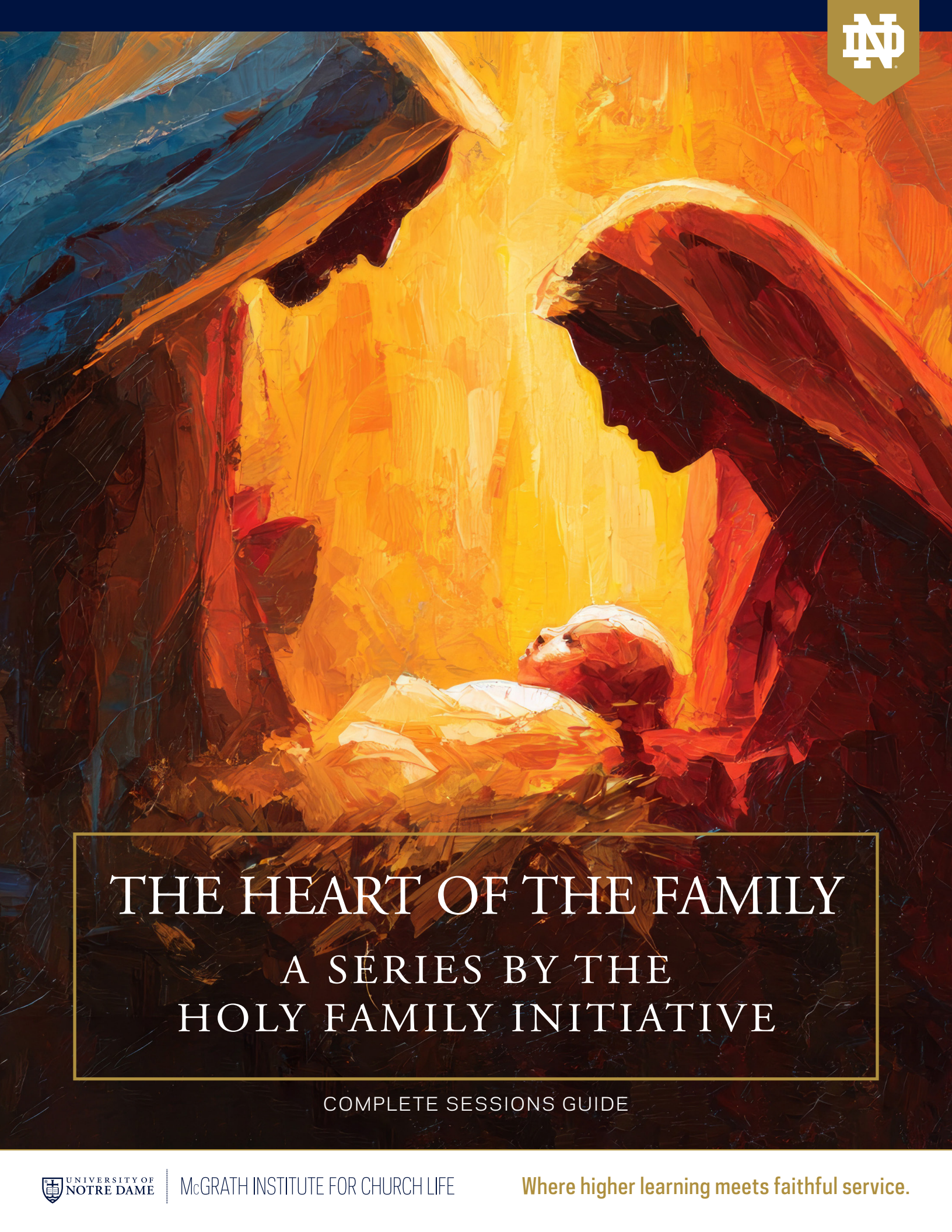


A dramatic, expressive oil painting of the Nativity scene. The Virgin Mary is shown in profile, cradling the infant Jesus in her arms. They are positioned in the lower center of the frame, illuminated by a warm, golden light that radiates from behind them, creating a halo effect. The background is composed of bold, textured brushstrokes in shades of blue, red, and gold, suggesting a cave or stable setting. The overall mood is sacred and intimate.

