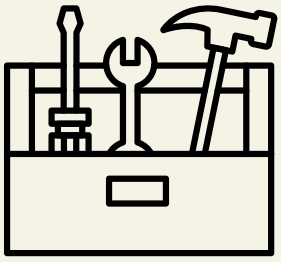
Faith Formation Family Tool Box

January 7th - 20th The Church

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

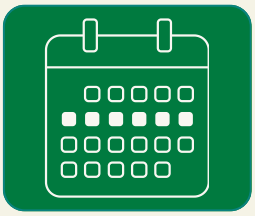
Some families might find it easiest to choose three or four ideas in this packet and make them into an afternoon or evening of faith-focused fun.

- 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!

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

Practical Faith Tools

Student Workbooks

Your Child's work 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.

January 7th, 2025 – The Church	
K: Unit 3, Session 11	1: Unit 3, Session 11
3: Unit 3, Session 12	4: Unit 3, Session 12
5: Unit 3, Session 11	Notes: OPCY materials this week

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.

We are settling into a new calendar year, as well as the new liturgical year's first season of Ordinary Time. By now many are getting used to thinking 2026 and have already started rethinking our resolutions. If you haven't already done so, **now's a good time to ponder the goodness of last year as you look ahead to revised goals**.

- What experience this past year was most fun?
- What accomplishments this past year made you most proud?
- What was a surprising joy last year?
- Looking forward, what do you hope to do this year?

Our focus this session is the Church. Some possible questions to start discussions about this topic are:

- Do you have questions about the Church?
- Is there a country you'd like to learn about and how the Catholic churches there might include aspects of local culture into worship?

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 28:17 “Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’”

OR

Acts 13:47 “For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

OR

Acts 2:43-7 “Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

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, January 11th
Baptism of the Lord
First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7
Psalm 29:1-4, 9-10
Second Reading: Acts 10:34-8
Gospel: Matthew 3:13-7

Sunday, January 18th
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
First Reading: Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
Psalm 40:2, 4-10
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-3
Gospel: John 1: 29-34

Daily Readings
bible.USCCB.org

Baptism didn't begin with John the Baptist. It was originally a Jewish rite, which symbolized a washing from unrighteousness through the renunciation of sin. It was used until John's day for the cleansing of Gentiles who were converting to Judaism. John's baptism was revolutionary, in that he offered it to Jews -- meaning that they, no less than the Gentiles, needed to be cleansed of their sins. They were no better than the Gentiles in conforming their lives to the will of God. And this was a preparation for the teaching of Christ, that all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, needs to come to Him for cleansing...In being baptized, Christ renounced not His own sins, but the sins of mankind.

Lord’s Day Ideas

As we celebrate and ponder the baptism of Jesus, we should also remember and celebrate our own baptisms. Some ways this can be done are:

- Light your baptismal candles
- Look at videos & photos from your baptism
- Tell stories about baptisms in the family
- Talk about the persons or saints each person is named after
- Invite Godparents to a celebration of baptisms
- Bless each other with holy water
- Pray for the priests who baptized each of you
- Mark baptism dates on the calendar to celebrate annually

Prayer Habits

Option 1: As we learn about and ponder the Church, **pray for the Suffering Church**, for those souls in purgatory. This Grace after meals is an easy way to begin that effort. Alternatively, you could add this prayer to your morning or bedtime routine.

We give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits, O Almighty God,
who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.
May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Option 2: **Pray a decade of the Rosary together**. Some good times to try this prayer as a family could be a Saturday or Sunday evening, on the way to or from Mass, or after dinner one night when the family isn't busy.

Two decades that are particularly applicable to this session's topics are the Baptism of the Lord (Joyful Mystery) and the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Glorious Mystery), when the Church was born. Below are two podcast episodes about these decades from Rosary in a Year. Also below is the full list of episodes if you wanted to explore these decades more in-depth.

Day 34: Baptism of the Lord, the Anointed One

Day 46: Descent of the Holy Spirit: Come Holy Spirit

Rosary in a Year podcast

Hymn

Hymns are sung to lift the soul and draw our hearts closer to God. Many are based on Scripture, giving us another avenue to understanding and reflecting on the Sacred Word. Some hymns teach doctrine and express beliefs, reinforcing Catholic teachings and traditions. Below is a hymn about the Church that your family can listen to, learn, or sing during the next few weeks.

