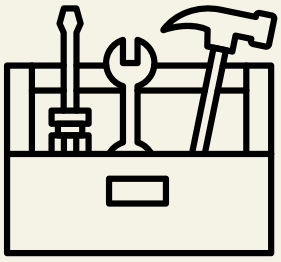
ST. PATRICK
Catholic Church

Faith Formation Family Tool Box

November 5th through November 19th
God the Father

www.st-patricks.org

About the Tool Box



St Patrick's Faith Formation provides these resources to support your family, and to make living your Catholic faith together as a family simple and effective.

We know that fitting everything into an already busy schedule is complicated. So, we aren't asking you to do it all. Instead we invite your family to take on these resources as a challenge. Ask yourselves "What can we do?"

We have intentionally planned and crafted a variety of options to choose from with all families in mind. Look through the options provided and pick a few that work well for your family. Choose an afternoon to do several activities, or sprinkle them throughout your week.

This is your toolbox! Use the tools that are most helpful in building your family's faith together.

What You'll Find in This Tool Box

- **Practical Faith Tools** — Simple prayer practice, Bible readings, saint stories, conversation starters, fun videos, and Sunday Mass support
- **Lived Faith Ideas** — Crafts, recipes, games, pop culture, service projects, faith and science, and more
- **Deeper Learning** — Optional resources for parents wanting to learn more about that session's topic.

A Faith-Filled Afternoon/Evening

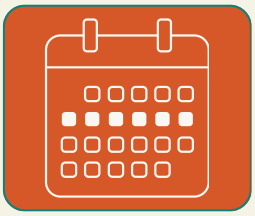
Some families might find it easiest to choose three or four ideas in this packet and make them into an afternoon or evening of faith-focused fun.

- Start your time in prayer or conversation by using one or two of the options in the "Practical Faith Tools." For example:
  - Begin with one of the suggested Prayer Habits
  - Use the suggested Conversation starters
  - Watch one of the recommended video resources.
- Then spend some time together working on one or two of the "Lived Faith Ideas"
  - Choose a craft or recipe to do together
  - Play a game or watch a pop-culture option
  - Complete a faith and science or service project
- Conclude using one of the prayer ideas provided.
  - Read the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday together
  - Learn about this session's Saint and ask for their prayers.

An Intentional Lord's Day

Perhaps it will work well for your family to integrate these resources into the rest of your Sunday before and after Mass.

- Read the Mass Readings as a family before Mass, or have a passenger read them on the drive to Church.
- Utilize the Conversation starters on the drive home from Mass, and practice a recommended prayer habit or Lord's Day idea.
- Integrate a recipe idea into lunch or dinner.
- Utilize a game, pop-culture, faith and science, or service project idea as part of your family time in the afternoon.
- Utilize the saint or art resources to conclude your day as a family in prayer.



Sprinkled Throughout the Week

For some, it might just be most practical to identify your favorite ideas from these materials and plug them in to different opportunities throughout the week, whenever time allows.

- Choose a day to add a recipe idea to dinner.
- Use conversation ideas when driving together in the car.
- Start your weekend with a service or faith and science project
- Read the Mass readings together Saturday evening in preparation for Mass the next day.
- The options are limitless!

Table of Contents

Practical Faith Tools

Student Workbooks 06
Conversation Starters 07
Memory Verse 08
Mass Readings 09
Lord's Day Ideas 10
Prayer Habits 11
Witness of the Saints 12
Praying with Art 14
Video Resources 15

Lived Faith Ideas

Crafts 17
Food and Recipes 18
Pop Culture 19
Faith and Science 20
Service Projects 21

Deeper Learning

Parent Videos 23
Scripture and the Catechism 24
Reading Options 25

Find easy to use links to all resources on the St Patrick's Family Formation webpage

Practical Faith Tools

Student Workbooks

Your child's workbook that they use during Wednesday Sessions with their catechist provides quality resources on the session's topic. We encourage parents to utilize these as a way to debrief the Wednesday session as well as carry the Wednesday session into the rest of the week. Below we have outlined the most helpful parts of each chapter as well as the specific chapter your child worked on with their catechist during our most recent Wednesday session.

- The last page in every chapter is an at home "with my family" page with scripture, activity, and discussion options.
- Each chapter introduces the example of a saint that demonstrates the topic through their lived faith.
- Throughout each chapter, there are a variety of simple prayer options that you can integrate into other prayer times throughout your week.

