

# God Family Friends



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## Dear Parents,

Are you or your children stressed out or sad over how the stay-at-home order has affected "normal" life? Are there just too many school lessons or work-at-home tasks? Are you tired of trying to look like you have it all under control? Are your children sad about the loss of contact with friends, sports, etc. Are they disappointed, because there will be no prom or a graduation? Or worse, have you lost your job and now deal with serious fears about the future? How could this happen?

Nearly 2,000 years ago, two disciples walking toward Emmaus also asked in disbelief: "How could this happen?" Crushed and disoriented, they walked away from their hope that Jesus could have been the Messiah. Yet, Jesus came alongside and walked with them, lovingly listening to their story of disappointment. Then he explained that everything that they just witnessed had to happen to fulfill the Father's plan, and he revealed himself to them in the breaking of the bread.

The disciples met Jesus in the midst of disappointment. This week, we invite you to ask Jesus to hear your losses... but also to let him connect you to hope and free you from fear.



***"[Christ] is in you, he is with you and he never abandons you. However far you may wander, he is always there, the Risen One. He calls you and he waits for you to return to him and start over again. When you feel you are growing old out of sorrow, resentment or fear, doubt or failure, he will always be there to restore your strength and your hope" (Christus Vivit, 2).***

Dear Ascension of Our Lord Parish Community,

Today we celebrate the Third Sunday of the Easter Season. Easter is more than just a day--it is a prayer liturgical season of 50 days!

During these 50 days I hope you are taking advantage of this wonderful resource that can help families celebrate Sunday in our homes. While we are unable to gather as a parish family at this time, it is important that we continue to gather at home for prayer--to keep our faith alive and well!

We are called to do much these days. Between our jobs and the many e-learning assignments that our children have to complete for school each day (RE no exception), we are called to prioritize what is truly important. Our faith will continue to lead us through this time of change, the uncertainty, and the isolation. Renewed time as family, renewed priorities, and a time to continue to develop our faith and prayer life together continue to be a blessing during this time.

Many parents never thought that they would be teaching at home. Many parents feel inadequate. In the end, we are all in this together doing the best that we can. Like our Baptismal Promises being renewed throughout this Easter Season, we as parents and grandparents are called to renew ourselves as the FIRST teachers of the faith. The domestic church (our homes) is foundation of what are children will continue to believe. What you value as important they will as well.

My prayer for all of you is to spend time in prayer together. If prayer is important to you, it will be important to our children as well! This will keep our faith alive!

As always, Fr. Jose, Deacon Peter, and I are available if you have any questions or are in need of any support.

Peace,

Vince Zaprzal, MA

Director of Parish Ministries, Religious Education, & Facilities

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630-953-4415



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to keep you up to date!**

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## The Road to Emmaus

In the Gospel story this weekend, we find a model for the Mass. If your kids are old enough, they may be able to notice this with just a little help from mom and dad.

There are [4 parts of the Mass](#) consisting of two primary movements: an encounter with Jesus in the Word, followed by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist.

First, notice these two movements in this week's Gospel yourself, then help your children to discover them as well.

## Encounter Him!

Although we are unable to receive Jesus sacramentally, you'd better believe we still receive Him! Regardless of where you are, you can always receive Jesus in the Word, but choose which Mass you will live stream and do both! Encounter Him in the Word, and receive Jesus into your hearts by making a Spiritual Communion.

[View this page](#) for live-streamed Masses across the diocese, or visit your parish website for the most up-to-date parish information. If your parish does not have a live-streamed Mass, we recommend a kid's Mass with Fr. Andy Davy on Saturday, or Sunday morning Mass with Bishop Pates.

## The Gospel Story for Kids



LIVE

STREAM



**4:00 PM**

Saturday 4/26  
with Fr. Andy



**10:00 AM**

Sunday 4/26 with  
Bishop Pates

[Daily Readings](#)

## Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Holy Eucharist. I love You above all things and I want to be with you.

Since I am unable to receive you at Mass, please Jesus, come into my heart. Be with me now and never let me be separated from you. Amen.

# God Family Friends

## Bible Enthronement

We encourage you as parents to consider the many ways in which you can more and more [make the word of God a part of your home](#).

