



THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

*Tools for Building the Domestic Church
Including recommendations for the Year of St. Joseph*

ACCORDING TO THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL'S DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH: "THE FAMILY, IS SO TO SPEAK, THE DOMESTIC CHURCH."

(Lumen Gentium #11) This means that it is in the context of the family that we first learn who God is and to prayerfully seek His will for us. In the following bullet points you will find some suggestions on how to build your "domestic church" through a life of prayer that can help all the members of your family.

- Pray as a family and read from Scripture daily, certainly before meals, but also first thing in the morning or before bed. Find a time that works for your family. Use the liturgy of the Church as a model for prayer, and try to include heartfelt unstructured prayer as well. Unsure of how to begin? The Church has some beautiful traditional Catholic prayers.
*In this year of St. Joseph, consider praying the Litany or other prayers to St. Joseph.
- Allow your children to witness you in private prayer. Encourage your children to pray daily on their own. Invite them to look to St. Joseph as an example for recognizing, listening, discerning, and responding to God's call in their life.
- Talk freely about the presence of God in the joys and sorrows of your life.
- Have a crucifix in a prominent place in the home, and in every bedroom. Create a home altar or prayer corner with images of the Holy Family, candles, and a Bible.
- Attend Sunday Mass together weekly.
- Plan a family pilgrimage. Consider traveling to, and participating in one or more of the special diocesan Votive Masses in honor of St. Joseph.
- Have at least one family meal together around the table each day and use that opportunity to have prayer and discussion with family members.
- Begin family traditions based on liturgical seasons.
- Teach stewardship and charity to your children, through word and example. Come up with ways your family can serve those in need.
- Following the example of St. Joseph and Blessed Virgin Mary, demonstrate love for your spouse, your children, your neighbors, and the world. Remind your children that they are loved by God and have been given gifts to serve others.

