Simple ways to incorporate the Year of St. Joseph into your family life

Incorporate these ideas as often as you wish to celebrate St. Joseph this year.

Pray the Act of Hope

- “Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1817). Today, talk about hope and what a gift it is. Learn the prayer below and add it to your midday prayer time for the week.

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon for my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

Have a Dad’s day

- Dad cooks his favorite meal for the family. This could be anything from PB&J to filet mignon! The oldest child in your family could lead prayer invoking St. Joseph for the intentions of the father.
- St. Joseph was a carpenter. Dad could lead a woodworking project today, such as making a crucifix or a stable for next year’s nativity scene. If woodworking is too difficult, try a craft. The point is to come together and work with your hands, like St. Joseph did. Talk about St. Joseph’s life and his role in Jesus’ life while you work.

Make a crown for Dad

You'll need:

- construction paper;
- lined paper (age appropriate for your children);
- pencils, markers, and/or crayons
- scissors
- tape.

Make a crown and/or button out of construction paper and decorate with the words "We love Dad" or "Dad is great." Each person (even Mom!) can draw a picture and/or write a letter stating why Dad is so great (younger children can dictate to older ones). Put these in a folder for Dad to read on lunch breaks at work or on business trips.

Discuss Obedience

"To live well is nothing other than to love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul and with all one's efforts; from this it comes about that love is kept whole and uncorrupted (through temperance). No misfortune can disturb it (and this is fortitude). It obeys only [God] (and this is justice), and is careful in discerning things, so as not to be surprised by deceit or trickery (and this is prudence)" – St. Augustine (De moribus eccl. 1, 25, 46: PL 32, 1330-1331).

St. Joseph was obedient to the words of God spoken through the angels. We must be obedient to God's words spoken through His Church. Today would be a good day to discuss obedience and how children are obedient to their parents, as parents are obedient to God. How do we as parents act as an example of this? (Words to look up in the Catholic encyclopedia: magisterium, pope, papal infallibility, conscience.) Read section 2197 and those following in the Catechism.

Talk about Temperance

Temperance moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. Practice temperance by limiting pleasurable foods and activities. This will help to ensure the will's mastery over instincts and help to keep desires within the limits of what is honorable, which is very important for adolescents struggling with chastity (see CCC 1809).

Pray a St. Joseph Prayer

Glorious St. Joseph, spouse of the immaculate Virgin, Foster-father of Jesus Christ, obtain for me a pure, humble, and charitable mind, and perfect resignation to the Divine Will. Be my guide, my father, and my model through life that I may merit to die as you did in the arms of Jesus and Mary. Patron of families, patron of fathers, patron of the Universal Church: St. Joseph, pray for us (adapted from the "Novena in Honor of St. Joseph").

- Write the prayer in large letters on poster board and challenge the older children to memorize it. Come up with a small reward for those who do, such as a small St. Joseph medal, statue, or holy card.

Family Tree Centerpiece

Supplies:

- bare tree limb (spray-painted if you wish)
- large, plastic margarine tub filled with plaster of Paris (from hardware store) or clay
- decorative paper or tissue
- ribbon
- wooden or plastic loops (such as shower-curtain hooks)
- scissors
- glue or tape

- snapshots of family members
- holy cards of patron saints

St. Joseph is the patron of families. The Year of St. Joseph is a perfect time to remind ourselves that our family is bigger than those who live in our house. It also includes those who have passed away (including infants and miscarried babies) and the communion of saints, especially our particular patrons.

Stick branches securely in wet plaster or clay, then wait for plaster to harden. Cover the container with bright paper and ribbon. Attach ribbon to the tops of the loops and glue or tape photos to the back of them. Hang the pictures on the Family Tree and use as a centerpiece at dinner. Can be used also on sacrament days and added to as often as you wish.

Other simple ideas

1. Honor St. Joseph with a special prayer.
2. Honor your father today in small way. Make a card or surprise him with something he likes.
3. Have lunch with Dad.
4. Go to work with Dad.
5. Pray for Dad everyday.