

Dear St. Ignatius Families,

Since I sent my letter last Friday about responding to stress and reaching out to others (attached if you missed it), it has become clear that we will be home for some time and that life and faith practice will look different for awhile. This time of quarantine makes me think of the Israelites during the Babylonian exile. During the exile the Israelites were removed from their homeland and separated from the holy Temple, considered the dwelling place of God. However, the exile became a pivotal period in Jewish history when they became “the people of the book” and Judaism survived because of the ways that families and communities lived their faith while separated from their geographical home and place of worship. Family-based rituals and study of the Torah carried them through and in many ways strengthened them to be a resilient and enduring faith community despite intense persecution.

We have a lot to gain from emulating the example of our Jewish sisters and brothers. While physically separated from our community and places of worship, we are not spiritually apart and we have an opportunity to integrate our faith into our family life in a meaningful way. In light of this, I’ve been thinking about family faith formation and have gathered together some resources to share. I will be creating a space on our www.sipdx.org website to access the links below as well as other resources, both practical and spiritual, that have been shared with me.

As we continue through Lent and into Holy Week and Easter, I encourage you to make intentional plans for celebrating Sundays together, and for celebrating Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter as a family. I have listed some helpful links but you may have your own sources or ideas that will work for your family. Some possibilities might include: on Sundays read the Sunday gospel together and have each member of the family pick out a word or phrase that speaks to them or “walk through the mass” with your kids by watching it online and stopping at times to help them understand what’s happening, or use one of the activity guides for the Sunday gospel below. For Holy Thursday consider reading the story of the Last Supper and washing each other’s feet. (It can be interesting to ask kids who they would invite to their last meal or what they would want to eat or what they want to be remembered for and then explore why Jesus celebrated the Last Supper in this way.) The options are many but the most important thing is to set aside some time to be together in spiritual communion with the greater community as we pray through this season, remembering our connections with the greater story and the wider community, and reminding us to love our neighbors as Jesus did, especially those most vulnerable. The rhythms that we set for our families will mark what is important and celebrating the liturgical seasons and Sundays is a profound way to do that.

Here are some great resources for Sundays, activities for Lent, and resources for families during the COVID-19 pandemic:

<http://catholicmom.com/kids/catholic-gospel-coloring-worksheets-sunday-mass/>

(This is a great website in general, but each Sunday there are coloring sheets, mass guides and puzzles for kids to complete.)

<https://www.catholicicing.com/>

(This is a great website for Catholic families. You can find resources for Lent and Holy Week as well as Sunday resources and specific recommendations for when you can’t attend mass.)

<https://teachingcatholickids.com/>

(This resource is published by Our Sunday Visitor and features some very timely resources for talking about the Corona Virus and resources for helping kids cope, as well as other faith-related resources.)

<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/sunday-connection>

(This website has family or grade level suggested activities to accompany the Sunday gospel.)

Magnificat: during quarantine they are offering **complimentary access to MagnifiKid**. Visit www.magnifikid.com/free to view and download each weekly booklet of our colorful Sunday missalette for children ages 6 through 12.

Online mass links:

<https://thesundaymass.org/>

<https://www.catholicextension.org/stories/sunday-catholic-mass-online>

<https://www.heartofthenation.org/online-mass/sunday-mass#/>

<https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass/>

<http://www.catholictv.org/masses/notre-dame-mass>

By the way, if you're looking for a tangible way to support neighbors in need, consider supporting our St. Vincent DePaul Society at St. Ignatius – it's in action right now and can always use extra volunteers or monetary and food donations.

Finally, the Mom's group is hosting an online meeting each Sunday from 9:15-10:15 a.m. and all are welcome. If you want to connect face-to-face with a great group, I encourage you to join us. Just let me know and I will send you the link for our meeting.

Blessings of peace, health, generosity, and courage at this time!

Warmly,
Beth Schaller

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Beth Schaller
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