

Holy Week



Family activities for Holy Week while being at home

Diocese of Trenton



Dear Families,

Coronavirus has impacted all families around the world. In this time of uncertainty and change, there is hope and many possibilities.

We are no longer able to go to Mass, and we will not be able to go to Mass during Holy Week.

We desire that you, parents, make the very most of the challenges we face.

This Holy Week will be different, but as parents, we have an excellent opportunity for ourselves and our children to get closer to God.

We have developed these sets of ideas that might help your family to be able to live this Holy Week with great devotion knowing the reality we are living.

PREPARATION

Choose a Livestream...

The Monitor has the list of parishes in the Diocese of Trenton that are livestreaming Masses

<https://trentonmonitor.com/>

See if your parish is live-streaming Mass!

Make it Special

There are so many ways to honor God and to enter more fully into Mass as a family. Here are a few suggestions to consider:

- **Dress Up:** just like you would if you were going to Mass at your parish. This will signal to your kids that you are about to do something extraordinary. Make an Altar: take an end table and spread a white cloth over it. Place around it a crucifix - or pictures of Jesus, Mary, or the saints. Prop your phone or tablet up on your altar as you stream Mass.
- **Opening Hymn:** before the live stream begins, ask your family to be still and to quiet themselves.
- **Sit, Stand, & Kneel:** follow along with Mass. Sit for the readings, stand for the Gospel, and kneel after the "Holy, holy, holy."
- **Plan a Celebration:** every Mass is a celebration because we get to receive Jesus and his Divine Life within us - but consider planning a big breakfast after Mass or something creative!

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Holy Eucharist. I love You above all things and I want to be with you. Since I am unable to receive you at Mass, please Jesus, come into my heart. Be with me now and never let me be separated from you. Amen.

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH!

- Create your Palms
 - Here are some crafts that you can do with your kids this week in preparation for Palm Sunday:
<https://www.pinterest.com/esl52/palm-sunday-crafts/>
- Do a procession with your family in the house (start in the basement, go to the second floor, and finish in front of the TV where you will be watching the Mass.

MONDAY - WEDNESDAY

The first three days of Holy Week are traditionally days of "Spring Cleaning" as Catholic families prepare their hearts and homes for the Easter Triduum.

Prepare hearts:

- Parents use this time to do a proper examination of conscience with your children; each member can read one phrase and leave a moment of silence to meditate. Here are links of the Examination of Conscience for Children, Young Adults, Single People, and Married Persons <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/penance/examinations-of-conscience.cfm>
- Create with the whole family a special place for God in your house (an altar), a place where you will gather as a family and talk to God. Here is a link with some ideas. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/197595502374005827/>

Prepare home:

- Write on separate pieces of paper, chores to do around the house (clean the bathroom(s), sweep and mop or vacuum the whole house, clean the yard, dust, etc.) Ask each member of the family to pick one chore, and whatever duty they pick is the one he/she has to do for the day. Repeat this exercise on Tuesday and Wednesday. Each member has a chance to trade only once during these three days.

HOLY THURSDAY

We begin our Triduum with Holy Thursday. On this day the Church celebrates the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The Eucharist was established within the Passover meal by Jesus with His Apostles.

- **Family Last Supper idea:**
 - "A wonderful way to bring home the richness of this feast is to imitate the Last Supper by recalling some aspects of the Passover meal, and a foot washing ceremony with the family in imitation of Jesus. This a wonderful tradition to start in the family. The idea is serving foods reminiscent of the Passover meal as the Jews did in Egypt and Christ did in imitation of the Exodus. Elements of the Mass of the Lord's Supper are included to prepare us for participation at the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Incorporating the various senses in this meal really helps active participation, particularly for children.
 - Holy Thursday is one of the biggest feasts in the Church year, since it commemorates the institution of Holy Orders and of the Holy Eucharist. Sunday-best should be worn by participants and the table should be beautifully decorated, with a white tablecloth (in imitation of the white vestments used at Mass) and even the good china and silver. For dessert (since this is a special feast day, no Lenten abstaining here), at times I have baked a cake in the shape of a lamb.
 - Before or during the dinner, we read from Exodus 12:1-20 — the story of the first Passover. Then someone reads from the New Testament reading about the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist from either Matt 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26 or Luke 22:7-20." (Posted by Jennifer Gregory Miller)
- **Pilgrimage to seven churches: A Holy Thursday tradition**
 - "At the end of the Holy Thursday Mass, the Eucharist is placed on a temporary 'altar of repose' away from the sanctuary. It is customary for the faithful to process together to this altar and spend time in quiet prayer and adoration. In the Roman Missal, it states: 'The faithful are invited to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable length of time during the night, according to circumstance.' The Seven Churches Visitation is a tradition that grew out of this time of prayer and adoration. Catholics remember when Jesus asked his disciples to stay and watch with Him while they were in the garden. This tradition of mindful watching is a sort of pilgrimage to various altars of repose, in different churches that correspond to each of the seven places, or 'stations,' that were made by Jesus between the Last Supper in the Upper Room to His crucifixion on the cross." (Stephanie Patka)