THE HEART OF THE FAMILY

A SERIES BY THE HOLY FAMILY INITIATIVE

COMPLETE SESSIONS GUIDE



THE HEART OF THE FAMILY

A SERIES BY THE HOLY FAMILY INITIATIVE

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Welcome

Welcome to *The Heart of the Family*, a project of the McGrath Institute for Church Life, sponsored by a generous gift from Lilly Endowment Inc. This family program that can be used at home, at the parish, or in a Catholic school, is an invitation to rediscover the most profound identity of the family, that of the domestic church—a place where divine love becomes palpable through the relationships of the family members and where our Catholic faith is lived and transmitted in the messy and beautiful reality of daily life.

In the first three sessions of this program, we will follow the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth, to transform our own homes into sanctuaries of love and faith, with God at the heart of our family. The next three sessions will explore how our domestic church is strengthened by our connections to our extended family, our parish community, and the communion of saints. The final session of this program is a guided family meditation that will serve as a beautiful experience of familial love.

It is never too late to start your family's journey to holiness! Visit HolyFamilySeries.nd.edu to start this program.

The Heart of the Family is part of the Holy Family Initiative, a program dedicated to supporting the growing number of Hispanic Catholic families, and all families, in their task of transmitting the faith to the next generation. A second round of videos that will launch late this fall, will provide practical and effective tools for parents and the adults in the home to communicate our faith to their children and grandchildren.

We pray you find this resource helpful as your family continues to put God at the heart of your family!



Benito Medrano Calderon
Program Director, Holy Family Initiative



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Session One

Waiting for the Lord to Bless Us

We begin our journey with the Holy Family of Nazareth by creating a vision of what it means to be a domestic church. In this first session, we will learn from Mary and Joseph how families are called to embrace God's invitations with courage and trust.

Let's Read Scripture

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

Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming to her, the angel said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But Mary was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David, his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"

And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So, all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.

And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

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. When everyone is ready, share your responses with each other. Remember to listen with an open heart to the words, thoughts, and experiences of your family members.

- Mary and Joseph said yes to God's plan and grew in love and care for one another. What is one action you can do this week to show more of your love and care for members of your family?
- Think about your life: which includes your work, your school, your responsibilities and your decisions: What is one way that you can begin to experience more trust in our Lord as Joseph did, or more courage like Mary did?

Let's Pray

After you share your responses, play Video Three of this session and pray along as a family.

For this prayer, our priest will read the first sentence, and he will invite your family to read together the bold text.

Let us pray.

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

Blessed Virgin Mary, you said yes to the plan that God had for you.

Help our family to hear and respond with generosity and trust every time that God calls us.

Blessed St. Joseph, you cared for and protected mother and son.

Help our family to become a gift to the other through acts of love and mercy.

Most Holy Child Jesus, your birth brought hope, peace, and love to Mary, Joseph, and to the world.

Grant our family the grace to experience the fruits of your presence in the routines of every day of life.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
Pray for us.

Let's Act

Build a little altar at home. A domestic church sanctifies the time and the places where the family gathers. Use the prayer space you create as a gathering point for your family's prayer.

- Find a space at home for your altar. The living room is a good option, as it will be accessible to everyone.
- Use a tablecloth. Throughout the year, you can change it to match the colors of the liturgical calendar, for example, you can use purple for Lent and Advent, white for Easter, green for Ordinary time etc.
- Place a crucifix in the center. Jesus is the center of our faith. May He also be at the heart of our family.
- Use an image or statue of Mary. She always accompanies us on our journey. You can use any Marian image, for example a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- Add a Bible that you can read as a family. It can be a children's Bible so that adults can read Bible stories to their children or grandchildren at home.
- Add a candle. You can use a real candle if it is safe, or a battery-operated candle.
- Over time, add additional decorations such as flowers from your garden, images of other saints you have a devotion to, or a prayer book.

Share a family story. We started this session by bringing to mind significant moments in the life of our family. Those moments live in family photo albums and in many objects that we keep around the house as souvenirs or reminders. For this session, we invite you to go through your photo album or through your house, and find one picture or object that reminds you of a beautiful moment you shared with your domestic church. Maybe it's an old memory; maybe it's something your family did recently. When you find it, regroup again and share that story. As you tell the story, pass around that picture or the object for everyone to see, and don't forget to ask as many questions as you want. But please remember to do so respectfully.