The Church's One Foundation

The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
by water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her
to be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
and for her life He died.
Elect from ev'ry nation,
yet one o'er all the earth;
Her charter of salvation,
one Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
with ev'ry grace endued.
'Mid toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
shall be the Church at rest.

Praying with Art

Master of the Die by Raphael

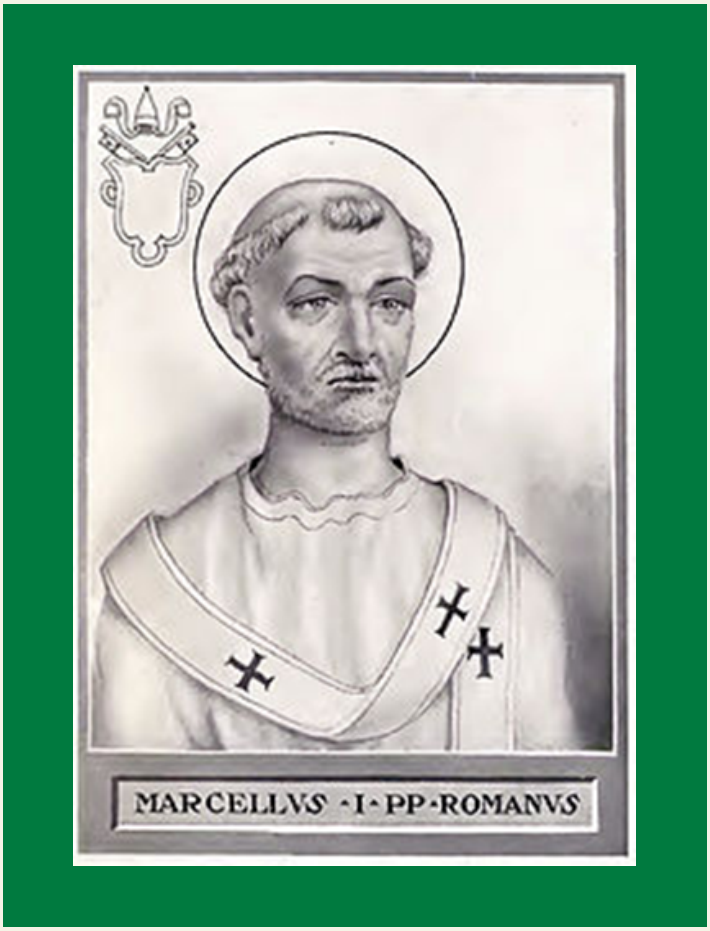
Each session, your family will receive a print out of a work of sacred art related to that session's topic. Over the Church's history, it was known — long before anyone had heard of multiple intelligences — that some people learned better through visuals and images can also be helpful for prayer experiences.

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).

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.

The Witness of the Saints



This session's saint is St. Marcellus.
Feast day: January 16th
Born: January 6th, 255 AD
Died: January 16th, 309 AD
Patron saint of **truth and protection against lies**

After reading about St. Marcellus, discuss as a family how to stand firm in your principles, even when unpopular. How can each of you foster an environment of honest forgiveness and genuine repentance in the family? How might each of you reorganize your routines to bring better order to daily life?

"Remain steadfast in the truth, for from the cross of Christ all power and grace is given to us." ~ Pope Saint Marcellus I

During the third century, paganism and Christianity vied for supremacy in the Roman Empire. Hoping to stifle the Church completely, the emperor Diocletian in 303 began the last and fiercest of the persecutions. In time, Christian charity conquered pagan brutality, but it was only after almost three hundred years. During those many years, persecutions had forced Christian worship underground. When the worship was allowed to be out in the open again, without fear of persecution, the Church was still young and disorganized, and vulnerable to heresy and apostasy.

At this time, Saint Marcellus was elected Pope and was just the leader needed.

The Witness of the Saints

Nothing of Marcellus' life before his papacy has survived the centuries. He became Pope around 308-309. The persecutions had disrupted the Church so much that there had been a gap of over a year with no Pope. Marcellus faced several challenges. He needed to reconstitute the clergy, which had been decimated and whose remnant had practiced their vocation only covertly and with the expectation of martyrdom. He restored the organization of the Church into parishes with a priest over each one – this permitted more efficient instruction of the faithful and preparation for the receiving of sacraments. He worked hard to recover and welcome back all who had denied the faith in order to keep from being murdered.

