

witness
W I T N E S S

Leader Guide



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

AN INVITATION

You have been invited to accompany your families as they are introduced to holy examples of faith! In today's world, it can be difficult to find role models who point us towards goodness and holiness. Saints are regular people from all walks of life who were committed to following Jesus' example. Their witness is a living reminder and a daily invitation for families to walk in their footsteps as they, too, are called to be saints.

Becoming a saint begins by inviting grace into our daily experiences, allowing God to lead us and make our ordinary lives extraordinary. One way to do this is by making ordinary moments intentional opportunities for faith conversations. Since we all have to eat everyday, cooking and sharing a meal becomes a great place to start. Each Family Meeting includes a recipe that will help to gather the families and set them up to share an intentional conversation.

The testimonies of life and death for the Lord offered by the saints and martyrs have been authentic sequentiae sancti Evangelii, Gospel passages capable of proclaiming Christ and eliciting and nourishing faith in him. (Directory for Catechesis 99)

FAMILY MEETINGS

Over 8 Family Meetings, families will cook a recipe related to the life of a saint and learn about a gift of the Holy Spirit lived out in their lives. Each Family Meeting includes: a gathering ritual, opening prayer, check-in question, recipe to cook together, teaching, and closing prayer. Each meeting is designed to take 20-45 minutes.

GATHER

Families will begin by praying a Litany of Saints they create together in the first meeting. When families continually share in rituals of their faith, they can become more grounded in Christ and united as a family. This gathering ritual will help provide a regular rhythm to begin Family Meetings.

CHECK-IN

The check-in is meant to get the conversation started between family members. The question is loosely based on the theme, and is one that is easy to answer.

ACTIVITY AND TEACHING

In each meeting, families will discuss how a specific saint lived out a gift of the Holy Spirit in their life and how they can be an example for us. We hope families will continue to celebrate the saints on their feast day by cooking the recipe together and having intentional conversations of faith about their holy lives.

PRAYER

To end each Family Meeting, a prayer is included for families to pray together.

A FEW TIPS

- By reading and experiencing the content yourself, you will be best equipped to accompany this program. We recommend first becoming familiar with the material before implementing it.
- *Witness* is part of our ongoing formation resources. It was designed for post sacramental preparation.
- *Witness* is designed to be led at-home, and can be accompanied by the At-Church Support Materials. The At-Church Support Materials include 2 Sessions for parents and children.
- Check in with families regularly using our Family Follow Through system available on Martha or as a PDF. This helps with accountability.
- Share photos from the Family Follow Throughs in your bulletin, newsletter, emails, or bulletin boards.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Family Meeting	Theme	Activity
1	-Called to be a Saint -Feast Days	-Make a Birthday Cake -Light the birthday candles to remember the light of Christ that lives in you.
2	-St. Teresa of Calcutta -Wisdom	-Recipe: Traditional Indian Curry
3	-Sts. Peter and Paul -Understanding	-Recipe: "Tent" Snack
4	-St. Katharine Drexel -Knowledge	-Recipe: Cornbread
5	-St. Joseph -Counsel	-Make and decorate sugar cookies -Create a "feast" with an assortment of goodies and decorate your St. Joseph Table. -Share your extra goodies with a neighbor, friend, or someone in need.
6	-St. Michael the Archangel -Fortitude	-Recipe: St. Michael's Bannock
7	-St. Maximilian Kolbe -Piety	-Recipe: Polish Kielbasa Meal
8	-St. Lucy -Fear of the Lord	-Recipe: "S" shaped Sweet Buns

MASTER PLANNER

Download the Pathways Master Planner to schedule and organize your implementation of *Witness*. It can be found toward the bottom of the Pathways for Parish Use page on our website.

WITNESS AT-CHURCH

It is important to have families gather periodically throughout the *Witness* process.

The goal of gathering is to:

- Find out what is going well and what families are struggling with in the Family Meetings.
- To encourage, deepen, and support their experience of the Family Meetings with any tips, inspiration, or information.
- To meet and hear from other families on a similar journey. There is wisdom in any room of families, especially parents!
- To give children a positive and meaningful experience at-church.
- To pray together - for each other and for the entire community.

This resource has been provided to support you in facilitating family Sessions held at-church throughout the *Witness* experience. The Sessions are designed to have parents and children together. There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame in the Sessions. Session 1 is designed to be used between Family Meeting 4 and 5. Session 2 is designed to be used after Family Meeting 8. They may also be used between other Sessions. We realize each of our directors have different gifts; some are wonderful teachers, some are storytellers, others are better facilitating small groups, some are gifted in finding volunteers to present material. Use your strengths to lead your family Sessions, and look for others who can take the pieces you are not as confident in. It takes a team!

There are supplies that need to be pulled together to help bring these Sessions to life. We have given you supply lists. We cannot overemphasize the impact of simple but beautiful decor, great hospitality, and intimate prayerful spaces. Your attention to detail tells everyone this is important, we prepared for you!

We realize families are in different places and stages in their own faith journeys. We have written sessions we feel best take into account today's families. It is our hope that these Sessions meet them where they are at and slowly lead them into something more. Feel free to scale the material up or down. It is most important that families leave with a positive experience of Church and community, feeling like they have a place in it. We have included 2 family Sessions for the *Witness* resource. In addition, you may also want to have a gathering inviting families to bring a favorite family recipe to share. A simple potluck with prayer, food, conversation, and a couple games is a great community builder.

WITNESSES

FAMILY FOLLOW THROUGHS

Time with family is precious. Following through with this family experience tells your child this is important. With your child, please complete the following tasks after each meeting to turn in.

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Family Meeting 1: Email a picture of the birthday cake you made before you enjoyed it as a family.

Family Meeting 2: Email a picture of the traditional Indian curry you made in honor of St. Teresa of Calcutta before you enjoyed it as a family.

Family Meeting 3: Email a picture of the tent with fish you created in honor of Sts. Peter and Paul before you enjoyed it as a family.

Family Meeting 4: Email a picture of the cornbread you made in honor of corn's place in soul food and Native American culture and cooking before you enjoyed it as a family.

Family Meeting 5: Email a picture of the St. Joseph Table you created in honor of St. Joseph before you enjoyed it as a family.

Family Meeting 6: Email a picture of the St. Michael's Bannock bread you made in honor of St. Michael before you enjoyed it as a family.

Family Meeting 7: Email a picture of the Polish meal you made in honor of St. Maximilian Kolbe before you enjoyed it as a family.

Family Meeting 8: Email a picture of the sweet buns you made in honor of St. Lucy before you enjoyed them as a family.