Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families 2019–2020
The Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur are declarations that the material is free from doctrinal or moral error, and thus is granted permission to publish in accordance with c. 827. No legal responsibility is assumed by the grant of this permission. No implication is contained herein that those who have granted the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur agree with the content, opinions, or statements expressed.

Scripture texts used in this work are taken from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 1970, 1986, 1997, 1998, 2001 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Quote on the following page from the New Revised Standard Version Bible ©1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

This book was edited by Michaela I. Tudela, Víctor R. Pérez was the production editor, Anna Manhart was the designer, and Kari Nicholls was the production artist.

Cover illustration by Eleanor Davis © LTP.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-61671-458-1

CSCF20
“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding to you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.”

(Deuteronomy 6:5–7)
Contents

How to Use
Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families 1

Ordinary Time during Fall 2
Advent 28
Christmas Time 36
Ordinary Time during Winter 46
Lent 58
Easter Time 70
Ordinary Time during Summer 88
Everyday Family Prayers 115
How to Use

Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families

This small weekly guide draws on the Gospel for each Sunday and Holyday for the coming year. It is intended to help parents engage their children with the Mass and deepen their appreciation of the richness of their faith life. So often, going to Mass becomes a weekly event that begins and ends at the church door. The brief reflection on an excerpt from the Gospel is intended to spark your thinking about the Scripture that will lead to conversation with your family before and after Mass. Suggestions for questions and conversation starters are provided, as well as some practice or practical way to carry this reflection into the life of the family. Keep in mind, however, that sometimes you may have other needs, concerns, or ideas that are more relevant to your home life at that moment. If so, engage your children with those.

Note that very young children are able to enter into the liturgy through their senses. Singing the hymns, calling their attention to the changing colors of the liturgical seasons, and sitting where they can observe the gestures of the Mass are all ways to form them in the faith. Always remember, as the Rite of Baptism proclaims, you, as parents, are your children’s first and most important teachers. We hope that this book will enrich your family’s life of faith.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, tired about his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” —For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.— Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”
Reflecting on the Word

In today’s Gospel, Jesus approaches the Samaritan woman first. This is a story of conversion: God holds out a hand of friendship that we might learn to seek his grace. Our reward for reaching out in return is tremendous: living water, water to wash away sin and death, to share in the divine life. God relentlessly pursues his people, at every time and every place. How has God pursued a relationship with you? How do you respond to his call?

... ON THE WAY TO MASS

Explore what it means to thirst physically. How do you feel when you’re thirsty?

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS ...

The notion of thirst in today’s Gospel moves from the physical to the spiritual. We hear that Jesus’ offer of living water will quench a spiritual thirst. What is the living water?

Living the Word

This week, learn more about the efforts of Catholic Relief Services (CRS.org) to provide clean water to people around the world. Discuss how your family accesses clean water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning, and contrast it with the situations of others living in poverty or war-torn areas. Consider doing one of the family activities at http://education.crs.org/resources/families. Pray that all people worldwide might have access to clean water.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam”—which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.
Reflecting on the Word

In today’s Gospel, we are invited to focus on the physical and spiritual aspects of sight and light. Jesus responds to the prevalent belief of his time that misfortune and disability were the result of sin. He responds by giving the question a different twist—that through this man’s disability, God’s power will be made known.

God makes himself visible through our lives, through the good or happy occurrences. But sometimes, as with the man born blind, we come to know God through the challenges we face. God works in us, even in dark times, shining a light of hope and faith and offering healing for body, heart, or soul. God not only works in us, but also walks with us through all the good and the bad.

ON THE WAY TO MASS

What might it be like not to physically see?

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS

What might it be like not to recognize God’s presence in our lives? How might our lives be different in each of these scenarios?

Living the Word

Are there people in your community whom you fail to notice? Perhaps it is the elderly, the sick or homebound of your parish, the homeless, or those living in precarious financial situations. Do you see Christ in them? Choose a person or group that you can pray for this week, and commit to being present to them, to see and love them, and to care for them as tenderly as you would care for Christ.
March 29, 2020

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Hearing the Word

John 11:17–23

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

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise.”
Reflecting on the Word

The context for today’s Gospel reading is the Jewish leaders’ growing hostility toward Jesus. Jesus has been in Jerusalem, and the people have been pressing him to pronounce plainly that he is the Messiah. Jesus tells them to decide for themselves by looking to his works, which testify to his coming from God.

