

16—Our Family Helps Us

Objectives

By the end of this lesson students will be able to ...

- state that the family is the first place in which we are called to love and serve.
- recognize that our family is also the most difficult to serve.
- realize the Mystery of Crowning is the special way in which families are transformed into the image of Christ's love.

For the Catechists

Christians are called to love and serve God and each other. We need a place to learn how to love and serve, and our family offers us the best school of love. Each day family members give each other an opportunity to learn commitment, patience, and service. Maybe if the family members started seeing their disagreements as opportunities to practice love and patience, our families would grow stronger in their love of Christ.

We need our families as we journey to God because they help us learn how to become more God-like. They teach us how to sacrifice for each other. Family members encourage each other and want what is best. In our family we learn how to accept each other and be with each other all day. We learn how to become one family in Christ just as God wants us to become one with Him.

Through the Mystery of Crowning in Marriage, the couple begins a Christian family in which the love of Christ is seen in action. This lesson presents the relationship of the family as similar to the relationship of the Trinity. The Trinity is a community, and so is the family. Also, the family is an icon of the Church—a community of believers.

This lesson presents details about a traditional family, but modern society has been rough on the family. Marriage and family are being defined in ways other than the traditional way. We must be sensitive to the fact that some Church members are definitely affected. When teaching this lesson, emphasize God's plan for marriage and family, but try to avoid making any judgmental statements about any of the other life choices. Help the students realize the importance of the members of their family. Encourage the students to also think about their extended family because grandparents and relatives are all working together to help them learn how to love and serve. The entire family is on a journey to God.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal ...

Icon: The Holy Trinity (*Come Bless the Lord* icon packet #18).

Closing Prayer: "This New Commandment"—at the end of Lesson 14 in this manual

Pens, pencils, markers and white paper

1. Opening Prayer

Chant or recite "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal...."

[Find this prayer in the Divine Liturgy books in your church. This prayer is before the reading of the Epistle]

2. Introduction

Ask the students to brainstorm about how the family is our school to learn how to serve and love. Identify specific scenes that show family members serving and loving: Mom and Dad cooking dinner, siblings helping each other with homework.

3. Guided Reading

- Before the reading, review last week's objectives. Then summarize this week's objectives of the lesson on a wall pad or easel pad to use for review next week.
- Have students read text aloud and emphasize the importance of family.

4. Scriptural Reflection

- Read Ephesians 6:1-4
- Before reading aloud, have students make the sign of the cross. Remind them that reading Scripture is praying.
- Look at the icon of the Wedding Banquet at Cana. Share some of the facts from the back of the icon.
- Give the students 3 minutes to answer the questions and read the passage again.
- Ask the students to work in groups of 2 and share their answers
- Possible answers:
 - Obeying them; helping them with household chores
 - A reward of a good life and a long life.
 - Some possibilities: Teach them through love—not hitting; give them forgiveness.

Background Reading (Sunday and the Church)

"Because life is so fragmented, we tend to put the Church also into a certain pigeon-hole. The Church is an island of peace in a threatening world, a guardian of morality and teacher of right and wrong. Its time slot is Sunday morning, but we don't see any relation between it and the rest of the week. For many families today, Sunday itself is nothing special, except for a few added hours at the end of the week to do shopping or odd jobs that can't be done any other day. The purpose of the Church must be wider than this; it is to serve as a leaven to ferment the transformation of our whole way of life. St. Paul says of the Christian life, 'Do you not know that a little yeast has its effect through all the dough? Get rid of the old yeast to make of yourselves fresh dough Christ our Passover has been sacrificed'" (1 Corinthians 5:6-7) (*Journey* TM 234).

5. From the Teaching of the Church Fathers

- Ask one student to read the words from St. John Chrysostom.
- Possible answers:
 - They are wealthy with love.
 - The couple working together can endure anything.
 - Help each other make the right choices.

6. Liturgical Study

- Read the paragraphs aloud.
- Ask the students to explain how our homes are "little churches."

7. Closing Prayers

Sing or pray "This New Commandment." Handout with words are at the end of Lesson 14 in this manual

Supplemental Activities:

Review—At the end of the lesson, ask the students what they remember by using one of the following suggestions:

1. Ask the students to write a short explanation about how their house is like a "little church." Let them share with each other.
2. Reread the information about the World Meeting of Families 2015. Use notecards to write the words *please*, *thank you*, and *sorry*. Place these reminders around the house for all family members to read. Use markers and stickers to decorate the cards.
3. Students learned that the family is the school for learning love. Ask them to write homework assignments for people in their family to practice loving each other. Possibilities: Two siblings have to play a game with no fighting; a parent and child must do dishes with no complaining Practice working together showing love.

Background Reading (Love One Another)

"God invites us into a relationship with Himself, but He reveals Himself as a community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are invited into this primary community. The famous icon of the Holy Trinity under the form of the hospitality of Abraham (cf Gv 18:1-15) portrays three angels seated around a table. By the harmony and blending of the lines of their bodies they form a circle, a unity open, inviting us to join this community of life and love. By our hospitality to one another we become God-like. The psalmist exclaimed, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is, when brethren dwell as one!' (Ps 132/133:1). The distinguishing mark of the Christian faith remains love for one another (cf Jn 15:17; 1 Jn 4:7-13) in the image of the Trinity" (LLI 6).