

Helping families grow in their Catholic faith.

WHAT IS A DOMESTIC CHURCH?

The term “Domestic Church” refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates all the way back to the first century AD. The Greek word ecclesiola referred to “little church.” Our Early Church Fathers understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

The Four Levels of Church

In reality, we can speak of four distinct levels of Church. There is the Universal Church led by the bishop of Rome and all bishops in union with him. There is the local diocesan church. Led by its local bishop, it is uniquely positioned to guide us on how best to implement our faith in our own time and culture. There is the local parish church, from which we receive most of our religious instruction and the sacraments. Finally, there is this fourth layer of Church. The Domestic Church plays a key role in our sanctification because it is the primary place where we practice coming to intimately love other persons.

<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/family-life/family/parenting/what-is-a-domestic-church/>



According to the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: "The family, is so to speak, the domestic church." (Lumen Gentium #11) This means that it is in the context of the family that we first learn who God is and to prayerfully seek His will for us. In the following bullet points you will find some suggestions on how to build your "domestic church" through a life of prayer that can help all the members of your family.

Begin praying as a family and reading from Scripture daily, certainly before meals, but also first thing in the morning or before bed. Find a time that works for your family. Use the liturgy of the Church as a model for prayer, and try to include heartfelt unstructured prayer as well.

Pray a Family Rosary (each member leads a decade, and everyone shares intentions).

Have a crucifix in a prominent place in the home, and in every bedroom.

Make the Sacraments a regular celebration – take the whole family to Confession and Mass!

Begin family traditions based on the seasons celebrated in the liturgical calendar.

Make your vacation a holy pilgrimage by visiting the shrines and saints of our land and the world.

Make worshiping God a priority. Never miss Mass, even while traveling – go to: www.MassTimes.org. . . to find a church near you!

Teach stewardship and charity to your children, through word and example.

Demonstrate love for your spouse, your children, your neighbors, and the world. Remind their children that they are loved by God and have been given gifts to serve others.

Talk freely about the presence of God in the joys and sorrows of your life.

Welcome into your home and support priests, brothers, sisters, deacons, and lay ministers in the Church.

Participate in the lay ministries and activities of your parish community.

Allow your children to witness you in private prayer. Encourage your children to pray daily on their own, to listen for God's call, and if heard, to respond.

For more ideas on how to build your home as a Domestic Church, go to: www.domestic-church.com. . . or visit [The Family Fully Alive](#). . . sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.



Lord, bless our family,
all of us now together, those far away,
all who are gone back to you.
May we know joy.
May we bear our sorrows with patience.
Let us be grateful to each other.
We have all made each other what we are.
O family of Jesus, watch over our family. Amen

from "Prayers for Our Catholic Family," Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.