

FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

GRACE AND HOLINESS IN FAMILY LIFE

TOPIC: PRAYERFULLY PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS & GRACE AND HOLINESS IN FAMILY LIFE

OPENING PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, you are the hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what's really important. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth on Christmas. Amen.

([Dynamic Catholic](#))

MATERIALS

- 3 pieces of paper and a marker per family
- Advent Wreaths or candle(s) and Nativity Sets they have placed on their home altars
- Lighter to light candles for closing prayer

ICE BREAKER

What is the best gift God has ever given to you?

CONTENT

During your At-Home Week you watched the video, *Immaculate Conception*. We are going to play a game to see who can answer the two questions from Week 2 about that video.

(Option: groups can watch the video together as a refresher. Play [Immaculate Conception](#) [2:34 min].)

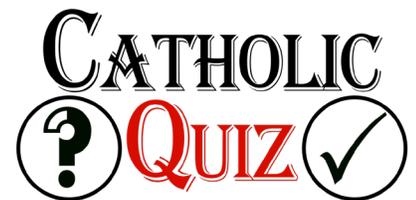
I am going to ask you two questions.

Please write your family's answers on three separate pieces of paper.

The first question is:

Who is the Immaculate Conception?

(Give families time to discuss and write answers.)



Next, on the second piece of paper please answer the question:

What does the Immaculate Conception mean?

Now, on the third piece of paper please answer this bonus question:

When do we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception?

(When families have answered all 3 questions, ask them to show what they had written for the answer to the first question, then second and third. If it's possible, you may want to provide a prize to the winning families, or a sweet treat for everyone to celebrate a job well done!)



CONTENT

Mary, from the moment she was conceived in St. Anne's womb, received exceptional grace. In and through that grace, she continued to say yes to the Lord throughout her entire life, and this included growing up and living the call to holiness with her own family and extended family. At our own baptisms, we receive the beautiful gift of God's grace as well. In and through that grace, we are able to say yes to the Lord and grow in holiness—grow as disciples of Jesus. The first and primary place where we rely on God's grace and live the call to holiness is in our family life. Mary shows us this truth in her own life, and Jesus Himself confirms it in His years living in the Holy Family.

FAMILY SHARING

Ask each family to show and share about their Advent Wreaths, or candle(s) and Nativity Sets, they have placed on their home altars.

Content: Watch the video
THE HOLY FAMILY VS YOUR FAMILY
(5 min)



AFFIRMATION ACTIVITY

Ask each family to:

1. Make a circle - if at home, around or near their home altar/prayer space (Give them a few seconds to get into place)
2. Think about how Jesus lives within each member of your family
3. Take turns saying 3 good things that you love about the person on your right
4. Model for families by asking one of your own family members to be present and then share three good things that you love about him/her (Ask families to raise their hands when they have finished.)
5. Explain that their sharing is a holy moment and that God is in their midst, a part of their family. Holiness doesn't mean that we are perfect; it means we are trying to grow in love. Tell the families that God loves them, and is pleased and proud of all of them because they are trying to love one another as He loves them. These efforts to love one another with, in and through God, is what makes them holy too!



CLOSING PRAYER

Ask families to:

1. Remain gathered around their home altar (if at home)
2. Light their Advent candles or other candles on their altars (if at the parish, consider gathering together in the church around the Advent wreath or the tabernacle, if possible, or in another way)
3. Hold hands
4. Then pray the following (adapt to circumstances as necessary):

Dear Jesus, as we light the candle(s) on our Advent wreath or on our home altar, may the light of your presence bring joy to our hearts. Bless our family and our friends, and be with all those who are in need this holiday season. Help us focus on you during this busy time. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas. Amen.

Adapted from [Dynamic Catholic](#)