

My Catholic Morals! Study Group

Session 4 - Loving Your Family

Pre-meeting Prep

Participants should be asked to read Chapter Four of the *My Catholic Morals!* book prior to this meeting.

5 minutes - Gather

Snacks and informal social time as people arrive. Try to be punctual and gather everyone together no longer than 5 minutes after the scheduled starting time.

5-10 minutes - Opening prayer and Scripture

Everyone sits quietly as the leader begins with the Sign of the Cross and then invites a period of silence in the following way:

Let us quiet ourselves as we begin this study of our glorious Catholic morals together. "Lord, as we sit here for a minute in silence, help each one of us to bring our own questions, concerns, fears, and joys to You. Help us, in this moment of silence, to be attentive to Your gentle voice speaking to us, directing us, and calling us to a deeper faith."

Take about a minute in silence with eyes closed so that each person can speak to our Lord about their own particular cares and concerns.

Leader reads the following invitation:

Let us ponder the Word of God. Let us reflect upon our own faith journey with the following questions: Do I believe? How deep is my faith? Am I open to letting God speak to me? Am I open to the Word of God and willing to let God's truth sink in more deeply? Am I willing to let this new faith change my life?

The leader of the session prayerfully reads the following Scriptures, one at a time, pausing for about 30 seconds between each verse:

Genesis 1:27-28: "God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply."

Exodus 20:12: Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Ephesians 6:1-3: Children, obey your parents [in the Lord], for this is right. “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise, “that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.”

Matthew 22:21: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.

Acts 5:29: We must obey God rather than men.

Leader then says: ***Let us take a moment in silence to reflect upon these words.*** (a minute of silence)

The Leader invites everyone to listen quietly as the leader prays the following prayer out loud:

Lord God, You created us within the context of a family, and You established our families as the first and most fundamental place of grace and growth in holiness. I pray for my family and offer each member to You. I offer all the love within my family and all the dysfunction and sin. Please, Lord, come and continue to strengthen these family bonds and give me the grace to love my family with Your perfect heart of love.

Please forgive me for the sins I have committed toward my family and give me the grace and humility I need to seek reconciliation. I forgive those who have sinned against me and pray that I may express this forgiveness with compassion and mercy.

Lord, I also pray for the family of Your Church and for our whole civil society. Unite all Your children into a powerful bond of love.

Amen.

The prayer time concludes with everyone professing the Apostles’ Creed:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

45-50 minutes - Discussion questions

Each person should be invited to share something or ask a question if he/she chooses regarding the questions/discussion starters below. Go through one question at a time, and give each person an opportunity to say something if he/she chooses. Avoid having one or two persons dominate the discussion. Go around the circle and do not be afraid to share! Your insights might assist someone else in their understanding of the topics. Your question might very well be the same question someone else has. Some of the questions below will invite a personal sharing; other questions will invite you to share with others what you read in Chapter Four. The goal is to share personally and to make sure that the faith of our Church is clearly expressed and understood by all.

1. What does it mean to say that “the most basic foundation of all of society is the family?” Discuss this concept.
2. Why would God choose parents to be the instrument through which He brings forth and nurtures children? What is it about Marriage that provides the proper foundation for children?
3. What about married couples who cannot conceive, despite a strong desire to have children of their own? How might God use them to bear fruit through their marriage in other ways?
4. Discuss the roles of a parent and child
 1. What rights and responsibilities stand out that a parent owes a child?
 2. What form of “honor” does a younger child owe parents?
 3. How do you see the relationship of a teen change in regards to a parent? How is a teen called to honor parents?
 4. How do adult children honor their parents?
5. Discuss family life.
 1. What are some of the greatest challenges faced by families today?
 2. What are some ideals to strive for as a family?
 3. Discuss ways in which families can pray together, offering specific ideas.
 4. Who influences children the most society, friends, or parents? What is the ideal and what can be done about this?
6. Optional - Civil society has introduced “gay marriage” into law. While maintaining a deep respect for every person, including those who have chosen to enter into a same-sex union, discuss the effects you might see in regards to same-sex couples adopting children.
 1. Here is an article you might want to read ahead of time as a basis for the Church teaching on same-sex unions: [The Church on Being Gay and Having a Gay Partner](https://mycatholic.life/catholic-question-and-answer/the-church-on-being-gay-and-having-a-gay-partner/)
(<https://mycatholic.life/catholic-question-and-answer/the-church-on-being-gay-and-having-a-gay-partner/>)

7. Discuss the role of society in regards to the family. How should civil authorities, the media, communities, etc., support the family?
8. What forms of honor, respect, and obedience do we owe to civil authorities? What about corruption within civil authorities and laws? How should we approach this in accord with God's will?
9. If time permits, spend time discussing the three conditions of a mortal sin: grave matter, full knowledge, and complete consent of the will. Apply these factors to earlier discussions on sins within the family so as to help identify some of the most serious violations of this Commandment.
10. Share any personal family experiences you feel called to share. How has God blessed you and your family in an abundant way?

20 minutes - Final Reflections and sharing

Go around and give each person an opportunity to share what might have stood out the most to them from the discussion of the night or what left them the most confused, so as to gain further clarity or insight from others.

5 minutes - Closing prayer

Leader begins with the Sign of the Cross and invites a minute of silence with all eyes closed. Each person should reflect upon what was discussed, especially what stood out to him/her the most.

Leader then prays the following prayer:

Father in Heaven, I thank You for establishing family life as the foundation of society. Please bless our country and local community and grant us strong families.

Lord, when sin has entered into family life, we pray that You help those who have been hurt to forgive and those who have sinned the grace to repent.

Help parents to be holy parents, and help children to be holy children. Fill them all with a deep love and mutual respect for each other.

Please bless our land and communities. Help those in power to exercise that power for the good of all and for the well-being of family life.

Most importantly, help all people to come to know You, Heavenly Father, and to enter fully into Your life so as to be a member of the one family You have established.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we trust in You.

Leader then invites everyone present to offer their own prayer in the following way (Note: This can be done out loud, but it might be preferable if it's done in silence at the discretion of the leader):

Let us now each bring our own personal concerns before our Lord, trusting that He hears us and knows all we need. Let us entrust these prayers to Him with full confidence that He desires to take control.

(Take a minute of silence for each person to speak to God about their own personal needs).

Leader then invites everyone to close with the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.