

RECLAIMING Sundays and MORE



RECOVER SUNDAY AS A DAY FOR THE LORD AND FAMILY



Reclaiming Sundays

Sunday is a day which is at the very heart of the Christian life. “Let us open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us “his day” as an ever-new gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human.

*(Pope St. John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, 7)*

Each parish of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis has been asked to help families in their parish “reclaim” Sundays. The Archdiocese has provided monthly themes that focus on various aspects of living out the gift of Sunday to its fullest.

By adding some of these resources to your repertoire, new healthy habits may be created that can allow your family to live Sundays as God intends. We hope that this resource will provide enough structure to help your family grow in their ability to live out the theme that corresponds to your season in life and meets you where you are.

We encourage families to use this resource to help develop habits that produce the fruit that comes from fully living the Lord’s Day.

12-MONTH Thematic Overview

SEPTEMBER	4	MARCH	10
<i>Prayer</i>		<i>Elevated Conversation and Prayer</i>	
OCTOBER	5	APRIL	11
<i>Rest, Recreation and Prayer</i>		<i>Breaking Bread and Prayer</i>	
NOVEMBER	6	MAY	12
<i>Beauty and Prayer</i>		<i>Community and Prayer</i>	
DECEMBER	7	JUNE	13
<i>Music and Prayer</i>		<i>Screen-Free Sundays and Prayer</i>	
JANUARY	8	JULY	14
<i>Invitation and Prayer</i>		<i>Creation and Prayer</i>	
FEBRUARY	9	AUGUST	15
<i>No/Low-Tech Sundays and Prayer</i>		<i>Service and Prayer</i>	

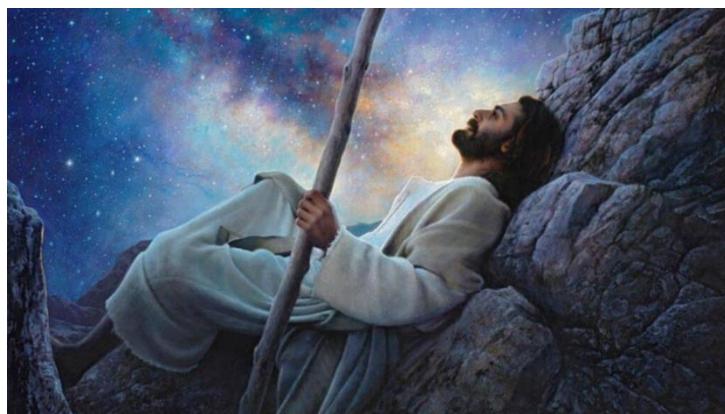
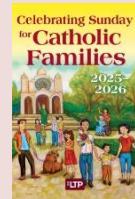
SEPTEMBER

Prayer

Prayer is the cornerstone for all “Reclaiming Sundays” efforts and is intended be carried throughout all the months. Two recommended resources to assist parents in building habits of prayer are the Hallow app (fee-based found on www.hallow.com) and the AMEN app (free on FORMED—<https://amenapp.org/>)

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR SEPTEMBER:

- Attend Mass every Sunday this month.
- Prepare your family for Mass by reading the Gospel in advance. Consider laying out clothes, find everyone's shoes, and do anything else that will make the morning peaceful and efficient. Use the “Celebrating Sunday” book offered.
- Come to Mass 15 minutes early & pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* prayer the group in the chapel.
- Pray before meals as a family and individually.
- Institute Lord's Day evening prayer on either Saturday or Sunday and ask for everyone in the family to offer prayer intentions. (Sample prayer below)
- Visit an adoration chapel for 10 - 30 minutes, or more as a family.
- Use this Adoration video to prepare your family on *What It Is* and *How to Go to Adoration* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0enG2NHd0Ag>
- Contribute to the Baby Bottle Drive which begins on September 27 through October 12.



