

Nourishing home as a holy place

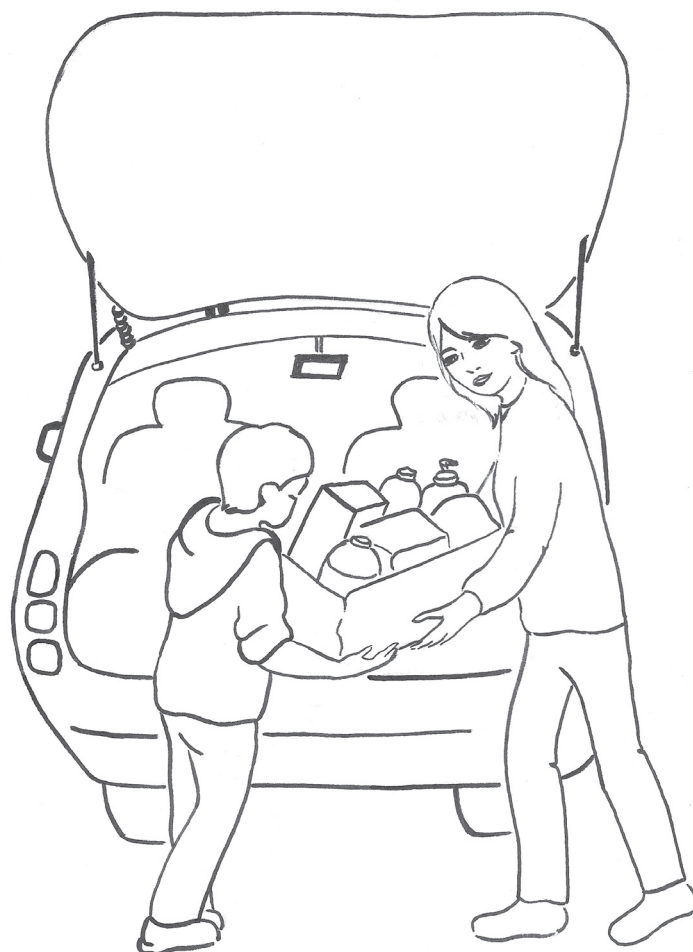
WHAT
NEXT?

This Resource Pack aims to help families and the wider Christian community recognise the holiness of everyday life at home. But what happens next? What can parishes, schools, groups and movements do to offer practical support for families to grow in this awareness? When participants at the *Releasing Formidable Energy* symposium were asked the same question they had a range of ideas:

- Use meetings for adults at key sacramental moments, parenting courses and parish missions for marriage and family life to affirm the life of the family as holy, good and important in the eyes of God.
 - Encourage existing small groups to explore how God works in their lives and to awaken people to the holiness that is already present at home.
 - Identify and develop strategies for delivering pre-marriage preparation, parenting skills, faith development and spirituality so as to enable family life to be understood as the main road to holiness for most people.
 - Help married couples reflect on their lived experiences of married life and discern the spirituality therein.
 - Provide an audio-visual display at the back of church to raise awareness of the holiness of our homes.
 - Use a Sunday each month to preach about an aspect of the spirituality of marriage and family life.
- Could you use this Resource Pack in any of these contexts? What about the resources listed overleaf and on the website?

Say It Again and Again

'I feel the most important strategy is to keep affirming the message that family spirituality exists and is important. Often people need to keep hearing the same message over and over again before it sinks in.'



Well-being and Balance

'Space, rest and recreation - in the proper meaning of that term - are vital to human well-being. The physical environment in which people live and work, their job security, and the time they have available for nurturing relationships with friends and within the family can either enhance or undermine a culture of life and hope.'
(*Cherishing Life* 75)

Space, rest, recreation and time are all factors that affect the quality of family life and family spirituality. What other obstacles are there to a sense of the holiness at home? What can your parish do to help? Family stress increases when demands on time, energy and resources outstrip the capacity to respond. Is your parish contributing to family stress or family well-being? How can you help families balance their home / life / work responsibilities?

For Parents

The Family Caring Trust programme *What Does God Expect of Parents?* is designed for parents of confirmation age children but can be adapted for other stages of sacramental preparation. Topics covered include:

- What does God expect of a parent?
- Changing my idea of what's holy
- How can we pray when we have a million things to do?

The Trust also offers a range of parenting and family programmes that are well used and valued highly by parents, couples, parishes and dioceses. Contact the Trust via their website for more information:
www.familycaring.co.uk

'Do whatever most kindles love in you.'
St Teresa of Avila

For Catechists

A short course *Introduction to Family Spirituality* is offered each year, over the internet, by Ushaw College in Durham. Designed for adults who want to broaden their awareness of God's presence in marriage and family life, this is an inexpensive and accessible study option that carries CCRS credit. For more information contact: courses@ushaw.ac.uk

Movements and Organisations

A variety of existing organisations have expertise in nourishing family and marital spirituality. Find out more about what they can offer by visiting their websites:

- Familias: www.familias-ew.org.uk
Teams of Our Lady: www.teamsourlady.org.uk
Worldwide Marriage Encounter: www.wwme.org.uk
Catholic Marriage Care: www.marriagecare.org.uk
Union of Catholic Mothers: www.theucm.org.uk
Verbum Dei: www.fmverbumdei.com
Chemin Neuf: www.chemin-neuf.org
Focolare - New Families: www.focolare.org.uk
Bethany Family Institute:
www.bethanyfamilyinstitute.com
Association of Separated and Divorced Catholics:
www.asdcengland.org.uk
Association of Interchurch Families:
www.interchurchfamilies.org.uk

Celebrate it as it is!

Celebration is an essential aspect of recognising and affirming God in the life-giving, loving, healthy relationships of married, parental and family life.

Examples include:

- **Liturgical celebrations, such as special Masses and non-Eucharistic services for National Marriage Week, International Day of Families, Parents Week, baptisms, funerals, weddings, and family fast meals.**
- **Rituals, such as blessings of children, meal time graces, family prayers, Shrove Tuesday pancakes, Advent calendars, Lenten fasts and house blessings.**
- **Family traditions, such as birthdays, anniversaries, coming of age celebrations, milestones such as first/last day at school, holidays, feast days, Sunday dinner.**

**How else might you celebrate the holiness of home and family life?
How might you offer healing to hurting families?**

Let us Pray

All praise and thanks are yours,
Heavenly Father.
You have created families in your image
and have chosen us to be followers
of Jesus your Son.

Look with mercy on all here present
and those with whom we live at home.
Help us to see and give thanks for the
formidable energy with which you have graced
your families.

May we work together in harmony
and grow in love by all we do.
Loving Father, we ask this grace
in the name of Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Further resources available:

www.homeisaholyplace.org.uk