

# Share the joy of family life



## Joy amid the struggle

When Jesus tells us to “keep my commandments” and “love one another as I have love you,” he adds, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete” (John 15:10-12). Jesus’ plan for family life is designed to give us joy.

And yet family life can be a struggle. We work so hard to feed, transport and care for our loved ones, and sometimes it feels like all we get is tired. Joy does not come on our terms, but flows to us as a gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). We receive this gift best when we invite God more into our family life.

## Open your family to more joy with the joyful mysteries of the rosary

The Holy Family experienced extraordinary struggles such as starting out in a barn and then fleeing to Egypt. Amid these trials, and the ordinary challenges of family life, the Holy Family experienced profound joy through their intimacy with God and one another.

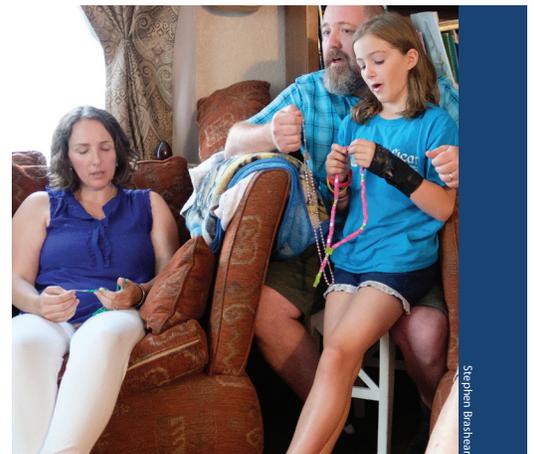
Reflect on the five joyful mysteries of the rosary and ask our Lord to send the Holy Spirit upon your family that you may grow more deeply in love with God and one another.

### 1. The angel Gabriel announces God’s call to the Virgin Mary

#### Reflect and Act: Listen to God

Mary is deeply aware that her relationship with God gives her life meaning. So when the angel Gabriel tells her she will give birth to Jesus, she responds, “May it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). Encourage your family to be open to God’s call. Clear unnecessary distractions that can make it hard to listen to God’s word. Work hard to listen to God and to one another in your family.

**Action: Make dinnertime sacred, keeping screens away from the table and starting with grace.** Share how you have heard God’s call in your life.



## 2. Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth

### **Reflect and Act: Invest in extended family**

After receiving the news from the angel Gabriel, Mary travels right away to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist. Our extended family can be a source of help, wisdom and encouragement. Grandparents can play a critical role in encouraging parents and strengthening the faith of grandchildren.

**Action: Connect with your extended family, making time for grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.** Investing time to remain close to your extended family pays off in a more vibrant and joyful family life.

## 3. The nativity of Jesus

### **Reflect and Act: Recognize the sacred in your family**

The Lord of heaven and earth humbled himself to become incarnate to us as a newborn child. God chose to make the human person sacred by becoming one of us. In the ordinary experiences of family life, we encounter the sacred in surprising ways by humbly caring for our spouses, our children and our elderly family members.

**Action: Let your spouse, children and parents know that they are a gift from God to you.** Take time in your evening prayer to thank God for placing these people in our lives.

## 4. Mary and Joseph present Jesus in the Temple

### **Reflect and Act: Participate in the sacraments**

Mary and Joseph journeyed to Jerusalem to present the child Jesus to God in the Temple. This presentation reflected their gratitude to God and brought joy to Simeon and Anna when they encountered Jesus. When we commit to participating in the sacraments and parish life, we discover a community of support and, most importantly, receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

**Action: Take a step to go deeper in your engagement with your parish.** Participate in the Eucharist weekly and reconciliation monthly. Engage with your faith formation or youth ministry program. Join a small faith sharing group.

## 5. Mary and Joseph find Jesus in the Temple

### **Reflect and Act: Communicate and reconcile as a family**

When Mary and Joseph lost Jesus in Jerusalem, they were frightened. Though Jesus obediently returned to Nazareth, Mary and Joseph discovered that, even in the Holy Family, parents and children are not always in complete harmony. Conflict and challenges are part of family life. Joy means encountering one another with love that is obedient to God's will and open to the needs of the ones we love.

**Action: Look for opportunities to say "Please," "Thank you," and "I'm sorry" to your spouse and children.** Participate in the Eucharist weekly. And throughout it all, continually say "Please," "Thank you," and "I'm sorry" to God.



## Strengthen the joy in your family with *At Home with Faith*

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“Three words:  
‘Please,’  
‘Thank you,’  
‘Sorry.’  
Three  
essential  
words!”  
Pope Francis