OCTOBER

Rest, Recreation, and Prayer

“On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.” Genesis 2:2

We are called to rest on Sunday as the Lord rested. It isn’t an idleness or simply a time for entertainment but rather a restorative experience of reveling in the fullness of what has been and gratitude for God’s providence — a time to take delight in the gift of life.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR OCTOBER:

- Refrain from house projects and tasks centered around productivity.
- Choose activities focused on recreation, leisure, and rest (read a book, listen to music, do a crossword puzzle, go for a long walk, playing a game, or play outdoors together).
- Build community by inviting another family over or by visiting a friend or relative.
- Kids love traditions and they are great for building family identity. Create a Sunday tradition such as brunch after Mass or flowers and candles with dinner. Or, on the flip side, adopt a quiet, simple dinner.
- October is the month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, a Sunday family rosary could be done in your living room, but also could be prayed on a walk, around a campfire, or in the car on the way back from visiting a relative.
- Learn how to pray the Rosary from the USCCB website:
<https://www.usccb.org/how-to-pray-the-rosary>
- Ascension Press has *The Rosary in a Year* which takes you through saints’ reflections, traditional forms of imaginative prayer, sacred art, and practical techniques to focus. This can be found on www.ascensionpress.com/RiY (available prayer guide and notebook). Listen to the Rosary in a Year podcast on your favorite podcast app...YouTube, Spotify, Apple, and the Ascension Press App.
- Our Baby Bottle Drive continues through October 12.



Making Rosary kits



NOVEMBER

Beauty and Prayer

“God looked at everything he had made and found it very good.” Genesis 1:31

On Sunday we are called to participate in appreciating the beauty that is all around us and participate in it. Beauty can evoke in us an appreciation for what God has created in our life and lead us to participate in that creation through the materials around us. We are called to find and assist in creating beauty through the ordinariness of family life.

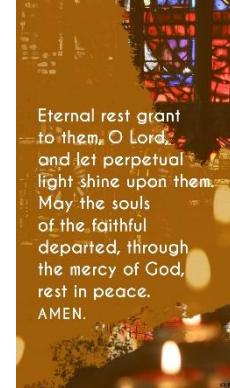
SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR NOVEMBER:

- Explore the beauty of our cathedral, basilica, or your parish by taking time to explore the art there. Learn about the saints you see. Take the time to draw your favorite image or take a family photo with a beautiful sacred image in the background. Turn this into your Christmas card photo.
- Color with your children.
- Share passionate projects in which you create (the woodshop, knitting, etc.).
- November 9th is a joint Faith Formation GIFT event with FUIF. After having donuts, parents will meet with Father Andrie and children PK+ will create a family Advent wreath.
- Visit the Giving Trees starting November 14th in the gathering space and choose one or more tags for those in need. The Christmas Box project also launches November 14th.
- Create an altar or sacred space at home. Many of us have religious art displayed (crucifix, icons, statues, etc.). Mother Angelica called them “holy reminders.” We may become so used to seeing them that they lose their importance, which is to remind us of Jesus. A small home altar may be a powerful tool to bring the centrality of prayer to our daily lives. One resource is <https://www.stmarthasguild.com/home-altars>
- Consider serving food at a Food Shelter for Thanksgiving. Invite extended family.
- **Liturgical Living:** Near the beginning of the month, visit a family member’s gravesite. Make it neat and bring flowers (if permitted by the cemetery). Pass on family stories about this person to your children. Learn the Eternal Rest prayer (below) and pray it daily for those you know who have died. Pray for the souls in purgatory.

<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/james-day-vintage-catholic>



lpi.org



DECEMBER

Music and Prayer

“He who sings, prays twice.” St. Augustine

Music and song lift the spirit to God. Engaging in vocal or instrumental music can be a way for our whole self to share in the glory of the Father. Have you used the AMEN or Hallow apps for your prayers yet?

