Ordinary Time … Extraordinary Time for Your Family

September is a pretty ordinary month. Kids are back in school. Parents are back to regular routines. But in all of its ordinariness, September is the perfect time to discover the extraordinary ways our Catholic faith gives meaning and purpose to our everyday lives!

Ordinary Time in the Church

During the month of September (but not only September), the Catholic Church celebrates Ordinary Time. That doesn't mean these Sundays are insignificant. The word "ordinary" comes from the Latin word ordinalis, which refers to a series of numbers. The term "Ordinary Time" reflects the way the Sundays are numbered.

The Ordinary Time we celebrate this month actually started after Pentecost Sunday and will continue until the First Sunday of Advent. There is another period of Ordinary Time beginning after the Christmas season and continuing until Lent begins. During Ordinary Time, the priest's vestments are green, which symbolizes hope.

Make Mass Extraordinary

- Decide ahead of time which Mass to attend.
- Set out everyone's clothes so getting ready is not a hassle.
- Plan a simple snack to eat an hour before leaving for a vigil Mass
  or an easy-to-make breakfast an hour before Sunday Mass.
- Make sure everyone has something to put into the collection basket.
- Sit in front so children can see.
- Bring children to the Communion line even if they are

too young to receive.
- Celebrate good behavior by doing something special after Mass.

Angel Power

Sept. 29 is the feast day of three important angels, whom we call archangels:

- **St. Michael** is the angel who forced the devil out of heaven. We pray to him to help overcome temptations.
- **St. Gabriel** is the angel who appeared to Our Lady and asked if she would be the mother of Jesus. We pray to him to help us do God's will in our lives.
- **St. Raphael** is the angel who accompanied a blind man named Tobit on a journey. We pray to him to protect us in our travels.

It's fun to celebrate angels. Remind your children that they each have a guardian angel who was sent by God to watch over them.

Sing Happy Birthday to Our Lady

- Sept. 8 is traditionally observed as the birthday of our Blessed Mother. Here are some fun ideas for celebrating:
- Talk about what kind of birthday gift you could give to Our Lady. Perhaps you could bring flowers to an altar of Our Lady at your local church or light a candle.
- Pray the Rosary as a family.
- Bake a cake, or, if you don't have time, buy one. Let the kids sing "Happy Birthday."

Celebrate the Cross in Your Home

Sept. 14 is a feast day celebrating the triumph of the cross

of Christ. Make it a point on this feast day to bless your children with holy water and let them bless you. Remind your children that they were all anointed with the Sign of the Cross on their forehead when they were baptized. You might want to give your children a small cross to carry in their pockets on this special day as a reminder to pray for help when difficulties arise.

TALK ABOUT IT: Share a difficult time in your life and how something good happened as a result. Encourage your children to talk about the crosses in their lives, and pray as a family that God will help all of you carry your crosses.

Help Other People

Sept. 5 is the feast day of one of our newest saints, Mother Teresa, who served the needs of the poor on the streets of Calcutta in India. This day is the perfect opportunity for the entire family to do something special for those who are less fortunate. Create a Caring and Sharing Box in which children can place clothing, toys, coins or other possessions that they want to share with others. Empty the box on a regular basis by letting your children donate the items to charitable organizations in your community.

Find God in the Present

We all know people who live their lives looking back at the past. We also know people who are always stressing about the future. Both types of people lose the joy of the present moment and don’t even realize what they are missing. Our Catholic faith teaches that God gives us the grace needed to deal with whatever is happening in the present moment. So, make it a point this month to look for God in each ordinary moment.