November 5th, 2025 – God as Father	
K: Unit 1, Session 2	1: Unit 1, Session 3
3: Unit 1, Session 3	4: Unit 1, Session 2
5: Unit 1, Session 2	Notes:

Conversation Starters

One of the most consistent indicators of a child who will continue to live their faith into adulthood is growing up in a family that simply talks openly and actively about their faith. Consider using some of the provided conversation starters to discuss your faith as a family this week.

1. This unit has been delving into learning about God the Father. **What traits make for a good father? How do we see those traits in God the Father?**

2. Whenever we think about fathers, we naturally think about their children, too. **What does a good relationship between father and child look like? How can we be better children of God the Father?**

3. God the Father is the ideal role model for earthly fathers. **How can we honor our earthly fathers?**

4. Think about other fathers, as well, such as grandfathers and spiritual fathers. **How can we know and pray for them better?**

Memory Verse

The Word of God is important in our faith journey, and memorizing short, simple scripture verses can prove to be beneficial to us at all ages to allow God to more consistently speak to us throughout our daily life.

Matthew 6:31-3 “Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

OR

Matthew 7:9-11 “Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”

Mass Readings

Reading scripture together as a family before you hear the Word of God proclaimed at Mass is a great way to improve comprehension and impact among people young and old. Spend just a few minutes together reading the assigned readings for Mass from your Bible or by using the link provided. You can even do this together in the car, or as a time of prayer on Saturday evening before bed. You can also listen to the readings using the links provided. If needing to shorten this option, try just reading the Gospel.

Sunday, November 9th
Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome
First Reading: Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-7
Gospel: John 2:13-22
This Sunday celebrates the seat of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. As we celebrate its dedication, we are reminded of the people the building represents – the Pope and all of God's people. We are also reminded of our own parish church and even more so, of our domestic church, our home, where we encounter God every day.

Sunday, November 16th
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
First Reading: Mal 3:19-20a
Psalm 98:5-6, 7-8, 9
Second Reading: 2 Thes 3:7-12
Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

Daily Readings
bible.USCCB.org

Lord’s Day Ideas

“Sharing in the Eucharist is the heart of Sunday, but the duty to keep Sunday holy cannot be reduced to this. In fact, the Lord's Day is lived well if it is marked from beginning to end by grateful and active remembrance of God's saving work. This commits each of Christ's disciples to shape the other moments of the day … in such a way that the peace and joy of the Risen Lord will emerge in the ordinary events…” ~ St Pope John Paul II

Most of us, perhaps all of us, are not yet at that level of keeping the Sabbath holy. But it’s a great vision to have as we move forward in our efforts. If you successfully made a change last month – fantastic! **If you think you’re ready to add a new practice or if you need something different for your family, consider these possibilities:**

- Explore the beauty of our cathedral, basilica, or your parish church by taking time to explore the art. Learn about the saints you see. If you have time, draw pictures of your favorite image or take a family photo with a beautiful sacred image in the background. Turn this into a small moment of evangelization by making it your Christmas card photo.
- If you haven’t already, create a small sacred space (prayer table/family altar) in your home. Enlist contributions from everyone in your family to make it beautiful (flowers in a small vase, draw pictures for Jesus, etc.).

If you need some new ideas for recreation and leisure, perhaps one of these will work well for your family:

- Color with your children.
- Go for a color walk – how many different colors can you see in this season of nature?
- Enjoy a cup of hot cocoa or apple cider while talking about… anything.

Prayer Habits

Option 1:
Select a time or recurring event, such as leaving the house or at the end of dinner, to pray the Our Father together. Even making this a weekly family prayer, such as when leaving for church, will be a great addition to your prayer life.

Option 2:
As a parent, it is heartwarming to hear genuine thanks from our children. As we learn more about God as our Father, try to stop for just a few seconds every day to truly notice God's creative work in nature. This can be noticing the sky as you head out in the morning and thanking Him for the lovely fluffy clouds, the overcast morning sky that will make driving easier, or the interesting birds that just flew by. It could be crunching some leaves while taking a lunch-time walk and smiling at this little joy in the fall and saying thanks. It could be looking out the window every day while waiting for your coffee and thanking Him for whatever you see. Find a way to make it a habit to notice and to enjoy a little awe every day. Start sharing what you notice at the dinner table to encourage other family members to develop the same habit of seeing Our Father's daily gifts.

The Witness of the Saints

St. Martin of Tours by Anthony van Dyck

This session's saint is St. Martin of Tours. He was born in 316 AD in Pannonia, now modern-day Hungary. He is the first non-martyr to be recognized as a saint.

His feast day is November 11th.

He's the patron saint of soldiers, cavalry, tailors, the poor…and conscientious objectors! Read below to better understand how this came about!