Session Two

When Everything Changes, the Lord Remains

How is a family to respond to the changing and challenging realities of life? In this session, as we continue to read in Scripture, Mary and Joseph will teach us that when the unexpected happens, the Lord faithfully provides and remains by our side, always.

Let's Read Scripture

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

Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,

are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

since from you shall come a ruler,

who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word that I too may go and do him homage."

After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary, his mother.

They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Matthew 2:13-23

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...

When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi...

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.”

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. When everyone is ready, share your responses with each other.

- We spoke about how no matter what happens in our life, the Lord remains with us, and the Lord provides. Think about a difficult moment that happened or is happening at school, work, or home, and share with others: in what ways do you recognize God’s presence walking you?
- The Magi came to the Holy Family with precious gifts for baby Jesus. What gifts do you have that you would like to offer to your family? Think about even small details and gestures, like a smile or a hug. Also think about quality time that you can spend with them, or even chores and tasks that you can do for them.

Let's Pray

After you share your responses, play Video Three of this session and pray along as a family. If it is safe, light a candle and have your family surround it. This candle reminds us of the star that illuminated the journey of the Magi towards Christ, the heart of our family. Our priest will start each sentence, while you and your family repeat out loud the bold words.

Dear Lord,

Like the Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph, on their way to Egypt, we journey through the world seeking safety and refuge of anything that can hurt and wound those we love. Like them, let us invite and embrace the presence of Jesus that we may walk with him through all the changes in our life.

Whenever we embark on a new journey...**be our companion.**

Whenever we are uncertain of the next step that we must take...**be our guide.**

Whenever we are tired or feel like we can't keep going...**be our strength.**

Whenever we feel lonely or unloved...**be our refuge.**

Whenever we struggle to love one another...**be our example.**

Every day, every night, every season, and every moment...**be the one whom we love, the center of our family story.**

Holy Family of Nazareth,

Pray for us.

Let's Act

Share a family story. Go through your family album or around the house and find a picture of the favorite gift you've ever received. Even if you don't have a picture or object to pass around, just share the story of the favorite gift you've ever received with as many details as you can. When everyone has found a picture, or object, or maybe just the memory of that gift, gather around, and share that story. Remember to ask, very respectfully, questions about the stories you hear.

Pray to your guardian angel. As we heard in the stories of these two sessions, angels came to Mary and Joseph to communicate God's divine plan for them. As Catholics, we believe that God has sent an angel to watch over us and to intercede for us every moment of our life. Make an effort to memorize these short prayers, so that when you gather in the family prayer space that you built, you can also pray to your guardian angel and to St. Michael the Archangel.

Prayer to Your Guardian Angel

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide.

Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen.

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.

Session Four

What Scripture Teaches Us About Human Relationships

With this session we begin to expand our view of the domestic church as we dive into the beginning of Scripture. As creatures made God's image and likeness, we were made to exist in a close and loving relationship with a God who accompanies us, provides, and loves us endlessly. Through this divine love, we are called to love others, starting with our family, but expanding towards all those around us.

Let's Read Scripture

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

Genesis: 2:4-25

This is the story of the heavens and the earth at their creation...the LORD God formed the man out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it... The LORD God said: It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suited to him. So the LORD God formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each living creature was then its name. The man gave names to all the tame animals, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be a helper suited to the man. So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The LORD God then built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of man this one has been taken." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body. The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.

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.

- Of all the relationships you have right now, which is the most positive and healthy relationship, and what makes it special?
- We heard that sin fractures our relationships, and that Jesus Christ is the one who restores us to be in communion with God and one another. What is one thing you know about Christ, and what is one thing you would like to learn more about him?

Let's Pray

After you share your responses, play Video Three of this session and pray along as a family. For this prayer, repeat the bold text, and pause the video after we pray for each relationship, so that each person may share what this handout indicates.

Almighty God, you formed Adam from the dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

Let our hearts draw near to you, to trust you, and to seek you today and always.

Pause the video, then share the following. When everyone has shared, continue the video.

Families, share one thing each of you can do to improve your relationship with God.

Heavenly Father, you declared that it was “not good for man to be alone,”

And created us all with equal dignity and beauty that we may be as brothers and sisters.

