

Session Three

Becoming the Strong and Tender Family of Jesus

Through the famous story of the prodigal son, Jesus will show us that, like the father in the story, a domestic church is strong enough to lift up one another, and tender enough to heal our wounds. In this session where we journey with the Holy Family of Nazareth will invite parents to reflect on the legacy of faith they would like to pass on to their children.

Let's Read Scripture

On *The Heart of the Family's* website, play Video One and Video Two.

Luke 15:11-24

Then Jesus said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So, the father divided the property between them.

After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father.

While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son. But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

Let's Reflect

After you play the second video, invite each family member to take a moment to think about their responses to these reflection questions.

- What does it mean for you, that the love of our family has to be both tender and also strong, and what do you think that kind of love looks like in how we treat each other?
- When the time comes for your children to build their own family, what ideas do you want them to inherit from you about what it means to be a family, and about what it means to believe in our God?

Let's Pray

After you share your responses, play Video Three of this session and pray along as a family. In this prayer, we will first pray for the parents and their responsibility to pass down the faith to the next generation, and then we'll pray for the children, who receive the gift of faith. Parents and children, pray out loud the bold part.

Heavenly Father, giver of all good gifts. We thank you for the gift of parenthood. You have called them to be the first catechists of their children, and the first witnesses of your divine love.

***Parents:* We ask you to give us the grace to live our faith authentically. Grant us the strength and tenderness of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Help us to keep you, O God, at the very heart of our family, so that every word we speak and every choice we make may lead our children closer to your Son, Jesus Christ.**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, who revealed to us that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like children.

***Children:* Help us to follow your voice when you call us to you. Open our hearts to receive the gift of faith that our parents share with us in their words and deeds.**

Bless these families, Lord, that they may learn how to love you above all things, and make their home a sanctuary of your presence.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
Pray for us.

Let's Act

Share a family story. This time, try to find a picture of your parents. When you have it, share with the rest of your family: what is something good that you have learned from them? It can be an important life lesson, or it can simply be a gesture or a phrase that you picked up from them. For this activity, you have a little more flexibility, because you can include your grandparents as well: is there something you have learned from them? And of course, make sure to share the story of how you learned this from your parents or grandparents.

Draw or paint a family portrait.

1. On a piece of paper, draw all the members of your family. Do not let anyone see your drawing yet!
2. As you draw each of your family members, think about this: what do you appreciate or admire about each of them?
3. When everyone is done drawing, take turns to show your picture to the rest of your family, and share with them the thing you appreciate or admire about each of them.