

Christmas:

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

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Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- God appoints parents to care for their children.
- Whoever honors their parents atones for their sins.
- Care for parents as they age; be kind and considerate of them.

Second Reading

- Live with heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.
- Forgive one another.
- Live with gratitude and peace in your heart.

Gospel

- Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him at the Temple.
- When Simeon held Jesus in his arms, he recognized him as the Messiah.
- As a child, Jesus grew stronger and he was filled with wisdom.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

First Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14—Those who fear the Lord honor their parents.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5—Blessed are all who walk in his ways!

Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-21—Family life in the Lord.

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40—The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.

Invitation to prayer (30 seconds)

Ask the children to quiet themselves and sit comfortably. Have them take three deep breaths while you prompt them to relax as they breathe in God, our Father who loves us, Jesus Christ, his Son, our brother, and God's Holy Spirit who lovingly guides us. As an invitation to prayer, make the Sign of the Cross.

Listening for a word or phrase to speak to your heart (3-4 minutes)

Ages 5-6: Read aloud the following story: *When Jesus was a baby, Mary and Joseph took him to the Temple to be blessed. A man whose name was Simeon was very excited to see the baby Jesus. He told everyone that Jesus was the Promised one. Then Mary and Joseph took Jesus home and took care of him. We call Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the Holy Family. Joseph and Mary taught Jesus to love God and care for others.* Read aloud the words on the handout and ask children to think about Jesus at home with his mother and father.

Ages 7-14: Read the Gospel passage or special phrase slowly and deliberately while the children are silently listening. Ask them to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they pick out their “word” from God. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

Loving God through his Word (3-5 minutes)

Ages 5-6: Have children draw a picture of Joseph and Mary caring for Jesus at their home. Talk about their pictures. Close with a prayer to the Holy Family.

Ages 7-8: Read the questions aloud and have a conversation about how our family members teach us about God in the ways they care for us. Have children draw a picture of how their family members care for each other. Close with a prayer to the Holy Family.

Ages 9-11: Guide young people through a silent meditation followed by a discussion using the questions on the handout.

Ages 12-14: Guide young people through a meditation on a typical day in their home and one in Jesus' home. Have them discuss some ways that Jesus grew (and that they grow) in body mind and spirit.

Living the Gospel words through the week (3-5 minutes)

The handouts describe one or two ways children and young people can live this reflection on the Gospel through the week at home, school, or play. If appropriate, have them add one or two more personal choices to act on this week.