

FAMILY REFLECTION GUIDES

FAMILIES IN MISSION

Families Following Jesus this Easter Season





FAMILIES IN MISSION:

How To Use These Guides



1.-Introduction:

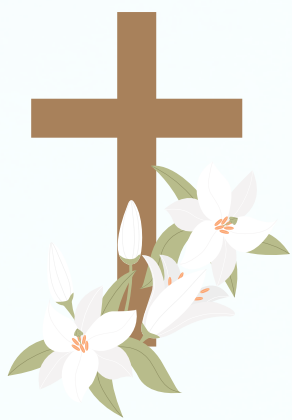
After Easter Sunday we may think that Easter is over, but actually we have entered the Easter Season, a period of 50 days until the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This is a happy time for us as people of faith because we remember that with Jesus' resurrection we don't have to fear death. We celebrate because one day we get to rejoin Jesus in heaven. As followers of Jesus, we invite you to think about how you can bring this happiness and good news to others during this time. Each week we will give you different prayers, questions to discuss, and activities to show how you might be a family following Jesus.



2.-Opening Prayer:

Let us pray:

Each week, take some time to pray together as a family. The guides include an opening and closing prayer but feel free to make them your own. For the opening prayer, turn to Jesus, and ask him to walk with your family this Easter Season. Ask him to teach you how to be better followers. Pray for the courage to go out to those most in need. Add any personal, family or community intentions that you may have.



Sacred Space Activity: Create a sacred space at home if you don't already have one. Decorate it with Easter colors and symbols. For example, create an empty tomb with the stone rolled back. Add a white linen cloth. Each week the guides will invite you to place new elements or symbols on your sacred space or altar related to the topic being discussed. Do that prayerfully.

3.-Sharing the Good News:



Read the Gospel for each Sunday of Easter. In the guides you will find the link to the reading for each Sunday. It will be good to use the family Bible.

4.-Reflect Together:

- Here we suggest some questions to encourage reflection and discussion in the family. In your discussions, reflect on what it may mean to be a disciple or follow Jesus this Easter. Think about where you may be called to be a disciple and to whom. Think about what you can do, say, or be so that others see you as a follower of Christ.
- Following Jesus begins in the family. So try to involve the whole family in the discussion. Be respectful. Listen carefully. Be kind in how you respond to each other. Encourage each other instead of putting each other down.



5.-Take action as a family:

- In this section we propose some actions that you can do as a family this Easter Season. However your family can come up with your own actions.
- We invite you during this time to think of yourselves as a "Missionary Family." Consider sharing with others what you are doing.



6.- Closing Prayer:

In the final prayer, turn to God the Father and ask for his Holy Spirit to guide your family as you follow Jesus.. Pray for the grace and the courage to be missionaries and disciples of Jesus during the week. Here too it is appropriate to add any personal intentions you may have.



Easter Sunday

FAMILIES IN MISSION:

HOPE



1.-Introduction:

Mary of Magdala was depressed. She did not know what to do after witnessing Jesus' terrible suffering and death. Now she just wanted to be close to his grave. So she headed out in the early morning darkness to visit the tomb of Jesus. To her tremendous surprise, his body wasn't there. He had risen from the dead! She hurried to tell the others. This changed everything. Now there is hope! We no longer have to fear death. He and our loved ones who have died live on in heaven. Jesus' mercy is complete. Now our job is to hurry to tell the good news to others and live as missionaries of mercy.



Sacred Space Activity: Put something hopeful in your sacred space.



2.-Opening Prayer:

Let us pray:
Dear Jesus,
Sometimes like Mary of Magdala we are lost, discouraged, and depressed. Help us to be like her, someone who in the midst of these feelings still goes looking for you.
Amen

3.-Sharing the Good News:



Read today's Gospel:

Jn 20:1-9

4.-Reflect Together:

Discuss some or all of these questions as a family

- When was a time that you lost hope or felt discouraged? What could you do differently if that happens again?
- What helps you to feel hopeful or even joyful?
- What can you learn from Mary of Magdala in the Gospel about how to be hopeful?

5.-Take action as a family:

- As you get ready to celebrate Easter, think of those who may be alone for this Holy Day and may need some hope in their lives.
 - If they are close enough, invite him or her to join you for an Easter meal
 - If they are not, write them a letter/send them a card.
- Make a list of what you accomplished or feel good about having done during Lent.
 - Post it on your refrigerator.
 - Keep a copy with you so you can look at it when you need to feel hopeful.



6.- Closing Prayer:

Loving God:

With your resurrection we are given the hope to always keep moving forward. You give us the mission to continue to bring your message of mercy, love, and joy to all the places and people where it is most needed.