As you listen to this story, another of Jesus’ miracles, we are reminded that death is not an end to life; rather, it leads to life anew. We recognize that it is still painful when death separates us from our loved one. But we also remember the promise that, like Lazarus, we too will one day rise.

...... ON THE WAY TO MASS

Have you ever had to comfort someone who experienced the death of a loved one? Have you ever been the one who was comforted?

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS .......

How did Martha express faith in Jesus? How can you trust Jesus in the same way?

Living the Word

If possible, go with your children to a loved one’s gravesite. Share memories. Read John 11:17–44 aloud. Discuss how Mary and Martha and their friends must have felt when Lazarus died. How do you think they reacted when he walked out of the tomb? How would you react if you were there? What does this story tell us about God? Pray for all of the dead, that they might rise to new life like Lazarus did.
Hearing the Word

Matthew 21:1–11

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

When Jesus and the disciples drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me. And if anyone should say anything to you, reply, ‘The master has need of them.’ Then he will send them at once.” This happened so that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled: / Say to daughter Zion, / “Behold, your king comes to you, / meek and riding on an ass, / and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.” / The disciples went and did as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them, and he sat upon them. The very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the road. The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying: / “Hosanna to the Son of David; / blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; / hosanna in the highest.” / And when he entered Jerusalem the whole city was shaken and asked, “Who is this?” And the crowds replied, “This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee.”
Reflecting on the Word

The Palm Sunday liturgy begins in triumph and ends in darkness. The same crowds that joyfully welcome Jesus as he enters Jerusalem are to turn against him just a few days later. They will jeer at him and condemn him. They ignore the Truth they have seen with their own eyes. How many times have we ignored the Truth that has been revealed to us? turned a blind eye to the presence of God in our lives? forsaken truth and goodness in the face of societal pressure?

ON THE WAY TO MASS

Alert your family that we begin Holy Week today. Palm Sunday is a day of high emotions: happiness and heartbreak.

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS

We heard today that Jesus obeyed his Father’s will, even when he was scared and he faced certain death. How do you understand God’s will for you?

Living the Word

We began Lent by receiving ashes, which were burned from last year’s palm branches. Today we begin Holy Week and receive new blessed palms. Look for tutorials online to fashion the palms into crosses. You might have your children process through the house singing “All Glory Laud and Honor” or another appropriate hymn. Place a palm cross over the doors or behind a crucifix.
April 12, 2020

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

Hearing the Word

John 20:1–8

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

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.” So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.
Reflecting on the Word

The story begins in darkness, which is symbolic as the realization of the empty tomb dawns on Mary of Magdala. It is probably light by the time she returns to the tomb accompanied by the two disciples. Simon Peter enters the empty tomb, but the first disciple ahead of him is the one who believes upon seeing the burial cloths. There is indeed a glimpse of new life in this account, but even richer is the truth that the stone is rolled back and that Christ’s Resurrection signifies triumph over death. The details in John’s account invite us to reflect upon a most amazing gift: faith in Christ and his Resurrection.

.....ON THE WAY TO MASS

Have your family pay close attention to the changes in the church today. How is the joy of Easter expressed in the colors they see? in the music they hear? in the scents they smell?

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS .....  

Ask your children to recall what they noticed at Mass. How do they know the Mass was more joyfully celebrated today?

Living the Word

Christ is risen, Alleluia! We are celebrating the greatest mystery of our faith: that death has been vanquished by the power of God’s love. Celebrate Easter lavishly, and continue celebrating the whole week! Plan special outings with friends and family. Sing Alleluia at prayer time. Fill your house with flowers (a sign of new life). Bring treats and flowers to those who are homebound, far from family, or feeling lonely.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, . . . Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Now a week later . . . Jesus came . . . and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you
have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Reflecting on the Word

Faith would be so much easier if only we had tangible confirmation. We will likely not put our fingers through the holes in Christ’s hands. But “faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). When Thomas at last meets the Lord, he knows him immediately and cries out in joy and faith. We will meet Jesus in many surprising ways through life. May we too have the faith to exclaim, “My Lord and my God!”

