



Catholic Schools Week 2024

Catholic Schools: Communities of Service

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21–27 JANUARY 2024

**WEDNESDAY: SERVICE IN OUR FAMILY COMMUNITY**





## Key Words: Family, Community, Service

### Introduction

(Introduction can be read as part of a class introduction, preceding the use of worksheets or as part of a prayer service – see suggested prayer service below.)

Pope Francis has said that ‘social changes are altering the living conditions of marriage and families all over the world’ and that ‘prolonged and multiple crises’ are putting a strain on family life. His suggested solution was to ‘rediscover the value of the family as the source and origin of the social order, as the vital cell of a fraternal society capable of caring for the common home’. We need to understand the ways that families are under pressure and come up with practical ways to rise to these challenges. As always, prayer must be a central component in our efforts, and service must be at the heart of what we do. If we serve the good of the family, the family can serve the good of the wider community.

(Quotes from: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-04/pope-francis-rediscover-the-value-of-family-life.html>)

### Music

One or more of the songs listed here on themes of family and service can be used as part of a prayer service or explored for themes using worksheet 2.

- ‘Servant Song’ – Bobby Fisher: <https://open.spotify.com/track/rTzoYagvHQUkHNWoiN3A3u>
- ‘Lead Me’ – Sanctus Real: <https://open.spotify.com/track/5E9p9WZsddRWhHYBCRxjCe>
- ‘Bless the Corners of this House: – Notre Dame Folk Choir: <https://open.spotify.com/track/6Lj7LcRdlv3qoVIMzzVMb>
- ‘These Hands’ – Dave Gunning: <https://open.spotify.com/track/63p3mt70r15kbuAbHABoLi3>
- ‘Hands’ – Jewel: <https://open.spotify.com/track/6I5auKcis6sGDrHk6UTEog>
- ‘We Are Family’ – Sister Sledge: <https://open.spotify.com/track/3lQFZgYuTXPiukusoz77ol>
- ‘Teach Your Children’ – Crosby, Stills and Nash and Young: <https://open.spotify.com/track/29HaKOpeLSYvqdFyEQSRdj>

### Prayer

(This prayer can be used at the start of class, at the end of class or as part of a prayer service.)

Lord, we all come from families,  
Help us to respect that.  
Help us to love and serve those in our family in a spirit of generosity.  
Our families are rarely perfect. There will be problems – it’s human nature.  
Help us to understand and forgive as we would like to be understood and forgiven.  
It’s not easy these days, but we would love the courage to pray together.  
Help us to be patient as we would like other family members to be patient with us.  
Amen.



## Worksheet 1

1. What, in your opinion, is the most important thing about family?

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2. List three practical ways you can be of service in your family.

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3. What kind of family prayer would best suit your family?

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4. How can your family be of service in the wider community?

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5. Is anything you're doing at the moment causing trouble in your family? What can you do to improve the situation?

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6. How can the family be a 'domestic church'?

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## Worksheet 2

Listen to the song about family and/or service that your teacher will play for you. Answer the questions thoughtfully.

1. What is your personal reaction to or opinion of this song?

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2. What has this song to say about family and/or service?

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## Worksheet 3

Having viewed the PowerPoint presentation on family, give your views on the following quotes.

1. 'The family that prays together stays together.' - Fr Patrick Peyton

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2. 'A happy family is but an earlier heaven.' - Sir John Bowring

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3. 'A family is a risky venture, because the greater the love, the greater the loss ... That's the trade-off. But I'll take it all.' - Brad Pitt

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4. 'The family humanises people through the relationship of "we" and at the same time promotes each person's legitimate differences.' - Pope Francis

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5. 'I sustain myself with the love of family.' - Maya Angelou

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## Prayer Service

### Opening

Reflective instrumental music – played by students, teacher or on CD/Spotify (e.g. *Ripples of the Divine* by Marie Dunne or *The Quiet* by John Michael Talbot)

### Introduction

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### Gospel Reading (Lk 2:41-51)

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, ‘Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.’ He said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’ But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

### Ritual

Hand out Post-it notes in various colours and ask students to write the names of those in their family and pin the notes to a board or the wall. Ask the class to pray silently for all family members.

### Closing Prayer

Lord, we all come from families,  
Help us to respect that.  
Help us to love and serve those in our family in a spirit of generosity.  
Our families are rarely perfect. There will be problems – it’s human nature.  
Help us to understand and forgive – as we would like to be understood and forgiven.  
It’s not easy these days, but we would love the courage to pray together.  
Help us to be patient as we would like other family members to be patient with us.  
Amen.

### Final Song

‘Servant Song’ – Bobby Fisher: <https://open.spotify.com/track/1TzoYagvHQUkHNW0rN3A3u>