Amen



2nd Sunday of Easter

FAMILIES IN MISSION:

Comfort the Wounded



1.-Introduction:

When we have a boo boo or a wound, what do we want someone to do? Take care of it and make it better, right? This Sunday we see how Jesus invites Thomas to see and touch his wounds. Jesus invites us to do the same by reaching out to those who are sick or depressed. That may scare us and we may prefer to stay away but Jesus reminds us that their wounds are his wounds. He invites us to come close, touch his wounds and be a healing presence for them.

2.-Opening Prayer:

Let us pray:



Dear Jesus,
We remember that you were also human and knew what it was like to experience physical and emotional pain. You invite us to not run away from your pain, but to come closer so that we will know that it is really you. Give us the courage to comfort those around us who are in pain. Amen



Sacred Space Activity: Put a bandaid in your sacred space to remind yourselves that everyone has wounds or boo boos sometimes and that our challenge is to comfort them.

3.-Sharing the Good News:



Read today's Gospel:

Jn 20:19-31

4.-Reflect Together:

Discuss some or all of these questions as a family

- Sometimes we stay away from people who are sick or sad or lonely because we just don't know what to do or say. Describe a time when you were feeling sad or were sick and someone helped you to feel better.
 - What did that person do/say?
 - What did you learn from that experience that you can use with others who are sick, sad, or lonely?



5.-Take action as a family:

- Who do you know who seems to be feeling sad or lonely at work, your parish, school or neighborhood?
 - Make it a point to talk to that person this week and ask how they are doing.
 - Pay them a visit, call them, send them a card or a note.
 - Pray for them each day.
- Put together small first aid kits - bandaids, neosporin, etc. and bring them to a local homeless shelter.
- Who do you know that is sick these days? Perhaps, make the person something to eat and drop it off to their apartment or home.
- Celebrate Earth Day. The earth is wounded or sick in many ways too because of all the trash we have.
 - Get a reusable water bottle.
 - Go for a week without using any plastic bottles or throwaway utensils.
- Read about how healing happens at a Maryknoll parish in Tanzania, Africa.



6.- Closing Prayer:

Loving God:

You feel and know our pain because you knew pain too. Sometimes we get discouraged when our pain doesn't go away as quickly as we would like. May the times that we are not feeling well teach us to be more compassionate towards others who are suffering.

Amen

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3rd Sunday of Easter

FAMILIES IN MISSION:

Go For a Walk with Jesus



1.-Introduction:

How many of us like to go for walks? In this gospel Jesus goes for a long walk with two very sad and discouraged people who had seen him killed on the cross and didn't know what they were going to do. The resurrected Jesus walks with them, explains what is in the bible, and gives them hope. So, at the end of the walk, they invite him into their home to eat. When do they finally recognize that it is Jesus? When he breaks bread or shares the eucharist with them. As Jesus' disciples, do we recognize that he walks with us through the people he sends our way, in the scriptures, and in the Eucharist? Are we willing to walk with others?

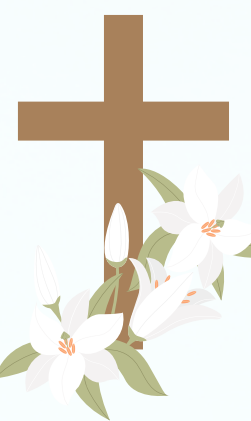


2.-Opening Prayer:

Let us pray:

Dear Jesus,

Sometimes, like the couple in this gospel story, it takes a long time to recognize that you were with us, helping us along the way. Often only when we look back do we realize that you were present to us through the people who came to our aid. Help us to be aware of your presence in our lives. Help us to bring your presence to others. Amen



Sacred Space Activity: Put a pair of shoes, sneakers, or sandals into your sacred space as a reminder to walk with Jesus.

3.-Sharing the Good News:



Read today's Gospel:

Lk 24:13-35

5.-Take action as a family:

- Imagine having a conversation with Jesus as you take a long walk with him. If you are comfortable, share part or all of your imaginary conversation with your family.
- Discuss as a family if there is someone who doesn't get out much that you could invite for a simple walk around the block. You could reach out to nursing homes to see if they need volunteers to take residents outside for a brief visit or stroll. Try to do this as a family and discuss what you learned.
- In the Gospel the couple did not recognize Jesus until he shared the Eucharist with them. Attend the Eucharist (mass) as a family and pay attention to where you sense Jesus' presence. Share how you felt with your family.

4.-Reflect Together:

Discuss some or all of these questions as a family

- What is your favorite place to go for a walk? What is it that you like about this place?
- Who do you like to go for a walk with and why?
- Reading the scriptures is one way of walking with Jesus. Do you have a favorite passage/story/verse from the Bible? Why do you like it? How does it make you feel?



