



Home Rituals – Ideas for your family

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St. Ignatius Loyola Parish

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Introducing Rituals into your Home.

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Home Rituals: Saints and Superheroes

Who do you want to be like?

Imagination is a gift and a special motivator. From an early age we are often asked “What do you want to be?” with responses ranging from astronaut to president to ballerina or cowboy. Yet, if we think about it, aren’t these more the answer to the question “What do you want to do?” How can we excite our imagination to dream more about our character rather than our occupation? The answer might just be in the stories of saints.

Yes, there are the gruesome tales that I grew up with where saints were mostly martyrs, martyrs with some rather horrible and frightening endings. In many cases this may not be inspirational. Yet with a little bit of careful consideration you just might find saints whose lives are more uplifting and more immediately appealing to the imagination.

Properly told, the stories of saints can be of great imaginative appeal. The story of St. Patrick can be told in terms of the shamrock with which he is often associated. Or it can be a great story of forgiveness where St. Patrick reaches out to those who kidnapped him, returning years later to teach them about God’s love.

Take the opportunity to ask yourself “What stories gave you hope and comfort?” You might recall the stories of guardian angels and the guardian angel prayer. An appropriation and adaptation of both story and prayer might help a struggling son or daughter.

Or take the opportunity to ask your self “What saint most matches my child’s temperament?” Maybe it is St. Francis with his great love of animals. Maybe it is the devotion of a little sister

like St. Agnes of Assisi who left home to follow her older sister St. Claire to the monastery. Maybe it is the great welcome that St. Alphonse Rodriguez used to exhibit as porter (door keeper), welcoming visitors to the Jesuit college at Majorca as if he was welcoming Jesus himself.

Catch my drift—these stories don’t have to be horrific or super-hero. Sometimes the heart of these saint stories can be the heart of your child or their day. What wonder to see them celebrated as both holy and admirable, especially if they have a special day and a statue or picture.

While many resources for Saints and their lives may be either too limited or too academic for your children, the research itself will equip you with the tools to tell the story yourselves. Here are a few Saint Sites to try:

Franciscan Media
[Saint of the Day](#)

Loyola Press
[Saint Stories for all ages](#)

The Vatican
[Saint of the Day](#)

Book Series: Loyola Press
[Loyola Kids Book of Saints](#)



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Finding God in All Things

Saints you may know: [St. Valentine](#), considered the patron of lovers is also known as the one who announces the coming of Spring, often depicted with the Sun in his hand.

[St. Josephine Bakhita](#), former slave, scarred and tortured by previous slave masters, must have been a beautiful person. As the doorkeeper for the convent she joined, her warmth and welcome for others led her to be called “black mother” by the people of Vicenza.

[St. Blaise](#), known mostly for the blessing of throats in his name, was known for befriending animals. The hunters who captured him found him living in a cave with wolves and bears surrounding him as he knelt in prayer.

National Black History Month

Pope Francis often reminds us that there are many Saints that surround us, although they may not yet be on the calendar. He called many of these “Ordinary Saints”, although some of them did some extraordinary things. One of those who lived right here in Denver was Julia Greeley. She never started a school, never held a political office and never had much money or fame. Yet she touched the hearts of so many that, when she died, hundreds came to her funeral. She was known for her little red wagon that she would pull behind her as she collected foods, clothes and goods for those in need. She also had a great devotion to firemen, recognizing how difficult and dangerous their job was. She would often visit them and pray for them. Julia frequently attended Sacred Heart Church and is now buried in the Cathedral, here in Denver. To read more about Julia and her kindness to others, visit <https://juliagreeley.org/>.

Often unnoticed are many African American Women who gave their lives as women religious, helping to shape not only the civil rights movements but to shape the church as well. Women like [Sr. Antona Ebo](#) who marched in Selma with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and [Sr. Thea Bowman](#) who [spoke to the US Catholic Bishops](#) about the rich heritage that African Americans bring to the church. And one cannot skip the heritage of [Henriette DeLille](#) and the [Sisters of the Holy Family](#), their work among the slaves and poor of New Orleans. It may seem trivial, but Henriette devoted a great deal of her life to religious instruction and to the witnessing of the sacraments for slaves and persons of color. Instruction and witness, Henriette passed on the gift she had received and recognized that gift in those often overlooked by the church.

After a year like 2020 it sometimes seems that marches or protests accomplish very little. The article [The Selma Effect](#) helps us to see the great effect that the march in 1965 had on the Catholic Church as a whole and religious life in particular for many of our Catholic Sisters. So many saints, so much grace. It is worth paying attention in our days of conflict to see how God does work in our lives.