- This tradition can be done at home with the family.
 - Visit as many Catholic Churches as you want around the Dioceses using the Internet. Pray one Our Father and Hail Mary for that Parish, its Pastor, Priest, and parishioners.
 - Use Google Earth and choose any Catholic Church, one from each Continent and pray one Our Father and Hail Mary for that Church and for the Continent where it is located.

GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday is the day that the Church remembers Christ's passion and death. Our homes could reflect the spirit of Good Friday.

- Take the silence challenge at least for one hour and set a specific time with your family. Young children cannot be expected to maintain silence, but if parents are silent, they will learn that this day is different from the others. (silence means no cell phones or TV or any form of entertainment).
- To help children fully understand the depth of Jesus' love for us, we spend our Friday afternoons praying the Stations of the Cross. Print the stations of the cross and place them around your house. Stations of the Cross for children. https://wau.org/resources/article/re_stations_cross_kids/
- Cover or take down all the pictures from the walls and uncover them or put them back after the Easter vigil Mass.
- Turn all lights off after 3 pm (remembering the death of Jesus) and use a flashlight only until the next morning.

HOLY SATURDAY

Holy Saturday is a day of anticipation, as we know Christ will be resurrected the next day. The church celebrates the "Vigil Mass" at night. These are suggestions for the family prayers and preparations for Easter.

- Put a small statue of Jesus in the center of your dinner table.
 - Talk about it: Over meals, talk about how Jesus is the center of our lives and our faith. How do we feel when we make Jesus the center of our lives?
- Gather the family around a bonfire in the backyard or light a candle. If possible, roast marshmallows and sing campfire songs as a sign of "keeping vigil" until Jesus rises.
 - Talk about it: The Easter Vigil begins with the symbol of fire. Talk about how fire represents that Jesus is the light of the world. He brings light to the darkness and new life to a sleeping world. What are some other symbols of resurrection? (Water, the color white, the transformation of a butterfly, Easter eggs, etc.)
- Decorating a Pascal Candle: <http://familyfeastandferia.com/lityear/lent-and-easter/easter-vigil-preparation/>
- Sing the exultet together and have a 'Liturgy of Light' at home. <http://familyfeastandferia.com/2008/04/the-liturgy-of-light/>

EASTER SUNDAY

Easter celebrates Jesus' Resurrection, the central feast of Christianity; this is a great time to illustrate the essential teachings of Christ's resurrection, and our redemption from sin and death.

- Parents can use a unique family candle or somebody's baptism candle that they can light at every meal during the Easter season.
- Paint a Resurrection Garden
 - Print out a black and white clipart of a garden. Put crayons in a bag. Each member of the family can grab only three crayons with their eyes closed. Whatever colors each chooses are the colors they will use to color the garden in ten minutes. Every two minutes with eyes closed, each member must trade one of their crayons to the family member next to them. At the end of the ten minutes, each one will present their drawing with an explanation of Jesus' Resurrection.

- Create a Resurrection Garden <https://www.pinterest.com/marcanobel/catholic-easter-activities/>
- Each member of the family creates a Prayer of Easter Gratitude and pray one prayer at every meal during the Easter season.
- Re-enactment
 - Gather your family and ask family members to share what they know about the events that happened in the days after Jesus' crucifixion. Invite your family to imagine that they are among Jesus' first disciples. Read together John 20:1–9 and act the scene then reflect together on the Gospel with questions such as these: If you had been among the first disciples who heard that the stone had been removed from Jesus' tomb, and Jesus' body was no longer there, what would you think? What did Mary Magdalene, Peter, and the Beloved Disciple think had happened? Recall that this is the first of many experiences that Jesus' first disciples had in the days after his death.
 - Pray together using Psalm 118.
- Make Resurrection eggs
- <https://www.catholicicing.com/catholic-resurrection-eggs/>
- For more Easter Activities ideas visit <https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/easter/easter-resources>

