



Sunday Celebrations

Fifth Sunday of Easter | **May 10, 2020**

Welcome to Sunday Celebrations, a free resource from RCL Benziger to help you celebrate Sunday with your family, in your home.

Each Sunday's celebration focuses on the Gospel of the day, and encourages family members of all ages to join in singing, praying, sharing, and celebrating. Suggested songs (search the internet for recorded versions) and craft activities help enliven and extend the celebrations.

Here are three simple ideas to help you get started:

1 Choose the place where you will gather for your Sunday celebration. It may be around your living room coffee table, around your kitchen or dining room table, outdoors at your picnic table, or any place that works for your family!

2 Decorate your chosen place with symbols of faith. These might include a placemat, napkin, or cloth in the color of the liturgical season; a Bible; a candle; a cross or crucifix; and a plant or flowers. Other suggestions will be offered on each Sunday Celebrations outline.

3 Each Sunday Celebrations outline is based on the flow of a Liturgy of the Word with children. Feel free to adapt the outline to best suit the ages and attention spans of your family members. It is most important simply to set aside time to pray and reflect on God's Word.

RCL Benziger prays that by taking time for Sunday Celebrations, families of all ages will be encouraged and strengthened by God's Word. Our prayers are with you as you lead your family in Sunday Celebrations and the Good News of Jesus Christ.





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Gospel Reading

John 14:1-12

(Reading is available at usccb.org/bible/readings.)

Symbol (optional)

Bowl of water; vase of spring flowers or an Easter lily; a heart (paperweight, paper cutout, clay, or whatever you have or can easily create); symbols, poems, drawings, and creations that picture or describe Heaven (see last week's session)

Get Ready

Begin by inviting each family member to take the heart in his or her hands and share anything that is troubling him or her today. Set the example by being the first person who shares. After you have shared, lead your family in saying, "Do not let your heart be troubled. You have faith in God." Once all family members have shared, spend a few moments in silence. Then continue this week's Sunday Celebration.

Remember to invite family members to again bring noisemakers with them. It is still the joyous Easter season!

Begin

- Light a candle and make a joyful noise with your noisemakers as you sing "Come and Go with Me to My Father's House," "There Are Many Rooms," or "We Are Marching."
- Make the Sign of the Cross together, then pray:
**Jesus, today we give to you all that is troubling us.
Help us put our faith and trust in God. Amen.**

Listen and Reflect

- Again, use your noisemakers as you sing "Alleluia!"
- Proclaim today's Gospel.
- Spend a moment in silent reflection. Then ask family members to share a word, an image, or a phrase they heard in the reading. Invite them to share why that word, image, or phrase stood out for them.
- After family members have shared, ask if they heard the words you said at the beginning of today's celebration and invite them to say the words with you: "Do not let your heart be troubled. You have faith in God."





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- Recall that in today's Gospel, Jesus also speaks about his Father's house. Ask if anyone remembers what Jesus said about his Father's house. (*It has many rooms; he is going there to prepare a place for us; we know the way there.*) Then ask, "What is another name for the Father's house?" (*Heaven*)
- Invite family members to share their creations about Heaven (see last week's session).

Connect

- Remind your family that in today's Gospel, Jesus says we know the way to Heaven. Invite each family member to name one way that leads us to Heaven. (*Responses might include: praying; reading God's Word; loving our neighbor; being patient; helping others; caring for the poor; obeying our parents; following God's Commandments; living the Beatitudes; and so forth.*)
- As a family, choose one way you will keep "heading to Heaven" in the coming week. You might decide to pray together every morning or night, to read together the Gospel of the day (the readings are available at usccb.org/bible/readings), to honor the Beatitudes' call to be peacemakers, to be more patient with each other, or to find a way to care for those in need in your neighborhood.
- Ask a family member to create a reminder of your choice and to post it on the refrigerator or in a place where all family members will see it.

Conclude

- Lead your family in praying for the world, the Church, those in need, the sick and those who have died, and for your prayer intentions. Respond, "Jesus our way, hear our prayer," leading your family in raising hands, palms up, to Jesus.
- Today is Mother's Day. After you have offered your prayer intentions, invite family members to extend their hands over their mother in a gesture of blessing. Then offer this prayer of blessing from *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*:





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**Loving God,
as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children,
so you watch over your Church.
Bless our mother.
Let the example of her faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, her family,
may honor her always
with a spirit of profound respect.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

- Pray together the Lord's Prayer.
- Make the Sign of the Cross and conclude by singing the song you sang at the beginning of this celebration.

On *Mother's Day*

If you have not yet done so, add an image of Mary to your family prayer table or create a little devotional area with an image of Mary, a plant or flowers, a basket of rosaries, and a candle. Encourage family members to pray to Mary throughout the month of May. Designate a night of the week to pray the Rosary together. Especially on this day, and all through the month of May, gather at your devotional area to sing a hymn in honor of Mary.





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Celebrating Sunday Throughout the Week | **May 10, 2020**

This week's invitation is to keep heading to Heaven by honoring the heavenly behavior choice you and your family have made. Here are three simple suggestions for extending this week's Sunday Celebration.

- Find a place to hang a long length of twine or yarn. Place a basket of cutout footprints and paper clips, tape, or clothespins near the twine or yarn. Invite family members to hang a footprint on the twine or yarn each time they “head to Heaven” by honoring this week's heavenly behavior choice. Be prepared to hang more twine and to create more footprints as needed. If possible, display your Heaven creations at one end of the twine or yarn, and designate this as your heavenly goal.
- Before Friday or Saturday night dinner, gather near your footprint display and take a few moments to share ways you “headed to Heaven” this week. Sing the song you used as the opening and/or closing song at last Sunday's celebration. Then enjoy dinner together!
- Bake and decorate footprint sugar cookies this week or make them as a special dessert for your Friday or Saturday night dinner.

Prepare to Celebrate *Next Sunday*

In preparation for next week's celebration, you will need several cutout hearts for each family member. Prepare these on your own or invite family members to prepare the hearts and bring them to next week's celebration.

