



Finding God®

Our Response to God's Gifts

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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Forgiveness binds families together.

PAGE 3: Jesus Shares His Kingdom.

With God's grace, our families can reflect the Kingdom of Heaven.

PAGE 4: Where can I find God's kingdom?

Seek God's will and you will find God's kingdom.



3-Minute Retreat

The Bond of Peace

The peace of Christ is impossible to find when we are not at peace with one another.



Slow your body, mind, and breath. Reflect on a memorable encounter you've had recently. Invite Jesus into this encounter. How would he have behaved

differently from you? How would he have acted similarly? How would he describe your attitude or behavior during that encounter? How might that encounter have turned out differently if you had behaved as he did? Ask Jesus for the grace to preserve the bond of peace with others. If you feel moved to do so, ask him to forgive you for the times you failed to preserve this bond of peace. ■

For a daily online 3-Minute Retreat, go to www.3MinuteRetreat.com.

Love Is More Than "I Love You"

I come from a very large Italian family. We are obnoxiously loud and bicker like no other, but I love them to bits. But a recent experience taught me the important lesson that a sense of family—or kinship—isn't limited to blood relations alone but includes a much larger web of relationships.

On February 27, 2021, I was at work with my aunt Tete when we got a call from one of my cousins, Liz. Liz's father had gone into cardiac arrest. They didn't know if he was going to make it. Liz's mom, my aunt Mary, was reliving the moment of his heart attack over and over. Another one of my uncles sat with her at the hospital, walking her through every step. My dad picked up Mary's children from the airport so they could be with her.

My uncle, by some miracle, is alive and recovering. Yet, in that mess I witnessed another miracle: the love and support shared in a time of need. That day, I recognized that love is more than just saying "I love you." It's support, it's service, it's prayers, and it's patience. Many people showed up to support us, showing me and my family that love isn't

limited to family. Their support surprised me.

Saint Paul reminds us to live "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love." (Ephesians 4:2) I can show

love and kindness by listening to someone who needs to be heard or by saying thank you. A simple act of love has the power to make any miserable situation a little more bearable. Such small actions don't have to be restricted to my blood relations; by extending that love to others, I can help foster a community that is like a family bound together by the love of Christ. ✝

Grace Colangelo explores her passion for writing while pursuing a degree in education.





EXPERIENCING GOD IN THE ORDINARY

God's Forgiving Presence through Others

Perhaps you can remember a time when you experienced the kindness and mercy of God. Maybe it was during a high school or college retreat or when you confessed your sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If so, then you know some of what the prodigal son experienced in that story Jesus told.

I remember that in a fit of anger once I hurt a close friend very deeply. I said things that seemed to me unforgivable, yet this friend not only forgave me when I expressed my remorse but has remained a friend to this day. She has been, for me, the presence of God for sure. The only way I can explain this kind of forgiving love is to understand that it was God working overtime, as it were, in my friend's heart. Maybe you recall something similar. If you do, then we both have much for which to be grateful to God and to our friend. ■

Excerpt from *Experiencing God in the Ordinary* by William A. Barry, SJ (Loyola Press, 2020).



Family Activity *Forgiveness Chain*

Forgiveness is key to the life of a disciple. "If you forgive others their transgressions," Jesus teaches us, "your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions." (Matthew 6:14–15) This activity will help your children learn how to be forgiving, just as Jesus teaches.

MATERIALS LIST

For this activity, you will need the following materials:

- Two 3" x 9" strips of white or light-colored construction paper per family member.
- Adhesive bandages with words of forgiveness written on them such as *I'm sorry*, *I apologize*, or *Please forgive me*, one per family member.

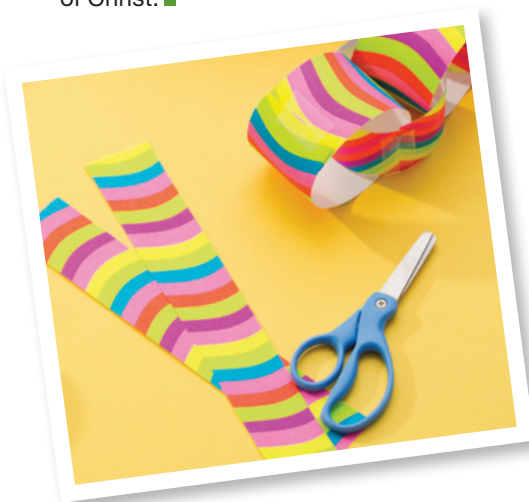
Directions: Gather your family together. Have each member of the family take two strips of paper. On one strip, draw a picture of a sad face depicting how one feels when he or she has hurt his or her friendship with God. On the other strip,

draw a happy face showing how one feels when he or she is forgiven and is a friend of God again.

Take a bandage and take turns reading the words of forgiveness. Talk about how forgiveness is like a bandage that helps relationships heal.

Use the adhesive side of the bandage to fasten the two strips of paper together to create a link. Fasten all the links together to create a Forgiveness Chain.

When the chain is formed, remind your family that you are using the words and actions of forgiveness to help us work together for the good of all as followers of Christ. ■



A Love That Forgives

If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive.

—SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTTA

The Prayer List

The Prayer List shares the true stories of how families from many faith traditions—Christian, non-Christian, or no defined faith—pray together in meaningful ways. These stories prove that family prayer can be a path to the intimacy and closeness we long for. ■

The Prayer List by Jane Knuth (Loyola Press, 2018).



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For activities, quick tips, and other resources to encourage faith-filled family living, visit www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/family.

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A Family Banquet

Saint Ignatius of Loyola taught a way of praying with Scripture by using our imaginations. Praying this way helps us “love Him more and follow Him more closely” (*Spiritual Exercises*, #104). As we pray with the Gospels this way, we grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

I invite you to contemplate the way Jesus invites us to share in his kingdom within our families.

Then Jesus said to the host who invited him, “When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

—Luke 14:12–14

Read. Read the Scripture passage a few times so that you know the story well enough to share it with another person.

Imagine. Picture yourself in the scene. Imagine you and your family hosting a dinner party. How would you get ready for this party? Imagine Jesus is with you as you prepare. Make a list of whom you would want to invite.



Notice. Watch and listen as the scene unfolds. Share with Jesus your guest list. Who does he say is missing? Listen closely as he asks you to invite people who are ignored, mistreated, and marginalized.

Respond. What stirs in you as you hear this new list of guests? How do you react? What does Jesus say? How do you respond to him?

Rest. Let God speak to you about what you saw, heard, and felt.

Reflect. What did you learn about Jesus, God, or yourself? Whom might God be inviting you to reach out to and invite into your life? How might your family welcome those who are ignored, mistreated, and marginalized? ■

Becky Eldredge is a wife, mother, and spiritual director and the author of the book *The Inner Chapel* (Loyola Press 2020).

Living the Beatitudes

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.”

—Matthew 5:6

Hunger and thirst are more than basic human desires—they are essential. We all need food and water to survive. The hunger and thirst for righteousness is the essential need that every single human person has for the truth, beauty, and goodness of God.



This desire for the goodness of God translates into a hunger and thirst to do good unto others. It is a desire to do justice. In this beatitude, Jesus is calling us to live a faith that does justice,

fulfilling Isaiah's ancient prophecy, “Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, / hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17) ■

Faith & Justice



Use the QR code to learn more about how to live a [faith that does justice](#).



What did Jesus mean when he said, “The kingdom of God is at hand”?

a: *After being led out of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land, the Jewish*

people were a small nation surrounded by “bullies”—bigger nations led by strong kings. For this reason, the Jewish people begged God for a king to protect and guide them. God raised up many kings to lead his people, but many of them disobeyed



God, leading to the destruction of the kingdom of Israel. When the Jewish people were carried off to exile in Babylon, they prayed fervently for God to restore his kingdom as a sign that the all-powerful God was in their midst.

Centuries later, when Jesus began his ministry in Galilee, he proclaimed, “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God

is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15) Jesus was announcing that, in him, God was in their midst. Through his Death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ is our victorious king who defeated sin and death. Therefore, we call Jesus “Christ the King.” Though the Kingdom of God will not come into its fullness until Jesus comes again in glory, God’s kingdom exists wherever God’s will be done. ■

Joe Paprocki is National Consultant for Faith Formation for Loyola Press and author of [Preparing Hearts and Minds](#) (Loyola Press, 2020).

5
THINGS

Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

Silent Movies

With movie multiplexes closed during the pandemic, I’ve been revisiting silent movies. Here’s what I learned.

- 1. Creation.** The grand visuals of sci-fi epic *Metropolis* (accomplished without CGI!) reflect how we rejoice in God’s creation by indulging our own creativity.
- 2. Laughter.** Laughter helps me shed sadness and recover joy. What better way to laugh than with the slapstick of Buster Keaton’s *The General*?
- 3. Compassion.** Watching the travails of Charlie Chaplin in

City Lights encourages me to show compassion to others.

- 4. Glory.** The flickering close-ups of movie stars in these films remind me that God has crowned us with glory and honor.
- 5. Solidarity.** At their best, films remind us of our common humanity. Silent films, by their very nature, bridge even language barriers as they do so. ■

Kevin McLenithan is a Chicago film critic and cohost of the film podcast *Seeing and Believing*.



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The Little Way

Watering Plants

The Little Way of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux allows us to find God in the ordinary events of our daily lives. By doing ordinary, mundane things with great love, we come to know God, who is love. “We love God,” Saint Thérèse once said, “to the extent that we practice it.”

The Little Way teaches us that ordinary activities can be opportunities to experience God’s mercy, as Rob Rohm, an editor at Loyola Press, explains:

“Watering my plants is a work of mercy for me. It’s God being merciful to me that my plants are still alive. It’s funny but true. I don’t know that I really know how to care for my plants; I don’t know that I really knew how to care for my children when they were little, but everything seems to, for the most part, be okay. That, to me, is God’s mercy.”

We are never far from God’s love. When we practice the



Little Way, as Rob does in watering his plants, we learn how to trust in God’s mercy because God’s love and mercy abound. And when we can trust God when doing the little things—like watering plants—we learn how to trust God with bigger ones. ■

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