Note: While all the saints would have had a special relationship with God the Father, we selected St. Martin for two reasons that are more earthly: he has an interesting connection to Veterans Day on November 11th, and he is a great saint to learn about as we head into the cold months of winter.

St. Martin grew up in a Roman military family that practiced paganism. He felt drawn to Christianity from a young age, though, and secretly studied the faith. As the son of a Roman officer, Martin was conscripted into military service as part of the cavalry at the age of 15. Although he was committed to his duties, his Christian faith continued to grow. One of the most famous stories about St. Martin's life occurred during his time as a young soldier stationed in France. When Martin saw a beggar suffering from the cold near the city gates, he tore his military cloak in half to share it with the man. That night, Martin dreamt of Jesus wearing the half-cloak, saying, "Martin, yet a catechumen, has clothed me with this robe." This experience inspired him to pursue his calling to follow Christ more completely.

The Witness of the Saints

Determined to leave the military to serve God, Martin requested discharge. However, Emperor Julian believed Martin's desire was an act of cowardice, especially since a battle with the barbarians was imminent. In a moment of remarkable faith, Martin responded, "I am prepared to stand in the battleline unarmed and to advance alone against the enemy in the name of Christ." Miraculously, the enemy requested a truce the following day, allowing Martin to leave the military and receive baptism.

After leaving the army, Martin became a disciple of St. Hilary of Poitiers, a prominent theologian and defender of the faith. Martin founded a small hermitage, creating what is considered one of the earliest monastic communities in France. Known for his commitment to poverty, prayer, and self-discipline, Martin's reputation spread, and in 371, he was chosen to be the Bishop of Tours despite his reluctance. As Bishiop, he continued the Lord's work with great zeal and simplicity.

Remembering Saint Martin
St. Martin's feast day has traditionally been used as a day to sign peace treaties. The Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, went into effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month - now known as Veterans Day.

St. Martin's Day is widely observed in Europe and often includes processions, bonfires, eating goose, and giving to the poor. Children in parts of Europe participate in paper lantern processions, singing songs about Saint Martin as well as about their lanterns. Often a man dressed as St Martin rides on a horse in front of the procession.

In the US, some families eat a meal by lantern light or have a bonfire. Some parents gift their children with winter items on St. Martin's Day. Others donate blankets or winter items to those in need.

After learning about St. Martin, talk as a family about what you can learn from his example. Perhaps consider what qualities make a good soldier, how we can honor veterans, or how soldiers can also be Christians.

If you have the time and inclination, visit a local military monument or memorial and pray for veterans. Nearby are the Remember Them Memorial in Oak Grove, Veterans Memorial Park in Cambridge, the Chisago County All Veterans Memorial in Lindstrom, and the Veterans Memorial in Anoka.

Praying with Art

Return of the Prodigal Son
Rembrandt

Each session, your family will receive a print out of a work of sacred art related to that session's topic. Over the Church's history, it was known — long before anyone had heard of multiple intelligences — that some people learned better through visuals and images can also be helpful for prayer experiences.

For this reason, the Church has a tradition known as visio divina ("divine seeing" or prayer in which we invite God to speak to our hearts as we look at an image).

"This is the story of a father who had two sons. He lost them both, one in a foreign country, the other behind a barricade of self-righteousness. Popularly known as the parable of the prodigal son, a more appropriate title might be the parable of the forgiving father, because the focus of the story is primarily on the father's love and mercy toward his sons." From Forgiveness: A Guide for Prayer

Experience visio divina or lead others by following these steps:

1. Choose a comfortable, quiet place where you will not be distracted. Quiet yourself and relax by focusing on your breathing.
2. Begin by paying attention to the details, including shapes, colors, lighting, and facial expressions/body language of characters in the image. Identify the parts of the image that stand out to you and share them with your family.
3. Take a moment to prayerfully consider how God is speaking to your heart and why you think God has drawn your attention to this specific part of the image. Pay attention to your feelings, and allow God to speak to you through the image.
4. Respond to God, expressing your thoughts, feelings, desires, or yearnings. This can be done silently or together as a family.
5. Conclude by taking a few moments of silence to rest and savor the beauty of the image.

Optional: Read the Parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32.

Video Resources

For younger children:

Watch these video resources on Formed.org. All St Patrick's families have free access to Formed as part of being parishioners.

1. Marcam's Animal Adventure on Formed. Learn more about some of God the Father's Creation with Marcam and Norbertine Father Damien.
2. Brother Francis | You Are Special on Formed. God the Father makes everyone to be unique. He sees our true nature and still loves us even though we're not perfect.

How do I use Formed?

- Go to formed.org/signup
- Select your parish by entering name, city and/or zip code
- Enter your name and email address
- Check that email account for a link to begin using FORMED.