6.- Closing Prayer:

Loving God

Thank you for sending your son to walk by our side even when we don't know it or feel it. Send us your Spirit so that we may notice those who may need a companion on their walk. Give us the courage to go out of our way to walk with those who are lonely or those who have trouble walking by themselves.

Amen



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FAMILIES IN MISSION:

Jesus is Calling. Are We Listening?



1.-Introduction:

How many voices do you think you could identify without seeing who it was? My mother was good at it even when she was in her 90's. All it took for her to know that it was me calling was my "Hello". In today's Gospel Jesus reminds us that following him as a disciple means being able to recognize his voice. That means we have to listen carefully because his voice may come through someone who speaks a kind or loving word to us. Other times it might come with a thought or feeling that comes to us when we pray or read the scriptures.



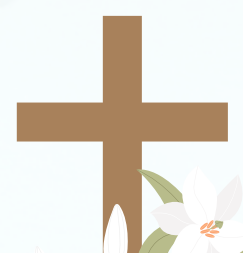
2.-Opening Prayer:

Let us pray:

Dear Jesus,

One of the hardest things in life is to hear you speaking to us because you are not around like other humans. Help us to listen attentively so that we recognize your voice speaking to us through the bible, through prayer, and through other people.

Amen



Sacred Space Activity: Put an old cell phone or even a picture of one in your sacred space as a reminder that Jesus wants to talk with us.

3.-Sharing the Good News:



Read today's Gospel:

JN 10:1-10

4.-Reflect Together:

Discuss some or all of these questions as a family

- Ask a parent or grandparent to describe a time when they felt that Jesus was telling them something. How did they know? What did they do with what Jesus was telling them?

5.-Take action as a family:

- Slowly read today's psalm 23 together and afterwards ask: was there a word or image that stood out to you? Slowly read it again and repeat the question. The words, images, or feelings that come to us can be God's way of speaking to us.
- Before going to mass tell everyone to remember one thing that the priest or deacon said in his homily. Then after mass discuss what you heard.
- Today is also World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Parents, explain that a vocation is what God wants us to do in life with our abilities. Everyone has a vocation, but some have a particular vocation to be a religious sister or brother, priest, deacon, or monk. Discuss with your children - Could you see yourself as a missionary priest or religious sister or brother? Read more about those kinds of vocations here or here.



6.- Closing Prayer:

Loving God:

We hear so many voices in our daily lives that sometimes we may not hear yours. Send your Spirit to teach us to be like Jesus who took the time to pray, be quiet, and listen so that like him we too may know what you are saying to us.

Amen



Maryknoll seminarians performing at an event at the Catholic Theological Union (CTU)

5th Sunday of Easter

FAMILIES IN MISSION:

Do What Jesus Does



1.-Introduction:

Do what Jesus does. It sounds simple, but it's not so easy, right? Jesus tells his followers in today's gospel, "whoever believes in me will do the works that I do." So what did Jesus do? For most of his life he lived as part of a family with Mary and Joseph, learning the work of carpentry from Joseph, and perhaps learning to pay careful attention to others from Mary. When he began his public life he lived out his message of love by listening to people, preaching, and healing. He paid special attention to the poor because they needed him the most.



2.-Opening Prayer:

Dear Jesus,
You are our example in this life. Reading about you in the bible helps us to understand what you want us to do and how to treat other people. May we continue to learn more from your example everyday.
Amen

Sacred Space Activity: Put something in your sacred space to remind you to reach out to someone who is lonely, sick, or troubled as Jesus would have done.

3.-Sharing the Good News:



Read today's Gospel:

JN 14:1-12

4.-Reflect Together:

- Discuss some or all of these questions as a family
- Parents share with your children one of the most important lessons that you learned from your own mother or father. Did you learn it from them by what they said or what they did?
 - Imagine if someone videotaped all that you did one day, what do you think they would learn about your day? What would you be most proud of? Where could you be doing better?
 - Share about someone you know or have read about who always seemed to try to do as Jesus would have done.

5.-Take action as a family:

- Watch together an episode from season one of The Chosen.
 - Afterwards discuss what you learned from what Jesus did and how you might do that in your own lives.
- Some years ago many people wore bracelets that said "WWJD" meaning "What would Jesus do?"
 - As you go through your day and make decisions, think about what Jesus would do.
 - Then at night, share with the family if you decided to do something differently after thinking about what Jesus would have done.



6.- Closing Prayer:

Loving God:

People know us more by our actions than by our words. Send us your Spirit to give us the courage to do what Jesus did even when it may not be easy for us. When people come into contact with us, may they leave having felt your love and caring.