......ON THE WAY TO MASS

Do you find it hard to have faith in God? What is most challenging for you?

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS .......

Where have you met Jesus? How has your encounter with Jesus led to greater faith?

Living the Word

Today is also known as Divine Mercy Sunday. Learn about the life of St. Faustina and her mission to make God’s mercy known the world. Print or buy the image of the Divine Mercy (or print coloring sheets for your children) and place it on your prayer table. Together, pray the Divine Mercy chaplet. Information about Divine Mercy Sunday, St. Faustina, and the chaplet can be found at http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/prayers/divine-mercy-sunday.cfm.
April 26, 2020

Third Sunday of Easter

Hearing the Word


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

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus’ disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?”
Reflecting on the Word

The two disciples poured out their fear and sadness to the stranger they met on the road. They did not recognize him until his breaking of the bread. In this Gospel, we learn that the Risen Christ is not always easily recognized. Sometimes we only recognize Jesus in hindsight. But, whether we know him or not, Jesus draws near to all of us on the journey of life. He is there to remind us of the Truth, to reassure us in the dark times, to light our way.

......ON THE WAY TO MASS

Have you ever met someone new and, right away, connected with that person? Why do we feel chemistry with certain people? Ask your family to pay special attention to when the priest breaks the bread during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS......

What connection do you see between today’s Gospel and the liturgy? In the Eucharist, we share in the breaking of the bread and find Christ in our midst. Just as the disciples returned to Jerusalem to recount their experience to the other disciples, we too are sent from our Eucharistic gathering to share our experience with others.

Living the Word

Why did the disciples say their hearts were burning within? Discuss how the disciples might have felt before being joined by Jesus, and then when they traveled with him. Imagine how they reacted when Jesus was revealed to them. Talk about what it means for your heart to be burning within you.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.” Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, “Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”
Reflecting on the Word

Sheep will distinguish the voice of their shepherd from all other voices. They trust that their shepherd will lead them well and in safety. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and we are his sheep. He loves us and calls us each by name. If we follow him, he will guide us to eternal happiness. It is up to us to know and heed his voice amid the clamor of other voices that try to lead us astray. What can only separate us from God is our own free choice to turn away.

ON THE WAY TO MASS

What do you know about sheep and shepherds? Listen to today’s Gospel and think about why Jesus would use the idea of shepherds and sheep to teach about God’s Kingdom.

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS

Explain to your children that the Fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. Each year we hear a different reading about Jesus comparing himself to a shepherd leading his sheep. Who are today’s “good shepherds” who lead us in faithfulness? (Suggested answers: pope, pastors, Christian leaders.)

Living the Word

How does a shepherd care for his sheep? How does God care for his people? Ask each family member to explain how God has cared for him or her. How does it make you feel to know that God loves you and calls you by name? Close by listening to or singing a musical arrangement of Psalm 23. Ask your children how they feel when they listen to the words of the psalm (comfort, love, being protected).
May 10, 2020

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Hearing the Word

John 14:1–10a

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

Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?”
Reflecting on the Word

*Do not let your hearts be troubled.* These are some of the last words Jesus offers to his disciples. Do not let your hearts be troubled when faced with despair, suffering, or loss. Do not allow the world to break you. This seems easier said than done, especially when we are confronted by the deep pain the world can bring. Jesus says he is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the way of hope, healing, and light in the darkest night. He is the way to eternal joy.

**. . . . . . . ON THE WAY TO MASS**

Have you ever felt sad or confused or lonely? Did you ever lose your way and felt scared? When has your heart been troubled?

**ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS . . . . . .**

Discuss with your family the following: Jesus doesn’t want us to feel troubled. He wants us to believe in him and to trust him. Jesus has shown us the way to live good lives as sons and daughters of God. He has taught us the truth about God and his great love, and through him, we will have everlasting life with God in heaven.

Living the Word

Have your children cut out a dozen little hearts from construction paper. Ask them first to think about how Jesus doesn’t want our hearts to be troubled. On each little heart, have them write one way they can show God’s love to one another. Remind them to write their names on the hearts.
May 17, 2020

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Hearing the Word

John 14:15–21

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

Jesus said to his disciples, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”
Reflecting on the Word

Jesus proposes something revolutionary to the disciples: that God will come and inhabit them, that their own hearts will become temples of the Holy Spirit. If we surrender ourselves to God, he will come and live in us and we in him. We will be as close as a heartbeat. God offers us a relationship of love, the love that truly desires the good of the other. And his love bears fruit as it teaches us to see with God’s eyes, to follow not the ways of the world but the Way of Love.