Pause the video, then share the following. When everyone has shared, continue the video.

Please share the names of people you want to pray for.

Creator God, you commanded us “to till and keep” the gift of your creation.

Help us protect this world, and to appreciate the beauty of your handiwork.

Pause the video, then share the following. When everyone has shared, continue the video.

Families share one thing you each love the most about the natural world.

In Christ, you have reconciled all things to you, oh Lord. May you continue to nurture in our lives the never-ending love by which you call us to you.

Holy Family of Nazareth,

Pray for us.

Let's Act

The first activity of this session builds on the idea that when we turn ourselves outwards, we learn to love people, not as we want to love them, but as they need to be loved.

1. Take a piece of paper and create a table like the one below with boxes big enough for you to write. Create one row for each family member.
2. Write the names of your family members on the first column. One name per row.
3. Next to their name, write down how you think they like to be loved—for example, maybe next to your mom's name, you can write that you think she likes to be loved by receiving flowers. You will fill out this column in secret! Don't show your table to anyone yet.
4. When everyone is done filling out the first two columns, go around sharing your answers, but (here's the important thing) after you've shared, you will listen attentively as each person says how they actually like to be loved. You can write what they say in the final column, and make a personal commitment to love your family as they need to be loved.

Family member	How <i>I think</i> they like to be loved.	How they actually like to be loved.

Family confession day. In the confessional, we encounter God's mercy and love for each of us. Today, assign someone in your family to research confession days and times in your parish, and make an agreement to attend together to receive this sacrament within the next month.

Who will research confession days and times at your parish?

Write the day and time you family can attend confession:

1. Before you go to confession: Reflect on your actions, thoughts, and words since your last confession. Did you fall short of loving God and loving those around you?
2. When you go to confess: You will make the sign of the Cross, and you can say something similar to "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." With a humble heart desiring God's mercy, confess all your sins to the priest. The priest may give you council, and will propose an act of penance: a prayer or an action.
3. When indicated, pray the Act of Contrition. Your parish may have a prayer printed at the confessional, or you can use the following prayer:

O my God,
I am heartily sorry for having offended you,
and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments,
but most of all because they offend you, my God,
who are all good and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace,
to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

Amen.

4. To conclude, the priest will pronounce the words of absolution, to which you will respond "Amen."

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."

Session Six

Family of Families: The Parish Community and the Communion of Saints

Our family is not journeying toward holiness alone. Rather, our family is called to join a parish community where we can gather with other families to worship God, to grow as a domestic church, and to serve the world. Furthermore, there exists a bigger community in Heaven and on Earth, the communion of the saints, that intercedes for our family. In this session of *The Heart of the Family*, let us see ourselves within a larger network of relationships as we all journey together towards Christ.

Let's Read Scripture

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

John 6:1-15

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, and a large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick.

Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near.

When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?"

He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little bit."

One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to Jesus,

"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?"

Jesus said, "Have the people recline." Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number.

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted.

When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted."

So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat.

When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world."

Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.

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.

- Let us keep connecting the “table of the altar” with the “table of our home.” Everyone, take a turn and answer: what is one thing we can do at home to prepare for Mass? When everyone has said one idea, choose the one you’d like to start practicing as a family this coming Sunday, and then rotate the other ideas.
- Let's reflect on the story of the loaves and fish: Jesus asks his disciples, "What can you offer?" So, take a moment to reflect on: what is one talent that you have, no matter how small it seems, that you can offer to help your family, your parish, or someone in need?

Let's Pray

After you share your responses, play Video Three of this session and pray along as a family. First, let's rely on the wisdom of the saints and pray together with the Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi; as usual, repeat the bold text. To close this prayer, parents, bless your children as you learned in the previous session.

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

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

Amen.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, **let me sow love;**

where there is injury, **pardon;**

where there is doubt, **faith;**

where there is despair, **hope;**

where there is darkness, **light;**

where there is sadness, **joy.**

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled **as to console**,
to be understood **as to understand**,
to be loved **as to love**.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
Pray for us.

Parents, bless your children.

Let's Act

Inventory of our family gifts.

1. Each member of your family will draw a table like the one below and follow the instructions for each column.
2. In the first column, write the names of each family member.
3. To fill out the second column, pick one person at a time, and everyone will go around sharing all their beautiful gifts and talents.