Amen

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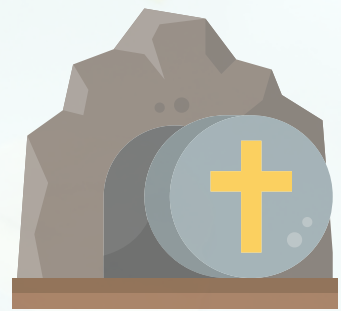
6th Sunday of Easter

FAMILIES IN MISSION:

Be a Jesus Helper



1.-Introduction:



Is it sometimes hard to be alone? Jesus reassures in today's gospel that even though he may not be with us in person, he was going to send the Holy Spirit to be our advocate or helper. As Jesus' disciples or followers we can always count on the Holy Spirit to help, guide, and comfort us. But we can't stop there. In a few weeks we will celebrate Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit, however, is not meant just for us. Just as Jesus did not abandon us, so we too must not abandon others. Are we ready to use the gift of the Spirit to help others?

2.-Opening Prayer:



Dear Jesus,
You promised to send us the Spirit to guide and comfort us. You promised to not abandon us. Teach us to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in the people who help, teach, and guide us. Help us to see the Spirit in things that fill our lives with joy and beauty. Help us to be your disciples who bring the Spirit to others.
Amen



Sacred Space Activity: Make a "Help wanted" sign and put it in your sacred space to remind you to help others this week, like the Spirit helps us.

3.-Sharing the Good News:



Read today's Gospel:

John 14:15-21

4.-Reflect Together:

- Discuss some or all of these questions as a family
- Share about something or someone that brings you comfort or lifts your spirits when you are sad. It could be a bible story or verse, song, poem, a painting, nature, a hobby or a place you like to be.
- Listen attentively as others share their stories as this may be the Spirit reaching out to help us.
- Share what you admire about someone who is always offering to help or guide others.
- What is one thing you would ask the Spirit for so that you could be a more helpful person? Write in on a piece of paper and put it in your sacred space.

5.-Take action as a family:

- Pray for the gift you would like from the Spirit so that you can be more helpful to others.
- In honor of Mothers' Day, celebrate a mother figure in your neighborhood, parish, community, or school who may not have anyone to celebrate with.
- Advocates speak out and stand up for others especially those who can't do so for themselves. Many saints have advocated for others e.g St. Vincent de Paul, St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Josephine Bakhita. Try to find out more about their lives and work this week
 - Share with your family who you learned about and what you learned about being an advocate for others.
 - Speak up for someone this week if there is the opportunity to do so.



6.- Closing Prayer:

Loving God:
Help our family to be your instruments of peace, hope, and love in the world. Teach us to learn from your son Jesus how to put others before ourselves. Send your Spirit to give us the wisdom to see who is in pain and the courage to reach out and help them.
Amen

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FAMILIES IN MISSION:

Look Up and Then Look Around



1.-Introduction:

Imagine that you were there with the disciples when Jesus went up to heaven on a cloud. What would that have been like? Amazing perhaps, and I imagine that the disciples just wanted to stay there and talk about it, but quickly they were reminded to focus back here on earth. Jesus left his disciples with work to do when he gave them the command, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” by baptizing and teaching them. Where will we go? Who needs us the most? Let’s take a look around.



2.-Opening Prayer:

Let us pray:

Dear Jesus,

You want us to think both of the present, what we need to do today, and the future, how we will get to heaven. May all of our actions this day lead us closer to you and thus closer to the one day when we hope to be with you in heaven.

Amen



Sacred Space Activity: Put something in your sacred space that reminds you of heaven.

3.-Sharing the Good News:



Read today’s Gospel:

Mt 28:16-20

4.-Reflect Together:

Discuss some or all of these questions as a family

- If you could go anywhere in the world to tell people about Jesus, where would you go? Why did you pick that place? What would you tell the people there about Jesus? What might you learn from them?

5.-Take action as a family:

- Go through each day this week “looking around” trying to notice who might need help or a positive word. Do what you can to be like Jesus by helping or spreading kind and helpful words. At the end of the week (or a day), discuss how it went. Did you notice anything new?
- Jesus wants us especially to go to those who are left out or ignored by others. Who in your school, work, or community is left out? Do something this week to reach out to them.
- Take a look at this 5 minute Maryknoll [video](#) about our men who have gone out to many nations. Discuss it afterwards. Could you see yourself going to other countries as a missionary?



6.- Closing Prayer:

Loving God:

Sometimes we are content to daydream and sit around doing nothing, but you tell us to “go” and that there is work to do to spread your message and love. As we look around at our communities and the world, help to see where you are most needed and to act as you would.

Amen