

YEAR 4 - LESSON 5 - FAMILY GUIDE WK. 2



FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION

GOD'S SAVING LOVE FOR US: LITURGY AND THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

TOPIC: THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING: PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

FAMILY AT-HOME MISSION ACTIVITY

Sin hurts our relationship with God and some sins actually separate us from God. God knew that we would sin, but He still loves us and wants to be as close as He can be to us. The Good News is that, for that reason (i.e., loving us while we were sinners), God the Father sent His Son Jesus to save us from our sins! Jesus' sacrifice of dying for our sins is the source from where the grace of all the sacraments come. In fact, the Sacraments of Healing, following Baptism, cleanse and heal us of our sins, fill us with God's grace again and bring us back into a loving, intimate relationship with Him. God fills us with His peace! This makes God happy and it makes us happy too!

Step 1: As a family, together, watch one or more of the videos below:

- [Reconciliation](#) | Catholic Central
- [Sacraments 101: Penance \(why we confess\)](#)
- [Catholicism 101: Confession!](#)
- [Inside Out](#) (Tweens & Teens)

Step 2: Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or make intentional plans to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as a family.

Step 3: Use the *Family Epiphany Blessing* below and chalk to ask God's blessing upon your home together as a family. (Family Mission Activities adapted from Catholic Digest)

Family Epiphany Blessing

“The practice of writing a special code over the entrance to a home with blessed chalk is a centuries-old traditional blessing that takes place each January. It's a reminder of God's presence in our daily lives, and a dedication of the year, and everything that will happen during it, to God. It's also a great witness for your guests, not to mention that it looks pretty cool!” (From Catholic Family)

How to do it...

1. Take a stick of chalk that's been blessed by a priest or deacon, and write above your home's front entrance (inside or outside), 20 + C + M + B + 24.

2. A family member reads this explanation:

“The letters C, M, and B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three Magi (or Wise Men) who brought gifts to Jesus sometime soon after His birth: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which translates to ‘May Christ bless this house.’ The ‘+’ signs represent the cross and the numbers, the year.”

3. The head of the house leads the prayer:

Dear God, we ask Your blessings on our home and family and anyone who visits here. We invite Your Son, Jesus, to be a part of our family and to always be with us in our home, in our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows. We thank You and we love You. We make the following words of Joshua our own: “As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

Hail Mary...

As you finish the prayer of blessing, make the Sign of the Cross with holy water (if possible), as a reminder of your baptisms and of Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan, which began His public ministry.

We ask all this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Step 4: Get ready to share about your Family Epiphany Blessing experience, as well as your front door mantle (bring a picture), at Week 3’s gathering of families.



A Daily Examination of Conscience Helps Keep God at the Center: There are many ways to do a daily examination of conscience, and various resources are available online or through Catholic publishers. Ask your pastor or parish catechetical leader for guidance if need be.

A helpful practice for a daily examen is to put God at the center, and to begin (and end) with praise and gratitude. The Lord blesses us with so many graces and opportunities to grow each day. Becoming more mindful and appreciative of these graces helps us trust in Him more and especially to trust in His mercy more and more as we recognize our sins—our choices to do wrong and failures to do good—and seek the Lord’s mercy and grace. As we look over our day, we can be mindful of our fundamental relationships (God, family, others [friends, coworkers, neighbors]), how we treat ourselves, how we treat creation and the things of this world, and our fundamental attitudes. The Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and other Gospel teachings can be very helpful for us. A key for starting and continuing the practice of a daily examen is simplicity and brevity.

For parents: Consider how you can introduce and nourish a simple daily examen within family prayer, with some brief time of silence to encourage your children to reflect and pray.

For many, a daily examen is best done near or at the end of the day, but it depends on your schedule and situation. Remember the importance of gratitude and praise—the Lord does not want us to be discouraged by our sins but desires that we seek Him ever more. Be encouraged and don’t give up! God loves us and wants us to grow in Him!