The Christians who had remained faithful demanded that the customary penitential discipline be maintained and enforced. Marcellus discerned that they were obliged to do penance but were not to be punished. Unfortunately, many who denied the faith were determined to be reconciled to the Church without performing the necessary penances. Soon the discord between the faithful and the apostates led to violence in the very streets of Rome.

Emperor Maxentius, judging the pope responsible for the trouble between the Christian factions, condemned him to work as a slave on the public highway. After nine months of this hard labor, he was rescued by the clergy and taken to the home of a widow named Lucina; this woman welcomed him with every sign of respect and offered him her home for a church. When the emperor learned that Christian rites were being celebrated there, he profaned the church by turning it into a stable and forced the Holy Father to care for the animals quartered there. In these sad surroundings, Marcellus died on January 16, 310.

Saint Marcellus I teaches the Church that true mercy is not indulgence, but justice tempered with grace. His life remains a powerful rebuke to compromise and a testament to apostolic integrity in both doctrine and discipline. “In the fervor of charity, he did not yield to the world’s demands. His silence in exile was louder than any compromise.” His witness calls today’s faithful — especially shepherds of souls — to remain faithful in the face of pressure from both within and outside the Church.

Video Resources

For younger children:

1. What is the Catholic Church? | Formed: Brother Francis gives a good but brief overview of what the Catholic Church is, how She began, and how She has grown.

For older youth:

1. One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic | Formed: The Catholic Church is more than the building you visit on Sundays. In the Creed, we say we believe in, “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.” These four characteristics help us understand the invisible realities of the Church, the true home of any follower of Jesus.
2. The Messengers: The Birth of the Early Church | Formed: Follow the small band of early Christian believers as they boldly proclaim Christ and His message in the face of great opposition resulting in the growth of the church and the unexpected conversion of its most zealous enemy. Based on the Book of the Acts of the Apostles Chapters 1-9.

How Do I Use Formed?

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

For the whole family:

Take virtual tours of the Vatican, basilicas, and papal chapels!

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

Make a Rosary

Consider making a Rosary this season. There are many options with actual beads, but those often require more tools and materials than most have at home. So, below are two options that do not require typical beads - you'll be making the "beads" with cord or yarn.

Options 1-2: Try a knotted Rosary Bracelet or a full knotted Rosary.

Option 3: Crochet a Rosary. This option requires that you already know how to crochet.

Rosary bracelet

Knotted Rosary

Crocheted Rosary

Food and Recipes

We are returning to “normal” routines and leaving behind all the big feasting. Winter is settling into our lives as well. Even the Church is grounding herself through a brief return to Ordinary Time. Perhaps your family should now get together in the kitchen and **create some healthy soups or stews**, to help your bodies detox from all the feasting, embrace some warmth, and regain some calm equilibrium.

Another option for connecting to your faith in the kitchen is to celebrate the Church and her first Pope by making **St. Peter’s Fish with Herbs**.

Ingredients

4-6 fish fillets (John Dory, Sole, or Tilapia)
1 lemon
tsp dried basil
tsp dried oregano
tsp dried tarragon
tsp dried thyme
salt & pepper to taste
½ cup flour
½ cup breadcrumbs or Panko
1 egg, beaten
¼ cup butter, melted

Directions

1. Clean and pat dry the fish fillets.
2. In a shallow dish, squeeze the lemon.
3. Mix in the dried herbs.
4. Cover both sides of the fish in the mixture and marinate covered in the fridge for at least an hour.
5. Combine salt, pepper, flour, and breadcrumbs in a shallow dish.
6. Lightly beat the egg.
7. Dip the fillets in the beaten egg and then dredge them in the flour mixture.
8. Fry in a skillet with the melted butter.
9. Drain on paper towels and serve hot.

Faith and Science

Years ago, when I was a postdoctoral researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I asked myself why I was doing astronomy when people are starving. I didn't have an answer, so I went off to Africa with the U.S. Peace Corps. Then I discovered that as soon as I said I was an astronomer, people wanted to know more. They didn't have running water, but they wanted to look through a telescope. Being able to see the sky is something that makes us human. Our souls have to be fed every bit as much as our stomachs. That realization made me come back and teach astronomy. To my mind, the Vatican supports astronomy because it is an important part of being human.
~ Jesuit brother Guy Consolmagno, director Vatican Observatory

The Vatican's observatory began when Pope Gregory XIII gathered together a committee in **1582** to study the scientific data to reform the Julian calendar.