Family member	What are the gifts and talents of this person?

4. Grab a parish bulletin next time you go to Mass, and looking at the ministries and activities coming up, answer the following questions:

- Is there a ministry or activity that a member of your family or your entire family finds interesting? Is there a ministry or event that you would like to attend? Is there one where you would like to volunteer? Do not be afraid to pick up the phone to call your parish and ask for more information about those ministries and activities.

The blessings from the altar to our table. Every time you are about to go to Mass, make a mental note about one thing that your family needs today. And when you have that in mind, make sure to offer your Mass for that intention, and ask for the grace to bring that blessing to your home. Though simple, this action can truly impact how we participate at Mass, and what God may do in our families. When you arrive to Mass or during communion, you may pray something similar to these words: Dear Lord, I offer today's Mass for [say your family intention].

Session Seven

What Your Hands Have Learned and Done: A Guided Family Meditation

1. Before you start

This is a session different from the others. To prepare for this meditation, first ensure that you have all the necessary materials listed below. When you have that, your family will be ready to continue.

- Fabric strips, about one to two inches wide and three to four feet long. They will be like bandages. If fabric is difficult to get, consider cutting strips of paper that you can tape or glue together to the dimensions mentioned above.
- Markers that can write on fabric.
- Gather your family around a crucifix. You can place the crucifix at the coffee table in your living room, or you can gather around your family prayer space.

2. Watch Videos One and Two

Video one will help your family prepare for this reflection. Video Two will guide you through an opening prayer, a reflection, and a short writing activity on the strips of fabric. At the end of the video, please share with your family any of the following questions:

- What did you notice or think about as you meditated on your hands? What was it like to name your needs to God? What was it like to write them on this fabric?

3. Watch Video Three

When your family has shared their thoughts on the previous questions, play Video Three. This video will invite your family to prayerfully bind the hand of one of your family members with their own piece of fabric. Listen for instructions.

At the end of the third video, share with your family these questions:

- What was it like to have your hand bound and to bind their hand? What was hard or enjoyable about the experience? What feelings emerged?

4. Watch Video Four

When your family has shared their thoughts on the previous questions, play Video Four. This video will mention a First Aid Kit. You can find that document below. The video will also close us in prayer. When that moment comes, please, follow the instructions provided at the end of the video to close our reflection.

“The Church is a gift poured forth from the wounds of the crucified Christ as a means of drawing us all into healing and unity with one another and Christ. Now, bind your sorrows and prayers to Christ so that you might be bound for something more...for Christ’s healing love, mercy and hope.”

FIRST AID KIT

Emotional and Spiritual Wounds

“The Lord heals the broken hearted and binds up their sorrows” (Psalm 147:3)

6 Steps of Wound Care

1. Breathe.
2. Recognize “I am hurting.”
3. Ask God: “Help me to receive your tender love and care.”
4. Remember no hurt is too overwhelming for God.
5. Share your hurt with another: a friend, pastor, loved one, or a counselor.
6. Adopt other healthy behaviors like: getting outdoors, physical exercise, etc.

Contact the offices in your diocese or the Catholic Charities offices, and ask for counseling resources they may have available.

Symptoms: Signs that You Are Hurting

For both children and adults, symptoms could include any one of the following:

In children:

- Increased fearfulness, anxiety, anger, and sadness
- Return to old behaviors: thumb sucking, bed wetting
- More irritable and aggressive
- Trouble focusing at school; distracted
- Increased crying
- Nightmares
- Increased headaches, stomachaches, dizziness, and shortness of breath

In adults:

- In addition to those already mentioned in the children’s section:
- Reliving memories of a past traumatic experience
- Irregular heartbeat; sense of panic
- Emotional numbness or denial
- Withdrawal
- Hypervigilance
- Alcohol or drug use
- Increase of risky, violent, aggressive behavior
- Hysteria, panic

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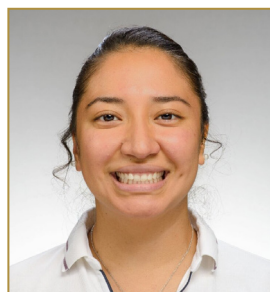
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