

FAMILY HOME VISITS

“...the future of evangelization depends in great part on the Church of the home. This apostolic mission of the family is rooted in Baptism and receives from the grace of the sacrament of marriage new strength to transmit the faith, to sanctify and transform our present society according to God's plan.”

St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*

GREAT FOR...

- New Member Families
- Baptismal Prep Families
- First Eucharist Families

LOGISTICS/PREPARATION

Scheduled around the family's preference

- Summer is often the easiest time, but in the school year, offer weekend or evening slots when people are home.
- It takes more time, but individual calls/emails to each family, to offer a specific time, are more effective than a broad statement of “send in your available times.”
- It's best if the whole family is there, but if that's not possible due to work/school/activities, the First Eucharist child and at least one parent should be there. In other contexts (for new members, baptism couples) this would be different.

About 20-30 minutes

- Some families are chattier than others
- Don't want to make it so short that the time seems rushed
- Too long and you'll overstay your welcome

Blanketed with prayer

- Pray for the family by name, before you leave and as you drive/walk over
- Once you arrive and settle in, pray for and with the family during your visit.
- After you leave, pray some more!

Personal, not just a script

- It's helpful to have an “outline” in your head, but the Holy Spirit is in charge, so follow his promptings
- Depending on the pre-existing rapport/relationship you have with the family, things might come up beyond the scope of the “outline.” That's ok
- Don't feel like you have to make each family visit identical. Each family is unique, and so are you!

ELEMENTS

Conversation/Rapport:

- Include both the parent(s) and the child(ren) in the conversation
- How was your summer? How is school going?
- What is something fun you're doing this week?
- Share about yourself too. This is a two-way conversation, not an interrogation!

Prayer

- Invite the family to pray with you.
- Pray aloud for the family, naming the 2nd grade child specifically, and other children if they're there.
- Thank God for the gift of this family, and for the journey they will be taking together this year.
- End with a prayer everyone can join in, like the Our Father.

Kerygma Cards [Based on the Wordless Books]

- Tells a story without words or pictures that very young children can understand
- Include the children in helping to tell the story based on what they know about the colors and the story of Jesus
 - **Gold:** What does gold make you think of? Mom's jewelry/wedding ring? The Gold medals in the Olympics? What other things are gold? In our story, Gold reminds of us God's goodness and perfection. God made everything good and wonderful, especially you! In heaven, everything is exactly the way God wants – everything in heaven is perfect! God made you to be in heaven forever as a saint.
 - **Black:** What does black make you think of? Darkness? Nighttime? The Black in our story reminds us of sin. Have you heard the word sin before? Sin is a choice that hurts other people, myself, and goes against God's plan. Sin makes a wall between us and God, because – flip back to the gold page – anything that's not holy can't be in God's presence.
 - **Red:** What does red make you think of? It makes me think of two things for our story: love, and the color of blood. Who loves you? Jesus is God's son. He loves us so much! He wants everyone to be a saint and live with God in heaven forever. He came to us as a baby – do you remember when that happened? Jesus never sinned. He is God's Son, and he always did what God wants for us. Jesus died for us on the Cross. Have you seen a picture of that before? It hurt him very badly, but he loves us so much he chose it

anyway. When Jesus died on the cross, he was hurt, and there was blood. The red color reminds us of his love and his blood.

- **White:** Now that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, something amazing happened! Do you know what happened next? He rose from the dead! This card is white, for a new fresh start. Jesus gives us all new life because he died and rose again.
- **Green:** What things are green? Grass, trees, flowers... things that grow! You're a special part of God's family. There are four ways we can grow closer to Jesus every week. Let's talk about what those are.

4 Ways... Poster

- These are 4 ways we stay close to Jesus. Two of them go up and down – that's my and Jesus in our friendship – and two of them go side to side – that's my friendship with Jesus and other people.
- The one at the top is what? (If the child is a strong reader, ask them to read). It says, "prayer!" We stay close to Jesus by spending time in prayer – talking to him every day. There are lots of ways to pray.
- The one at the bottom is what? It says, "Bible!" The Bible is God's special and holy word. Do you have a children's Bible? (if not, encourage Mom and Dad to get one). In the Bible are cool stories about God's people and the things Jesus did when he was on earth. Reading the Bible is a way we talk to and learn about Jesus.
- The one on the side says what? It says "Mass!" Every week we have a chance to worship – show love and respect for – Jesus with our family and friends at Mass! At Mass we get to hear readings from the Bible, sing songs, pray together, and be close to our community. At the end of this year, you'll be ready to receive your First Holy Communion!
- The one on this side says what? It says, "service!" Service is helping others with love. Let's take a family poll. What is the chore that you hate the most? (everyone answers). We can serve people in our neighborhood and community, but we also serve our family because we love them. (if there is an older sibling, they read the JP2 quote on the bottom of the poster; otherwise, ask a parent). If we serve our family with love and a joyful heart, that's a way to stay close to Jesus and love him, too! When Mom or Dad asks you to do the chores you don't like, if we says "yes, I will!" and do them without complaining, that's a way we can serve Jesus by serving others.

Parent prayer book

- Give out the parent prayer book; explain it's full of great ideas for parents for praying with children.
- You can use another prayer resource – maybe something from your parish with information about parent groups, etc

Rosary

- Ask if the child has a grandma or grandpa living close by. What are some things you love to do with your grandparents?
- Tell a brief story about your grandparents or parents. I talk about my grandma telling stories to us on the couch with the photo album about my dad and his brothers. One of the stories is pretty crazy –my dad and uncles had a pet alligator – but I know it’s true because my grandma told me, and she knew my dad best.
- Make a connection to the Rosary: Jesus’ mother Mary knows him best of all. When we pray the Rosary, we are sitting (or walking) with Mary as she tells us stories of her Son Jesus. When we prayer the rosary, we are learning about Jesus from his mom.
- In the prayer book for Mom and Dad, it tells about how to pray the rosary. Start with a little bit at a time and add a few more each time you pray.

Donation Bag

- If your local food pantry has donation bags, ask for a few hundred for your parish. Explain to the family that you brought these gifts in a bag that they can fill up with food items for those in need.
- Make a connection to the Eucharist: Jesus feeds us with his body and blood; we can help feed people who have less than we do.
- Encourage them to bring the bag back to church filled with food items.

Questions?

- Ask the parents and children if they have any questions about the gifts in the bag, or about 2nd grade faith formation.
- Thank them for their time, and you’re done!

“In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part.”

~Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nutiandi*

Questions or Ideas? Let’s chat!

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