Astronomy is actually important to part of our Liturgical Year as well. Easter is calculated by lunar cycles, because it is linked to Passover – which is also calculated according to lunar cycles.

As we learn about the Church this session, enjoy the Image Gallery - Vatican Observatory. Look at some of the Vatican Observatory - Annual reports for more images, an in-depth article, and insights of what people are studying at the observatory. Other images as well as news and reflections from the scientists can be viewed under Sacred Space Astronomy. **And then continue to look at the night sky and be thankful for these wonders of the natural world.**

"By dedicating just a minute or two each evening to stepping outside and observing the sky, we become more attuned to the natural rhythms and changes in the cosmos. Once you become familiar with what is normal, you can truly appreciate what is new and what is changing."
~ Brother Guy Consolmagno

Games

Water Drop Race

Water is central to baptism, where it represents new life and cleansing. Watching a single water drop move across the wax paper can be a simple, visual reminder of how God's grace carries us forward.

Materials Needed

- Wax paper (one sheet per player)
- Scissors
- Small dish of water
- Straws (optional)

Setup Instructions

1. Cut the same sized sheet of wax paper for each player.
2. Place each sheet of wax paper on a flat surface, like a table.
3. Fill a small dish with water.
4. Use a dropper or a finger to place one large drop of water on each sheet.
5. Optional: Give each player a straw to help guide their water drop.

How to Play

1. Players line up at one end of the wax paper.
2. On "Go!", each player blows gently on their water drop to move it toward the opposite end of the wax paper. (Players can blow directly on the drop or use a straw to direct their breath.)
3. The goal is to move the water drop across the wax paper without breaking it into smaller drops.
4. The first player to get most of their water drop to the other side of the wax paper wins.

Variation: Try making a longer or more challenging "race track" by adjusting the wax paper's size or adding obstacles (such as small paper barriers) to go around.

Service Projects

Option 1: Although many **church ministries** need adults and teens, there are also opportunities for children as well as whole families.

- Weekend Fellowship: for the whole family
- Altar Servers: for 5th graders and older
- Greeters: for the whole family
- Youth Choir: 2nd graders and older
- Feed My Starving Children: for age 5 and up
- Ushers?
- Leading the Rosary before Mass and/or the Divine Mercy Chaplet afterwards: for all readers
  - Family members can take turns on the decades, if leading the Rosary.
  - Contact Kathy Johnson at 763-242-6985 or kajohnson@ptc.com to learn more about this ministry.

St. Patrick's ministries

Option 2: **Lean more about Hope for Uganda** and pray for or even contribute monetarily to their efforts.

Deeper Learning

Parent Videos

Beauty (an Archdiocesan video)
Bernadette Gockowski, Catholic artist, wife and mother, shares her appreciation of beauty in our Catholic faith, Church history, and artwork in our physical churches.

The Church is Built on the Rock:
Bishop Barron compares the Roman Empire to the Catholic Church and asks us the one question that matters.

"Church" vs "church" - Formed
The “Church” is more than the building! The Church is the family of God. And you belong in the Church. When we go to church, we join the community of believers around us. Whether or not you love the physical structure of your local church, it’s our spiritual home.

Scripture and Catechism

Listen to Fr. Mike Schmitz and Jeff Cavins discuss the Church. They discuss the historical context of the early Church, why Rome and the early martyrs are so significant, and how the Holy Spirit takes on a major role. They also explain the differences between Acts, the epistles, and the book of Revelation.

The Bible in a Year
with Fr. Mike Schmitz
Introduction to the Church w/Jeff Cavins

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 paragraphs 748-80

Day 105 Christ's Church and Its Mission w/Fr. Mike

Consider continuing through Day 109 in the Catechism in a Year podcast to learn more about the Church! All episodes can be found here.

Additional Reading Options

What Is the Anatomy of a Catholic Church: Nave, Altar, and More?
Includes two great graphics labeled with all the parts of a typical Catholic church building. Describes the different areas and parts as well, including a good description of our inclusion of stained glass and statues.

Sheltering in place: Time to discover the liturgy of domestic church life
Understand how all that you've been doing works together to create a domestic church at home. If you feel something is missing, this article might help you identify what that is.

8 January 2006, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
Pope Benedict XVI explores the answers to several questions about baptism.

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

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