......ON THE WAY TO MASS

What words or actions express love? How do you know you are loved?

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS ......

How do we show our love to one another at home? How can we be better about showing one another our love—to one another, to those outside our family, and to God?

Living the Word

“‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second [commandment] is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30–31). Jesus’ exhortation to share God’s love is challenging in its simplicity. Think of some ways you can live these two commandments, both individually and as a family.
May 21, 2020

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Hearing the Word

Matthew 28:16–20

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

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”
Reflecting on the Word

In their last earthly encounter with Jesus, we hear that the disciples worshipped, but they doubted. This seems to be a paradox. How could the disciples worship Jesus Christ and at the same time doubt the truth of his identity? But Jesus is not concerned with their doubt, just as he was not concerned with their betrayal in Jerusalem. He exhorts them to make disciples of all nations. Even when we, like the disciples, doubt and deny and are imperfect, we are still called to be missionaries of his Good News.

On the Way to Mass

Have you ever felt insecure and unready, yet excited and hopeful about something new?

On the Way Home From Mass

Jesus left his followers in the care of the Holy Spirit. How do we feel the presence of the Spirit today?

Living the Word

Images are important reminders of people we love. That is why we carry photos in wallets and phones, or place them on our dressers, desks, or living room walls. Similarly, the presence of religious art in the home can be a way of remembering our relationship to God. Look for images or statues that resonate with your family and display them in your prayer space or in your children’s rooms.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that your son may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

“I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours, and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you.”
Reflecting on the Word

Today’s Gospel may sound very abstract and difficult to relate to. Perhaps a key phrase is at the end of this excerpt, when Jesus speaks of the glory he had with the Father “before the world began.” This leads us into the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, which we will celebrate in a few weeks. For now, it is enough to meditate on the fact that Jesus Christ—who walked the earth as a human being, as one of us—is one with God, who is eternal, without beginning or end.

ON THE WAY TO MASS

Instruct your children to listen carefully to the words, especially the beginning of the Creed, which we say after the Homily. (You may wish to refer to the Apostles’ Creed on page 117.)

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS

Explain what the Creed is and why we profess our faith every Sunday. What is the connection between today’s Gospel and the Creed?

Living the Word

Read the Apostles’ Creed together. Talk about how it contains the essential beliefs of our Catholic faith.
May 31, 2020

Pentecost Sunday

Hearing the Word

John 20:19–23

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

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”
Reflecting on the Word

It is now fifty days since Easter Sunday, and we complete our celebration of Easter with Pentecost (*pentecoste* means “fiftieth”). Notice that twice Jesus says, “Peace be with you” to the frightened disciples. In the same encounter, he gives them the power to forgive sins. Sin is a rupture in our relationship with God, with others, and even with ourselves. It is difficult to experience peace when we are out of good or right relationship.

...ON THE WAY TO MASS

Today is another opportunity to reflect on the connection between the Gospel and the liturgy. Ask your children to notice what Jesus says twice to the disciples. When will they say the same words in the Mass?

ON THE WAY HOME FROM MASS ...

What is having peace like? What is it like to give and to receive peace?

Living the Word

On the feast of Pentecost, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and institution of the Church. Punctuate your family’s feast with touches of the color red: red roses, red tablecloth, red cake (with seven candles to signify the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit). Have your children make simple paper doves to decorate your prayer space. Pray the sequence for Pentecost (*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*) in English or Latin (or both!).
This resource is an approachable way for families to integrate Sunday Mass into their lives.

For each Sunday, families are provided with:

• The Gospel reading and reflection
• Discussion questions
• Suggested family activity

This valuable resource helps families know God’s Word and provides practical ways to put it into action each week.

— Celeste Arbuckle, sss
Director of Religious Education and Youth Ministry
Archdiocese of San Francisco

Celebrating Sunday offers family members a most welcome plan for engaging in reflection on their encounter with Christ at Mass.

— Susan Anderson
Director of Religious Education
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
Derwood, Maryland