For older youth:

1. Who Is God? | Catholic Central God is a term that's thrown around a lot, but what do Catholics really mean when they say God? How can we know who God is? Why does God seem to have changed throughout time? Kai and Libby take you through some of the qualities that Catholics believe God has, and why they differ from the vengeful, angry being you might have read about.
2. To learn more about one of our spiritual fathers, watch a video about Father Yanta! (On the same channel, there are videos of other vocation stories, including Father Bloom and Father Eilen.)

Find easy to use links to these video resources on the St Patrick's Family Formation webpage

www.st-patricks.org/formation/youth/family-formation

Lived Faith Ideas

Crafts

Mason Jar Lanterns

Make some lanterns as a reminder during these shorter days that the Father sent us His only Son, the light of the world! Light them at dinner one or more nights during this season. As a bonus, they can be used for celebrating St. Martin's Day.

Materials needed:

- Tissue paper in various colors
- Mod Podge (or watered down Elmer's glue)
- Sponge brushes or paint brushes for the glue
- Jars – can be canning jars or the empty salsa jars waiting to be recycled with the label removed
- Light floral wire

Directions:

1. Cut tissue into preferred shapes.
2. Cover the jar with a thin layer of Mod Podge.
3. Apply tissues to the jar, covering each piece with additional Mod Podge.
4. When jar is covered with tissue paper, let it dry. This may take a full 24 hours.
5. Wrap the rim of the jar with some wire, form a handle with it, and tighten.
6. Add a small candle inside. (Drip some wax from a burning candle to the bottom of the jar to hold the candle in place.)

Recipes

In honor of our earthly fathers, make some typical dad foods!

- **Make dad's favorite food!** What does a Father in your life really enjoy? Perhaps your own dad, step-dad, or a grandfather has a favorite food that you can make and enjoy together.
- **Grilling and tailgating** is often associated with fathers. Make some brats or burgers for dinner one night! If you can, grill them! Or consider having a fun dinner one night of **just appetizers and finger foods**.

Horseshoe Cookies

These little cookies resemble a horseshoe covered in snow, to remind us of the legend of Martin the soldier riding through the snow and helping a poor beggar.

Ingredients:

2 sticks unsalted butter
2½ cups unbleached flour
1½ cups brown sugar
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 egg, beaten
1 cup almonds, lightly toasted and finely ground
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
½ teaspoon almond extract
¼ cup powdered sugar for dusting

Directions:

In a medium bowl, combine flour, ground almonds, baking powder and salt. Set aside. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Stir in beaten egg and extracts. Slowly stir in flour mixture. Knead the dough on a floured surface and then form into a ball. Divide into two pieces and roll individually in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for about an hour.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Remove dough from plastic wrap. Scoop tablespoons of dough and roll into balls. Then roll balls into 3- to 4-inch-long tubes onto a floured surface. Place on a cookie sheet in the shape of a U. Bake for 12 minutes or until light golden brown on edges. Transfer to a cooling rack and dust cookies with powdered sugar when cool.

Faith and Science

God the Father Cares about everything BIG and SMALL.

1. Through Abraham, God continued His mission of Salvation by inviting so many generations into a relationship with Him through Abraham as an earthly Father. *"[God] brought [Abram] outside and said, 'Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them…So shall your descendants be.'" [Gen 15:5]*
    a. Can you count the stars? What else can you see in the night sky?
    b. Can you find any of the constellations? Perhaps you can find one of the planets or first magnitude stars?

2. Jesus reminds us that we do not need to worry, because God the Father cares for us as His children more than even the small things that crawl about the earth. How much more care then does God give to us, when He has given such great attention to even the smallest things.
    a. Using a magnifying glass, explore the details of the small things around you, look closely at leaves, insects, your fingerprints, and consider just how much care God has given to all of the small things around us.

3. As we enter the winter season, many living things will go into dormancy, hibernation, or just die. Such absences make appreciating Creation in the natural world more difficult! However, this is also the season that we can really notice the dark-eyed juncos, a bird that winters in the area. They are very cheerful birds to keep an eye out for and enjoy watching. What a treat from our heavenly Father!

Video of juncos

Pop-Culture

Many popular movies show fathers in a variety of lights, some positive, and sometimes much more negative. While no father here on earth is perfect, it is important that we intentionally highlight the traits that make for a *good* father when we have the opportunity.

Watch one of the following popular movies as a family. Afterward, discuss how the movie portrays fathers, and the relationship between a father and his child.

Consider the movie through the lens of faith:

- What traits made the father/s in the movie good parents?
- In what ways might have the father failed in some way?
- How did the father demonstrate his care for his child? What did the child learn about their father through the conflict of the movie?

