6 ways to make Ordinary Time special

1. Focus on Christ's life

With less time worrying about placing decorations, hanging wreaths, buying gifts, stuffing baskets and preparing hunts, maybe your family will intentionally and successfully find that more time can be carved out for previewing the Scriptures with your kids. Ordinary time can be a time of growth in learning about and knowing Jesus. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops puts it best: "The Sundays and weeks of ordinary time … take us through the life of Christ. This is the time of conversion. This is living the life of Christ. Ordinary time is a time for growth and maturation, a time in which the mystery of Christ is called to penetrate ever more deeply into history until all things are finally caught up in Christ. The goal, toward which all of history is directed, is represented by the final Sunday in ordinary time, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe."

2. Learn about the lives of the saints

Saints are a great way to show your family how to live a life that shines a relationship with Jesus…and that makes ordinary time a great time to begin a family tradition of reading the stories of the saints on a regular basis. Check out these saint story cards from OSV. And here is a list of movies about saints for your reference.

3. Try new family prayers and devotions

Ordinary time can be a meaningful time to worship and pray together in new ways:

- try monthly devotions
- pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy

- try meditative prayer
- help your children consecrate themselves to Mary

It's also a good time to either jump-start or reboot your family prayer time. How's it going? What might you do to change it up a little, or make it work better?

4. Go to confession

Parishes remind us to go to reconciliation during Advent and Lent, oftentimes organizing parish-wide opportunities to go. But perhaps summer vacation from busy school schedules might lend itself to more time for intentional examinations of conscience, penance and forgiveness. Perhaps as we work on our relationship with Jesus, we can work on our relationships with one another.

5. Celebrate the Eucharist

Every Sunday is an Easter, during ordinary time or not. Go to Mass with your kids, reminding them every single Sunday is a celebration of Christ's resurrection. Here are more than 25 strategies for making Mass work with kids….for example:

- have kids write down what they are thankful for on slips of paper and place them in the collection basket during the offering of the gifts;
- do a liturgical scavenger hunt;
- give younger kids something appropriate to look at; give older kids a kid0friendly Mass missal;
- unpack the Mass as a family afterward.

6. Spruce up your home oratory

Do you have a home oratory or prayer table? Spruce it up with special items that only come out during ordinary time: saint cards for the feast days of the saints, natural objects that represent the season (fall leaves, spring flowers, beautiful

pebbles)…and, of course, a green tablecloth, or even a banner your kids make.

What ways will you and your family mark this liturgical season of growing closer to knowing Jesus together as a family? How will you make ordinary time extraordinary this year?