12, it’s clear that both Mary and Joseph “did not understand” that Jesus was doing the Father’s will. Comparatively, later, at the wedding at Cana, when Jesus was 30, Mary has grown so much in understanding of the mission of her Jesus and His desire to do the will of the Father, that she ushers in Our Lord’s first miracle when she says, “Do whatever he tells you.”[51] When Mary says to Jesus, “They have no wine”, Jesus said to her, “Woman how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” It is at the Wedding at Cana that the concern of Mary is united with the concern of Christ. We are concerned with many things, but are we concerned with what Christ is concerned with? It is as if Jesus “hour” came, when His mother was ready, almost as if He was waiting for her yes and cooperation to begin His public ministry. Jesus desires us to cooperate with His saving mission—to make His concerns our own concerns. We must heed the words of Our Lady and “do whatever He tells us”, likewise helping others to listen and obey.

**How could Jesus “increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man,” when He is God?** It is because Jesus while Divine was also fully human with a rational, human soul.[52] “This human soul that the Son of God assumed is endowed with a true human knowledge. As such, this knowledge could not in itself be unlimited: it was exercised in the historical conditions of his existence in space and time.”[53]

#### **Obedience – Lesson and Discussion**

*“was obedient to them”*

*This lesson is based on the Cycle C, Gospel Reading*

In today’s Gospel reading (Cycle C Reading), when Mary and Joseph find Jesus in the temple, we have the first recorded words of Jesus. **What were they?** “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Lk. 2:49) It shows Jesus was first and foremost concerned with the things of His Father. However, two verses later we read, “He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them.” (Lk. 2:51), which also shows His obedience to His family.

Jesus asks us these same questions, **How do we answer Him? Why were you looking for me? Do we look for Jesus? Where do we look for Jesus? Why are we looking for Jesus? Is it for physical reasons or spiritual reasons?**

**Do you know I would be in my Father’s house?** We can obviously look and find Jesus in the physical building of the Church. This question also directs us to the will of the Father. Jesus in the temple is accomplishing the will of the Father. **Do we know the will of the Father? How do we discover the will of the Father? Are we doing the will of the Father?**

**What is so important about Jesus being “obedient to them”?** Saint Bernard touches on the most profound idea in this Gospel reading. He says, “Who obeyed? Whom did He obey? God obeyed man! Yes, the God to whom the angels are subject...was subject to Mary, and not only to Mary, but also to Joseph. For God to obey a woman is humility without parallel... Learn then, man, to obey; learn, O earth, to be submissive. God subjected Himself to men; and do you desiring to rule others, place yourself above your Creator?”[54]

Saint Jose Maria Escriva also comments on this verse. “Jesus obeys, and he obeys Joseph and Mary. God has come to the world to obey, and to obey creatures. Admittedly they are very perfect creatures: Holy Mary, our mother, greater than whom God alone; and that most chaste man Joseph. But they are only creatures, and yet Jesus, who is God, obeyed them.”[55]

The family is the school of obedience, as each member of the family must be obedient to the others in some capacity. The father, as the head of the family, must be obedient to the needs of