

Psst! Parent - Student School Topics



Ten Family Ways for Quarantine Days

Quarantine days have made it possible for some of us, who are not battling illness, to devote time to new interests. What follows are **10** activities that may feed your family spirituality and bring encouragement to this situation.

Though each can be completed individually and/or with siblings, if possible, pursue the activities as a family project. Some tasks might be completed within 30-60 minutes. Others may take repeated sessions. Whatever the configuration, each suggestion is a growth-filled way to spend time.

1. Acrostic Gift

Choose a family member. On a piece of paper vertically print their first name. Next to each letter write a word that begins with that letter – a word that describes a positive characteristic of the person. After the word write a sentence that explains why you chose that particular word. Make an attractive copy and leave it on the pillow of the family member.

2. Profile Mary

Mary is mother, mentor, and model. Read the scripture references to Mary. Make a list of ten character traits or personality traits that you see in the scriptures. (There are many more than ten!) Then, next to each trait, write one example of something you could do to practice the trait.

Mary Scripture Citations: Luke 1: 26-38

(**Annunciation**); Luke 1: 39-45 (**Visitation**); Luke 1: 46-56 (**Magnificat**); Luke 2: 6-7 (**Bethlehem Birth**); Luke 2: 15-20 (**Shepherd's Visit**); Luke 2: 22-35 (**Presentation**); Matthew 2:13-16 (**Egypt**); Matthew 2: 19-23 (**Return to Nazareth**); Luke 2: 41-52 (**Lost and Found**); John 19:25 (**Crucifixion**); Acts 1:14 (**Cenacle**).

3. Learn Mary Apparitions

Did you know that Mary appeared on earth several times? Do you know the stories about those visits and what Mary communicated during the visits? The stories of Lourdes, Fatima, Guadalupe, and her visits to Saint Catherine Labouré to give us the Miraculous Medal are all available in movie form. Choose an apparition. View the movie. Then share the story with other family members or friends.

Each of these apparitions are available for free as YouTube Movies. Also, www.Formed.org is making them and many other religious films available free during the Quarantine days.

(The *FORMED* platform includes access to Catholic movies, faith formation videos, audio talks, and great children's videos.)

4. Celebrate the Holy Spirit

Use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (ccc.usccb.org) to discover the Seven Gifts and the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Make a "flash card" of each, put the term on one side and the definition on the reverse side. Use the cards to play "Concentration." During the season of Pentecost daily feature one Fruit. Determine specific ways (A) that you can live that virtue the next day, (B) that you witnessed that virtue during the current day, or (C) how that virtue would have made a positive difference in a scenario from the day.

5. Study a Saint

Whenever we spend time with a person we can "pick up" character traits that we admire or that we disrespect. Spend time with a Saint. Either read a book about him/her, watch a film, or do internet research. During your experience make a list of traits, characteristics, features, or qualities that you admire about him/her. Then, next to each trait, write an example of one way that you can imitate or practice that trait. Choose a minimum of six characteristics.

Hopefully you have some saint books at home. If you are a member of a public library you may be able to get an e-book. Probably some saints are featured in the book that you use for faith formation classes. Even Wikipedia offers useful information. But, if you enjoy movies, YouTube offers many. Also, www.Formed.org offers movies on recently canonized saints like: Pope Paul VI, Pope John XXIII, Pope John Paul II, Josephine Bakhita, Teresa of Calcutta, Faustina, Edith Stein, and Maximilian Kolbe.

6. Namesake Momentos

Regardless of family reasons for choosing a baby's baptismal name, the name itself connects with a saint. That saint becomes the patron saint of the child.

For a family member make a momento like a mini-poster or a bookmark of his/her patron saint. Learn about the saint and choose a minimum of three characteristics that remind you of the family member or traits that would improve life if the family member practiced them. Transfer the information to the momento. Present it as a gift.

7. Grateful Heart Day

"Great hearts are grateful hearts." Write a letter, design a greeting card, make a poster, or create some way to express gratitude to the heroic people who are on the "front line" combating the Pandemic. People like caretakers (both medical personnel and family members), first responders, scientists and researchers who seek to find a vaccine and cure, military, workers in supermarkets and other necessary stores, etc.

8. Pray a Rosary

Pray a rosary. If you prefer to pray with a group check your diocesan website or search the Internet for a live-streamed prayer group. For example, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (phillyevang.org/rosary) offers a "Rosary Campaign for the End of the Caronavirus" at 8PM EST.

9. Family TV Show

Together watch a favorite TV show then discuss: (A) What were the positives or negatives that you noticed? (B) Are elements of the show (characteristics or behaviors) present in your family? If so, are they "life-giving or life-blocking" to your family life? (C) What life-lesson will you take away from this show? You can apply this exercise to any TV show, movie, book or story.

10. Popular Music

Music can feed a soul and draw the best out of you or it can be destructive. Just because a song becomes popular with the public does not assure that it is good for your soul!

Pick one of your favorite songs or a song that is currently very popular. Print out the lyrics. With your family examine the lyrics and the message(s) that the song contains. If body movements/dancing/choreographing is part of the song, then consider that aspect, too, when answering the following kinds of questions:

Is the song respectful of people? Does it treat people like creatures made in the image of God? Does the song leave you feeling positive and loving? If not, what emotions does it cause in you? Which of the Ten Commandments can you recognize in the story line?

Here is a quick test as to how life-giving or life-blocking the song is. If Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was sitting with you would you perform the song for her? Do you think that she would sing and dance it with you?

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