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR DECEMBER:

- Share the gift of music together. If you can play instruments, great!
- Make a playlist of favorite hymns.
- Find a playlist of Advent and Christmas music. Check out Spotify’s collections, Ignatius Press Catholic Christmas Classics, or YouTube’s Beautiful Christmas Hymns, and more.
- Attend your parish, school, or neighborhood musical program this month.
- Attend the Faith Formation GIFT event on December 10th to pack Christmas boxes for Mary’s Place families. Start with Mass and dinner with us before packing boxes.
- Pray with an Advent Wreath. (On Nov. 2nd you made a family Advent wreath at our Faith Formation GIFT event after the 10:00 Mass.)
- Another prayer resource is the iBreviary app. This application brings all the traditional Catholic prayers and texts of the Liturgy to your device. Found on Google & Apple



iBreviary



JANUARY

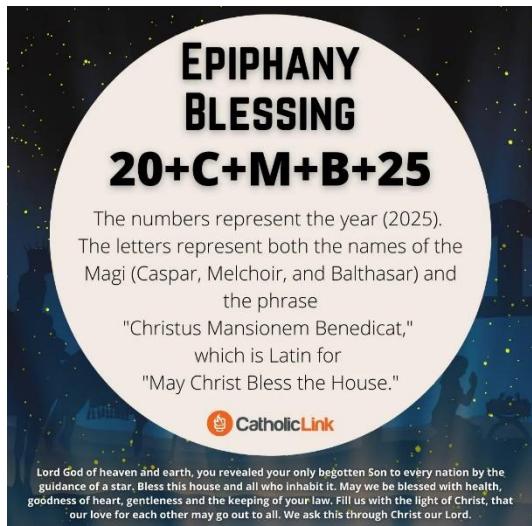
Invitation and Prayer

“The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.” Pope Francis

Pope Francis reminds all Christians in *Evangelli Gaudium* that the joy that transforms our lives when we encounter the living Jesus is a joy that must be shared.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR JANUARY:

- Invite someone outside of your family to share an aspect of your “reclaimed Sunday” (e.g., invite a neighbor for dinner or ask family friends to walk with you).
- **Liturgical Living: Intentionally celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.** (E.g., light the candles and have a little procession to place the Magi in your Nativity scene, use blessed chalk to bless your doorways, eat a meal of middle Eastern foods, sing “We Three Kings,” etc.) Invite someone to share your celebration. (See Epiphany Blessing below)
- **Liturgical Living: Celebrate the Baptism of the Lord** by remembering your own family’s baptisms. Light your *baptism* candles, look at photos and videos from the sacramental celebration, invite godparents to share your celebration, bless each other with holy water, pray for your godparents, pray for the priests who baptized you all, etc. While you have all these mementos out, document your family’s baptism dates and mark them on your calendar to celebrate in years to come.
- Recommended resources to assist in building habits of prayer are the Hallow App and the AMEN app. (Don’t forget about The Rosary in a Year with Fr. Mark Mary!)



<https://catholic-link.org/how-to-bless-your-home-on-the-epiphany/>

FEBRUARY

No/Low-Tech Sundays and Prayer

“Sometimes we prove hard of heart and mind; we are forgetful, distracted and carried away by the limitless possibilities for consumption and distraction offered by contemporary society.” *Evangelli Gaudium 196*

The endless distraction of smart phones is well known. A device marketed to unite and connect has in many instances had an alternative impact. Create space in the interior of your heart to receive the blessing of God by turning off the distractions.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR FEBRUARY:

- Turn off phones during dinner or all day.
- Stow devices or commit to not responding to emails or engage in social media-free Sundays.
- If you choose to lessen media, try replacing that time with playing family games or reading books aloud together.
- Ash Wednesday is February 18, 2026. Incorporate some kind of technology fast in your family’s Lenten plan. Adults — lead by example! Consider Father’s Lenten Bootcamp.
- **Liturgical Living: Attend Stations of the Cross at your parish or pray a family friendly version at home. (Start with 14 lit candles and extinguish one after each station.)**
- Recommended resources to assist in building habits of prayer are the Hallow App and the AMEN app. (Don’t forget about The Rosary in a Year with Fr. Mark Mary!)
- Teach your children a new prayer or practice their favorite one. Ask what makes it so special for them. Add the Guardian Angel prayer to their list of known prayers!
- Say a special prayer for our youth who will be confirmed on February 21st.

Guardian Angel Prayer

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,
Rule and guide.



