

Session Five

Woven Together: What the Church Teaches Us About Family Relationships

Divine love, and the love of a domestic church, is self-giving. And this complete self-giving begins in the married couple, and it later extends to the children, fruit of the love between spouses. For many families, these loving relationships often expand to include our grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. In this session, let's explore these unique relationships.

Let's Read Scripture

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

Genesis 4:2-9

Abel became a herder of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the ground.

In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground, while Abel, for his part, brought the fatty portion of the firstlings of his flock.

The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry and dejected. Then the LORD said to Cain: Why are you angry? Why are you dejected? If you act rightly, you will be accepted; but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it.

Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out in the field."

When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the LORD asked Cain, Where is your brother Abel?

He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" God then said: What have you done?

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.

- In this session, we said that the presence and stories of our grandparents are a treasure for our entire family. What is one question you've always wanted to ask grandma or grandpa about their life, but haven't yet? If your grandparents are around, you can ask them now, or schedule a phone call or plan a visit to their home
- Let's think about other members of our extended family, like aunts, uncles, and cousins, or even people that you have adopted as members of your own family, and think: in what ways are they a blessing to your family? Or if you are not that close to your extended family, think about this: who would you like to get to know more? Perhaps, this is an invitation to get closer with your extended family.

Let's Pray

After you share your responses, play Video Three of this session and pray along as a family. Our priest will pray for each of you, spouses, parents, children, siblings, and other family members. As he does, briefly pause the video, so that everyone can share one reason they are grateful for that person.

Heavenly Father,

You created our family as a beautiful tapestry, weaving together our lives. We pray for the grace to love another with the same love that you have for us. Today, we give you thanks for each of the members in our family.

We thank you for the gift of a spouse.

Spouses, take a moment to express what you are most grateful for about your husband or wife.

Pause the video, and share. Then, continue the video.

We thank you for the gift of children.

Parents, take a moment to express what you are most grateful for each of your children.

Pause the video, and share. Then, continue the video.

We are thankful for the gift of parents.

Children, take a moment that each of you may express what you are most grateful for your mom and dad.

Pause the video, and share. Then, continue the video.

We are thankful for the gift of siblings.

Children, take a moment that each of you may express what you are most grateful for each of your siblings.

Pause the video, and share. Then, continue the video.

And we thank you, Lord, for our grandparents, and all our extended family members.

If there are other family members at home with you, express to them what you are grateful for.

Pause the video, and share. Then, continue the video.

We bless you and love you, Lord, for you have placed us in this family to experience your love and mercy every day. May each of us grow in patience, love, and in how we care for and accompany one another. And may we Lord, continue to grow in holiness, in imitation of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

Holy Family of Nazareth,

Pray for us.

Let's Act

Become a secret agent of self-giving love.

1. Write down the names of your family members on a small piece of paper and put them in a bowl.
2. Each person will take a name, which they will keep in secret. With this person, we will practice the self-giving love that we've talked about in pretty much every session.
3. For the following week, you are now the "secret agent" who will be doing acts of love and service for that person. The point is that no one finds out who's their secret agent, so you may do acts of love to other members of your family to trick them.

4. After one week, gather around your family prayer space to reveal the truth. As you do so, reflect and share with your family: how did you feel doing this activity as someone who served, and as someone who was loved through the service of others?

Bless your children. As a parent, you are the head of your household, and you are called to sanctify your family. So, pick a time, in the mornings, at nights, or before your children leave for school or work; go to your family prayer space, and doing the sign of the Cross over them, use one of these phrases. Children: If your grandparents live with you, don't forget to ask for their blessings, too. Use phrases like "Go with God; or may God bless and protect you; or may God bless you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."