A Goofy Movie: When Goofy's son, Max, finds himself in trouble at school, Goofy is convinced that he and the boy need to bond over a cross-country fishing trip like the one he took with his dad when he was Max's age, which throws a kink in his son's plans to impress Roxanne.

Finding Nemo: When Nemo swims too close to the surface to prove himself, he is caught by a diver. Horrified, his father Marlin must set out across the ocean to find him.

Mr. Popper's Penguins: Mr. Popper's life changes radically when he receives a final gift from his late father -- a live penguin, which is soon joined by five more penguins. The birds' antics soon win over Mr. Popper, and as he bonds with the penguins, his chilly relationship with his ex-wife and kids begins to thaw.

Service Projects

One way we can honor God the Father is by building relationships with each other, particularly with our fathers and grandfathers.

- Have a planned outing or play a game with your dad.
- If you have a grandfather you aren't able to see often, discern a way to regularly connect with him through phone calls, video calls, emails, text messages and photos, or even mailing cards or letters!
- Talk with your dad or grandfather - or even friends' dads or uncles - about fatherhood challenges and joys. You'll probably hear some great stories! Talk with your family about what you learned from these conversations.

Another way we can honor God the Father is by being His hands and feet to help His other children. In remembrance of St. Martin's example, here are some ways we can do that.

- Donate blankets or warm winter items (mittens, socks, jackets, etc.) to homeless shelters.
- Volunteer at or donate to organizations serving veterans, such as Haven for Heroes in Anoka or Freedom Fishing Foundation in Forest Lake.

Haven for Heroes

Freedom Fishing Foundation

Deeper Learning

Parent Videos

Rest and Recreation

For some encouragement towards making Sundays days of worship, rest, and leisure, watch this short video put out by the Archdiocese.

What It Means for God to Be Father

Speaking at SEEK 24, an annual Catholic conference for young adults, Father Mark-Mary Ames explains that Jesus shows us the love, the heart, of the Father and that we have three options when deciding the answer to the question, Is God really good? This is a good video to watch if you or someone you know doesn't yet know, believe, or trust in God's unconditional love.

Scripture and Catechism

Read and reflect on Luke 15, verses 11-32
Spend some time reading and reflecting on the Prodigal Son and His Brother. Consider how you might be similarly treating your heavenly Father. Optionally, listen to Father Mike Schmitz Bible in a Year Podcast to learn more about this scripture reading.

The Bible in a Year
with Fr. Mike Schmitz
Day 318: The Narrow Gate, Lost Sheep, and Prodigal Son

Consider Reading the Catechism of the Catholic Church
The Catechism of the Catholic Church is an outstanding explanation of all the teachings of the Catholic Church. You can read about this sessions topic online for free, or you can pick up a copy of the Catechism from the St Patrick's bookstore.

Read or listen to the Catechism's section, God as Father.

Read paragraphs 238-242

Day 33: God as Father w/Fr. Mike Schmitz

Read or listen to the Catechism's section God, "Our" Father

Read paragraphs 2786-2793

Day 357: God "Our" Father w/Fr. Mike

Additional Reading Options

Pope Benedict XVI reflects on the fatherhood of men and of the Lord as well as what His divine love and power really mean.

Here's a snippet of his address:
"It is not always easy today to talk about fatherhood, especially in the Western world. Families are broken, the workplace is ever more absorbing, families worry and often struggle to make ends meet and the distracting invasion of the media invades our daily life: these are some of the many factors that can stand in the way of a calm and constructive relationship between father and child. At times communication becomes difficult, trust is lacking and the relationship with the father figure can become problematic; moreover, in this way even imagining God as a father becomes problematic without credible models of reference. It is not easy for those who have experienced an excessively authoritarian and inflexible father or one who was indifferent and lacking in affection, or even absent, to think serenely of God and to entrust themselves to him with confidence.

Yet the revelation in the Bible helps us to overcome these difficulties..."

Continue reading at the link below!

General Audience
Pope Benedict XVI
Wednesday, 30 January 2013
"I Believe in God:
the Almighty Father."

Notes:

We are Here to Help!

We want your feedback!

These resources are designed for your family, and we want to continue to improve them to better meet your needs.
Share with us your favorite activities, standout options that work well, as well as the resources that might have missed the mark.

Send us photos from your family working on these activities at home! We want to see your family's faith in action!

Contact Us

Melissa Holmberg, Family Formation Coordinator
mholmberg@st-patricks.org
763-326-2740

Rob Masloski, Formation Director
rmasloski@st-patricks.org
763-326-2734