MARCH

Elevated Conversation and Prayer

“The spirit of love which reigns in a family guides both mother and child in their conversations; therein they teach and learn, experience correction and grow in appreciation of what is good.” *Evangelli Gaudium* 139

The power of conversation in a family cannot be overstated. The act of listening with the ear of the heart and responding out of love to what was heard is the bedrock of trust in the family. Taking time to engage in this kind of conversation can often get pushed aside for the utilitarian needs that take priority in working to manage frantic family life.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR MARCH:

- How are the Lenten prayer, fasting, and almsgiving intentions going for you and your family? Refocus if necessary.
- Set aside time for intentional conversation and check on each other’s “highs and lows” from the week.
- Share “What did God do for me” and “What did I do for God” today.
- Read or listen to the daily Gospels. Discuss the reading. These may be found at <https://bible.usccb.org/>
- Set aside one-on-one time between a parent and a child to encourage conversations that may be lost in the busyness of family life. (Go out for breakfast or coffee/cocoa)
- Our Parish Meal Pack Service Event is on March 17-18. Sign up to help with set-up, a packing shift, clean-up, or help financially to meet our goal to feed God’s hungry children.
- Consider a silent dinner (counter intuitive to elevated conversation) - during the silent dinner, a piece of music is listened to, or a book is read. This could lead to elevated conversation following the experience.
- Liturgical Living: Celebrate St. Joseph’s solemnity on March 19. Honor your father and grandfathers somehow. Show appreciation to your priest in some way.
- Liturgical Living: Celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation on March 25th in some way. It is a break from Lent and nine months to Christmas!
- Later this month, spend some time one Sunday to make family plans for the Triduum and Easter. There are so many traditions that go with these days! Adopt a new one.
- Holy Week begins March 29th, Palm Sunday. What are your family plans?



APRIL

Breaking Bread and Prayer

“But because of its special solemnity and the obligatory presence of the community, and because it is celebrated “on the day when Christ conquered death and gave us a share in his immortal life,” the Sunday Eucharist expresses with greater emphasis its inherent ecclesial dimension. It becomes the paradigm for other Eucharistic celebrations. Each community, gathering all its members for the “breaking of the bread,” becomes the place where the mystery of the Church is concretely made present.” Dies Domini 34

Just as we gather around the banquet feast at the Eucharist, our families can model this communal breaking of the bread in our own homes through celebrating the day with a special meal and extra time at the table.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR APRIL:

- Last month you planned how to celebrate the Triduum and Easter. Holy Thursday with the foot washing Mass is April 2nd, Good Friday is April 3rd, and the Easter Vigil is April 4th. Take some time to reflect on your family’s new tradition and how it went.
- Easter is on April 5th. Consider bringing your family to the Easter Vigil Mass.
- Create a special meal and share time at the table together.
- Find ways to incorporate Alleluias into your family’s prayer. (Sing it, pray it, decorate your prayer space with it, greet each other with it ...)
- Plan ways your family can intentionally celebrate the season of Easter for all 50 days. (especially appropriate on Sundays)
- Learn the *Regina Caeli* prayer. (See below.)



Regina Caeli (Queen of Heaven)

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.
Has risen as He said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY

Community and Prayer

“Houses and neighborhoods are more often built to isolate and protect than to connect and integrate. The proclamation of the Gospel will be a basis for restoring the dignity of human life.” Pope Francis

Pope Francis urges in *Evangelli Gaudium* to keep the proclamation of the Gospel at the center of going forth to serve those around us. It is in keeping Christ at the center of our outward movement that the dignity of human life will be restored.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR MAY:

- Walk around your neighborhood together, praying for those in each house you pass. Pray for those who serve your neighborhood (police, firefighters, local government, etc.).
- Spend more time outside in the hopes of meeting more of your neighbors.
- Host a community or neighborhood potluck.
- Join in our May Crowning and GIFT event sponsored by Faith Formation on May 6th. We begin with Mass, crown Mary in the Grotto, and then share a family meal.
- Play games with the family.
- Do a puzzle with a friend.
- Stay for our Faith Formation sponsored Pancake Breakfast on May 17th which is our fundraiser for summer youth activities.
- Recommended resources to assist in building habits of prayer are the Hallow App and the AMEN app. (Don’t forget about The Rosary in a Year with Fr. Mark Mary!)