We have included a special ritual your family can do to place God at the center of your lives. Create a prayerful space where your family can gather daily in prayer; and in that space, prominently place the Scriptures where they can be honored. Choose a place that is set apart - away from the TV, the noise, and as many distractions as possible. Decorate the area by placing flowers, candles, a crucifix, or sacred images. Use the following ritual prayer\* when you gather for your family's Bible Enthronement.

When possible, the ritual may start outside the main door to the house or outside the main entrance to the room. One member of the family holds the Bible, raised slightly. The father, mother, or other leader begins the celebration with the opening litany:

### Parent All

Our Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Word of the Father.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

You became one with us to tell of the Father's love.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

You are the light that shines in the darkness.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

You save us from fear and break the bonds of sin and death.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

You come to guide our steps and lead us to God.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

You are the Word of eternal life.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

You fill us with the Holy Spirit.  
**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

As everyone enters the house or room, they may sing a suitable song.

Then one of the following Scripture passages on the next page is read:

## Reader

**Matthew 4:17-23** (Jesus calls and heals through his Word)

**Mark 4:1-20** (The Word is like the seed)

**Luke 4:14-21** (Jesus proclaims the Word in Nazareth)

**John 1:10-14** (Jesus is the Word of God and the light of the world)

After the reading, the leader places the Bible in the place prepared for it. All bow deeply before the enthroned Bible.

## Parent

We have heard your words, Jesus.

They give us joy and bring light and truth into our lives.

Your presence gives us peace in our troubled and divided world.

Let your Word create in our hearts a deep desire for you.

Be with us in our hearts and homes, in our community and country.

Give us your Holy Spirit to help us to understand your Word.

We enthrone now this Holy Bible in our midst.

Make your Word the center of our lives.

May your Word inspire all that we think and say and do.

May your Word bind us together in unity with each other and with you, today and forever.

## All

**Amen.**

## Parent

Let's now pray together the words Jesus taught us

## All

**Our Father...**

## Parent

After this next prayer together, we will end with a sign of peace just like we do at Mass. Now, repeat after me:

**We promise to respect...**

**The Word of God in our midst...**

**We shall read and reflect on it...**

**As a family of God.**

**May we draw from it...**

**Inspirations for our decisions...**

**Strength for our work...**

**And comfort in suffering...**

**Jesus, help us...**

**To be faithful to our promise...**

**You who live forever and ever...**

**Amen.**

End with a sign of peace.

# God Family Friends

## The Making of Memories

Parents: call to mind and discuss together some of your favorite, most joyous memories from childhood (pause and do it now). Now, recall some challenging times, or times you would rather forget...

It is amazing how vividly we can remember both good and bad memories from our childhood. How do you think your children will remember this time of the "Stay-at-home" order?

- Will they remember how distant you were, or will they remember your love, and the joy of being with mom and dad?
- Will they recall fear and uncertainty, or your family's faith and trust in God?
- Will they remember separation and isolation, or will they remember great shared experiences and growing close as a family?

*The pandemic will soon end, but the memories you make will last a life-time.*

You have a choice each day to live family life to the full! We invite you this week to look for the joy and the love, to make great memories together and to show your children that, 'Love always out runs fear'!

*"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7)*

## Keep Calm & Turn to God

It may be difficult for you or someone you know to manage feelings and/or determine the next best steps. It is important to remember during these challenging times that we can find Hope in God if we turn to him for strength.

**Call4Calm**, a free emotional support text line, was launched recently by the Illinois Department of Human Services. It is an anonymous free service for Illinois residents experiencing stress and mental health issues related to COVID-19. Once a text is sent, you will receive a call from a counselor within 24 hours.

Text "Talk"  
to 552020

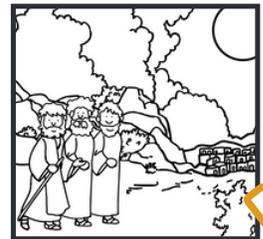
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## Free Family Fun

Have fun, and enjoy spending time with you family this weekend. We have included some engaging opportunities for you to consider - or be creative and make up your own! See "[5 Clever ways to keep your kids occupied in quarantine](#)" to help get your creative juices flowing.

