

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION



We are All Saints...
Holiness is Possible!

"1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the father loves [also] the one begotten by him. 2 In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, 4 for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith. "

- 1 John 5:1-4

INTRODUCTION

Family Faith Formation is a major tool of new evangelization in our Parish. It will be important to understand these terminologies (family, faith, faith formation), the aim and objectives of Family Faith Formation, its agents and its structure, as well as the marks of Catholic Christian Family.

Part 1- Terminology Explained

1. FAMILY

We must be familiar with this saying of Pope St. John Paul II: *As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.* What comes to mind when the word "family" is mentioned. To some of us, it recalls our childhood family of origin – dad, mom, and siblings. For others it is our present nuclear family including our spouse and children. Others may think of extended family — cousins, aunts and uncles, in-laws, and so on. The word family stimulates all

these thoughts and more. All our different definitions and images of family come from our unique experiences with those to whom we are related biologically and those who have become “family” for us through life experiences outside our immediate living situations.

The family is often called the principal cell or building block of human society. In the family setup, the father, mother and children and all members of the family exercise the *priesthood of the baptized* in a privileged way "by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity." Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and "a school for human enrichment." Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous - even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life (CCC 1657)

The Christian home therefore is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. It is as a result of this that the family home is rightly called "the domestic church," a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity (CCC 1666).

2. FAITH

Biblically, Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (*Hebrews 11:1*). Faith can be understood objectively of subjectively. Objectively, *Faith* stands for the sum of truths revealed by God in Scripture and tradition and which the Church presents to us in a brief form in her creeds. Subjectively, *Faith* stands for the habit or virtue by which we assent to those truths.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 150), helps us to understand that faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a *free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed*. As personal adherence to God and

assent to his truth, Christian faith differs from our faith in any human person. It is right and just to entrust oneself wholly to God and to believe absolutely what he says. It would be futile and false to place such faith in a creature. By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God.² With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, *the obedience of faith* (CCC 143).

Faith is grace in that *it is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him*. This can be seen when St. Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus declared to him that this revelation did not come from flesh and blood, but from my Father who is in heaven. This implies that before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth (Cfr CCC 153).

3. FAITH FORMATION

Faith Formation is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life (CCC n. 8). It is our duty and obligation to hand on the faith which we have received. We do this by professing, celebrating, living and praying our faith. Faith Formation never ends; we are all formed in faith every day!

4. AIM

Our aim is to make our Parish a true family of God, a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity with the HOLY MASS as the “source and summit” of our life and mission.

5. OBJECTIVES

- To help every Christian to develop and grow in a personal relationship with God and His Church that is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.
- To build authentic friendships among fellow Christians and their families.
- To engage all families from all different backgrounds and at all levels of spiritual development.
- To make all families nurseries for vocations in the church.
- To create good Christian home in the mind of the Church.
- Above all to lead all Christians to heaven for, *We are All Saints and Holiness is Possible for all of us!*

6. STRUCTURE

Family Faith Formation has various branches:

- Marriage Enrichment (only for couples)
- Youth Ministry (An extension of the family ministry)
- Sacramental Formation (Preparation for the reception of various Sacraments)
- Prayer and Action (Prayer groups)
- Liturgical Ministries
 - ⇒ Lector Ministry
 - ⇒ Altar Server Ministry
 - ⇒ Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 - ⇒ Music Ministry
 - ⇒ Sacristan Ministry

7. AGENTS OF EVANGELIZATION

We are all the agents of evangelization by virtue of our baptism. God has given each one of us gifts and a mission to realize here on earth. Kindly discern your own call into any of the ministries and sign up for

it. In this way proper formation will be given according to the demands of each ministry.

Part 2- The Five Marks of a Catholic Family

(Source: The John Paul II Renewal Centre)

1. **Catholic Families Worship Together** -The Eucharist is the source of our love and the sign of the intimacy to which we are called. Therefore, as a family, we attend Sunday Mass weekly (and Holy Days and at other times as we are able) and we actively participate in parish life—our spiritual home away from home. We also recognize that as fallen persons, we struggle to be the loving community we are called to be. Therefore, as a family, we regularly go to confession (recommended: monthly) to seek God’s healing and grace so we might better live his vision of love in our lives and homes.
2. **Catholic Families Pray Together**-As “domestic church” we recognize that we cannot love one another as God loves us unless we ask him, *together*, to teach us what this means. Therefore, in addition to our individual prayer life, *we gather together as husband and wife and also as a family for prayer each day*. In that time, we praise and thank God for his blessings, we ask him for the grace to love each other and the world better, we seek his will for our lives, and we pray for both our needs and the needs of the Family of God. We recognize in the words of Servant of God, Fr. Patrick Peyton, “the family that prays together, stays together.”
3. **Catholic Families are Called to Intimacy**-Tertullian once proclaimed, “The world says, ‘Look at those Christians, see how they love one another!’” The Christian life is first and foremost a

call to intimate communion. We recognize that families are “Schools of Love.” Therefore, as a family, we constantly challenge ourselves to seek to discover new ways to be even more open with and loving to each other as husband and wife, parents and children. We recognize that children are to be a visible sign of the loving union between husband and wife and we work to make this a reality in our homes both in the quality of our relationships and in our openness to life. Further, we cultivate marriage and parenting practices that make each member of the family—husband and wife, parents and children—willingly open up to one another and seek to freely give themselves to create a deeper “community of love” and practice all the virtues that help us live life as a gift.

4. **Catholic Families Put Family First**—We recognize that—because our family relationships are the primary vehicle God uses to perfect us and challenge us to become everything we were created to be—family life, itself, is the most important activity. To protect the intimacy we are called to cultivate as the domestic church, we recognize the importance of regular family rituals *and* we are intentional about creating and protecting those activities such as family dinner, family prayer and worship, a game night and/or “family day”, and regular time for one-on-one communication and relationship-building. We hold these activities as sacred rituals of the domestic church and value them over all other activities that would seek to compete with them.
5. **The Catholic Family is a Witness and Sign**—God wants to change the world through our families. We allow ourselves to be part of his plan for changing the world in two ways. First, by striving to exhibit— in every way possible in our daily interactions as husband and wife, parents and children— the love and intimacy that every human heart longs for. We must show the

world that this love is a possible dream worth striving for. Second, we will carry this love outside the home by serving the world-at-large in a manner that is responsible and respectful of the integrity of the family unit. We do this by committing ourselves and our families to the intentional practice of all the corporal and spiritual works of mercy within the home and outside of it. To this end, the ways we, as a family, are trying to fulfill this responsibility will be a regular topic of conversation in our homes.

CONCLUSION

It is our hope that by embarking on this Family Faith Formation journey together, everyone will encounter Jesus Christ more. Striving together, praying together, building together, loving one another, may we all draw close to the Gospel of Christ.

We are All Saints... Holiness is Possible!

God's blessings,

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A special thanks is extended to Fr. Gatien Nghah for his contributions to this article.