JUNE

Screen-Free Sundays and Prayer

“Sometimes we prove hard of heart and mind; we are forgetful, distracted and carried away by the limitless possibilities for consumption and distraction offered by contemporary society.” *Evangelli Gaudium 196*

Not only do smart phones distract, but also the endless streaming of Hulu, Netflix or Peacock. Create space in your family life to engage one another outside of the temptation to “binge” one show after another.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR JUNE:

- Skip the screens and enjoy glorious Minnesota summertime.
- Liturgical Living: Pentecost! Certainly, this inspires something. (Wear red to Mass, have a bonfire, make a birthday cake for the Church, eat spicy food - “tongues of fire.”)
- Liturgical Living: Corpus Christi – participate in a procession at your parish or somewhere else in the Archdiocese. There are many options.
- Liturgical Living: June 29 is the feast of our diocesan patron, Saint Paul. Celebrate by going to Mass at the Cathedral.
- Register your camper (gr. K-4) or youth leader (gr. 5-12) for Vacation Bible School on June 22-26. This is a perfect week to grow our love for Jesus through Scripture, prayer, music, crafts and more. Adults are needed too.
- Go to Adoration with your whole family. Adjust the time as works best for the ages of your children. Bring prayer books along to help them focus on prayer with Jesus. Watch the Adoration video from September again as a refresher.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0enG2NHd0Ag>



JULY

Creation and Prayer

“The work of creation was sealed by the blessing and consecration of the day on which God ceased ‘from all the work which he had done in creation.’” *Dies Domini 60*

The Lord has given us the Sabbath to bless and delight the fullness of our work. Creation is celebrated and blessed on the day of rest and seen as good. It is in acknowledgment of the gift and blessing of creation that we can more fully appreciate God’s providence.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR JULY:

- Get outdoors and relish the gift of God’s creation.
- Send your middle school and high school youth to Extreme Faith Camp.
- Go for a swim, walk, hike, sit outside and drink your cup of coffee, have a bonfire and roast s’mores with the neighbors.
- Visit your favorite local park; volunteer to clean up a section of it, if necessary.
- Enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds us and is a sign of the Lord’s love and providence.
- This month America will celebrate her 250th birthday. Participate as a family in a patriotic event or celebration.
- **Liturgical Living: July 26 is the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne (Mary’s parents). Do something to honor your grandparents.**
- Recommended resources to assist in building habits of prayer are the Hallow App and the AMEN app.



AUGUST *Service and Prayer*

“Inviting to a meal people who are alone, visiting the sick, providing food for families in need, spending a few hours in voluntary work and acts of solidarity: these would certainly be ways of bringing into people’s lives the love of Christ received at the Eucharistic table.” Dies Domini 72

When we receive the love of Christ at the Eucharist it is right to go outward and share that love. Upon reception into the Body of Christ it is natural for one to then seek to serve Christ’s body in the world.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR AUGUST:

- Serve at your parish. Every parish has some ministry opportunities that are family-friendly (greeters, hospitality, etc.)
- Surprise a neighbor with a bouquet and some cookies.
- Who is someone in need of Christ’s love who you could reach out to?
- Is there an area of your neighborhood that needs a little TLC?
- Does your neighborhood participate in the National Night Out? If so, attend.
- How can the love that you have received at the Lord’s table be shared with others?
- **Liturgical Living: August 15 is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Go to Mass, pray the glorious mysteries, put fresh flowers and a Mary statue in your prayer space. Because this year it falls on a Saturday, the obligation to attend Mass on this date is abrogated (repealed).**
- Recommended resources to assist in building habits of prayer are the Hallow App and the AMEN app.



Reclaiming Sundays And More

Learn more at <https://www.archspm.org/>
and
<https://www.st-therese.org/>