## Crafting Emmaus

See these two craft ideas of the Road to Emmaus from [craftingthewordofgod.com](#). Click the image to the right for a coloring page, or [consider doing this with your children](#) if you have the supplies.



## Alphabet Scavenger Hunt

Grab your phones and/or tablets, and take a walk around your backyard or neighborhood looking for something that starts with the letter "A". Take a photo.

Then find something that starts with "B", then "C", and so on. See if you can snap a picture for every letter of the alphabet, without skipping a letter.



Good for the  
Whole Family!



Time



Camera



## Take it to the NEXT LEVEL!

Make it a family race to "A-Z".

Vote on who took the best picture for each letter.

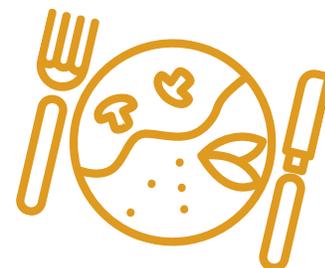
## Gospel Connection

Just as you took your walk and snapped photos of things on your journey, so it was for the two disciples walking together on the road to Emmaus. They too had their snap shots of the events of the past week clearly in their thoughts, the crucifixion, the resurrection, etc.

- Imagine what they were thinking as they encountered this 'stranger' on the road.
- What do you think they must have felt to suddenly realize that this 'stranger' was not just another sojourner but the Risen Lord himself?
- Share your thoughts!

## Dinner Conversation Tonight

Many things as we know it are changing; Baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, weddings, graduations, proms, sports, and the list goes on... Hopes and dreams seem to be fading away.



- What has changed for you? How might these events look in the near future?
- What new hopes and dreams have begun for you over the past thirty days?
- How has the "breaking of the bread" (see Acts 2:42) taken on new meaning in our small house church or "Domestic Church"?
- Do you think you would recognize Jesus if he were to appear physically to you? and...
- Would you invite him into our home?
- How wide do you think your family doors are open for Jesus?
- How open are the doors of your heart? Have you invited Jesus in?
- Take a moment and invited Jesus in!

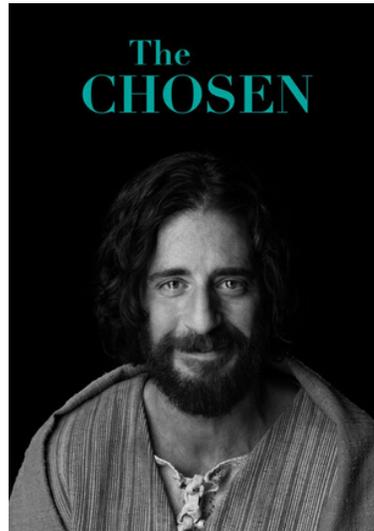
'Lord Jesus I invite you into my heart, come live within me and guide me all the days of my life.' ~ Amen

## Binge-Watch Jesus

The Chosen is the first original multi-season series about the life of Jesus - [watch the trailer](#).

[Download VidAngel's app](#) and watch Season 1. (English and Spanish subtitles are available through the app). It is totally free and good for the family.

Go ahead, get a few episodes in. Then call friends and family, start over, and begin watching and discussing with them.



## Helping Those in Need

There are many great initiatives going on in parishes and throughout the Diocese of Joliet that are aimed at serving the most vulnerable and the most in need.

Your family can make a huge impact in the lives of those who are considered "at risk". Here is a list of [7 specific things you can do](#) to reach out to isolated older adults - friends, family, neighbors, or fellow parishioners.

## Quarantine Collage

We have seen so many pictures of unique ideas and very real ways in which Catholic families, in our diocese and around the world, are creatively responding in faith in the midst of crisis.

Have you creatively made your home into a Domestic Church? Perhaps you have made an altar for Mass or created a prayerful

space in some way? Have you taken pictures of your family live-streaming Mass or doing something that was suggested in this "God, Family, Friends" resource? If so, please send your photos to **oyf@dioceseofjoliet.org** \* We would love to create a Quarantine Collage for an upcoming resource.

\*By emailing your photos you consent to and give permission to use these images in parish and Diocesan communications / publications.

