

# **The Joy of Love Event Outline**

Thank you for your willingness to learn more about Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation and to share his vision with others. Whether you choose to use our video or give our presentation yourself, here are some guidelines for how to organize a parish event (large or small).

This presentation can be used in a variety of settings, such as a staff, committee, RCIA, or parents gathering. If you are promoting your event to a larger group, feel free to use our Joy of Love logo to promote your event on flyers or posters.

## **Start with the Ending**

As you are planning your event, be sure to carefully consider what you hope will come out of it. You will be introducing people to *The Joy of Love*, which challenges us all to take action. This is not a document that is meant to just sit on a shelf!

We have provided some starting points for next steps at the end of the presentation, but the specifics will vary for your own community. For example, you might:

- Propose starting a small group process using our group reading guide, to go deeper.
- Form one or more teams to explore how this document could be implemented in different aspects of parish life.
- Start a specific new ministry (such as one for walking with the newly married).

Be sure to be ready to invite people into whatever next steps you have planned, while they are focused on the document. Have sign-up forms available or ask for interest.

## **Schedule**

Here are suggestions for how to structure and use your time at the event.

### **Preparation**

If you expect a group of more than 6-8 people, you will need to organize the room so that people can easily break into smaller groups for discussion. Here are some additional ideas for how to prepare your space:

- Set up a central table with a cross and a bible on it that you can gather around for prayer.
- Consider having a little fun decorating the space around a “love motif.”
- Have a sign-in sheet if you'd like to capture the contact information for everyone who attended.
- Set up a resource table with additional resources. See our suggestions later in this document.

### **Gathering**

You may want to have some soft music playing as everyone gathers to set the atmosphere. Provide name tags if those who are participating may not know each other. Be especially hospitable and welcoming to those who attend.

### **Opening Prayer (2-5 minutes)**

We recommend using “The Gift of the Family” prayer (page 1 of the Prayers document), but feel free to replace it with another option and/or incorporate music at this time.

### **Introductions / Icebreaker (2-5 minutes)**

Give your participants an opportunity to introduce themselves and/or share something about their families growing up. If you have a larger group, gather them into smaller groups. Ask them to share their name, the people who make up their family, and something unique or interesting about their family growing up (e.g. a family tradition).

## Presentation and Sharing (45-60 minutes)

The main portion of the event will alternate between the presentation and sharing on reflection questions. We have provided a document with the questions, which you may want to distribute at this time.

We would discourage handing out the summary or talking point documents at the beginning of the event, as that would tempt your people to read instead of listening to the presentation itself. You can instead distribute them at the conclusion.

The presentation is structured into five main sections, each ending with a set of reflection questions. If you are using the video, be prepared to pause it at the end of each section. Depending on the time you have available, you may want to have your people focus on only one or two questions per section. The video is 36 minutes long, not including any discussion time.

## Next Steps (5-15 minutes)

Offer options for next steps and/or lead a discussion about how the parish could respond (see “Start With the Ending” above). Direct people to your resource table and let them know what is available there.

## Resources to Send Home (2 minutes)

Send one or more of the following home with your people:

- **Presentation summary** (2 pages) and/or detailed **talking points** (15 pages). You may not want to make copies of the detailed talking points for all participants, but make them available at the resource table for interested parties.
- **Prayers.** Send home the third and fourth pages in the prayers document, for use by families and couples. Encourage your participants to use them on a regular basis (suggest that they put a reminder in their phone right now).

## Closing Prayer (2-5 minutes)

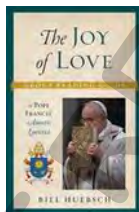
We recommend using the “As Families Go Forth” prayer (page 2 of the Prayers document), but feel free to replace it with another option and/or incorporate music at this time.

## Resource Table

Make some of the following available to your participants at a resource table. You may wish to put out a basket for payments or donations. The print resources we mention are all available from us at [PastoralCenter.com](http://PastoralCenter.com), many of them with bulk pricing.

- **Any of the free resources from this kit** that you have not already given out, such as the detailed **talking points**. If you have purchased our extra tools (e.g. indexes, textual analysis), make them available.

- **Full document.** You can print out the document from the Vatican website or buy this in print form from us.



- **Group reading guide.**

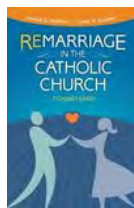
This booklet provides a detailed summary of the document in plain English with discussion questions, and is structured for six small-group sessions.

- **Day-by-day booklets.**

*What Pope Francis Says about Marriage and Family* is available now and *Walking in Love with Pope Francis* will be available by September 2016.



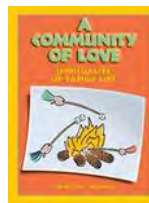
- **Prayer cards.** These color prayer cards (in English and Spanish) feature the prayer from the end of *The Joy of Love*.



- **Resources on separation, divorce, and annulment.** We have wonderful books and leaflets available for purchase.

- **Resources for parents.**

We especially recommend *A Community of Love: Spirituality of Family Life* and *Making Faith Fun: Spiritual Activities You Can Do with Your Kids*.





**Pope Francis' Papal Statements**



- The Light of Faith**  
*(Lumen Fidei)*  
Jun. 2013 Encyclical
- The Joy of the Gospel**  
*(Evangelii Gaudium)*  
Nov. 2013 Apostolic Exhortation
- The Face of Mercy**  
*(Misericordiae Vultus)*  
Apr. 2015 Papal Bull
- Praise Be to You**  
*(Laudato Si')*  
Jun. 2015 Encyclical
- The Joy of Love**  
*(Amoris Laetitia)*  
Mar. 2016 Apostolic Exhortation

**Previous Church Statements**



Vatican II



Paul VI




John Paul II




Benedict XVI

**Synods on the Family**



- Two gatherings (2014 & 2015)
- Hundreds of participants
- The Synods' own words

**Document Structure**



- About 53,000 words
- 326 paragraphs
- Introduction + 9 chapters



# Apostolic Exhortation

- A letter to us
- A form of teaching
- An encouragement to act



Franciscus

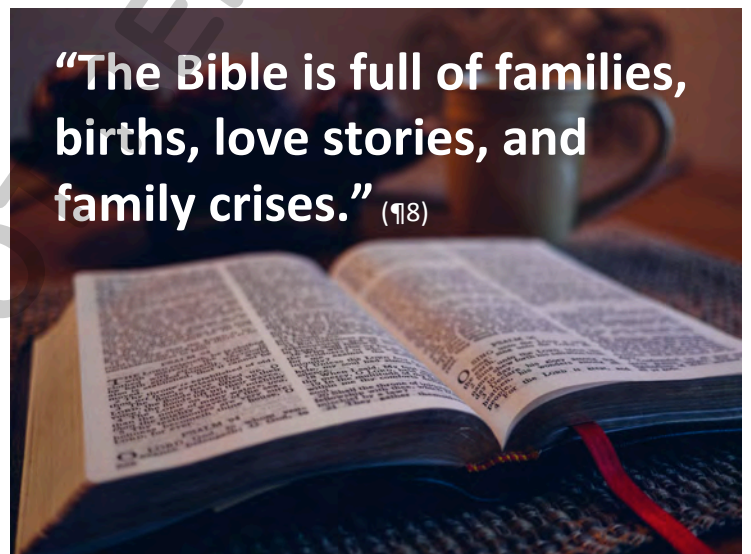
# The Audience

The whole church



# Family & the Bible

“The Bible is full of families, births, love stories, and family crises.” (118)



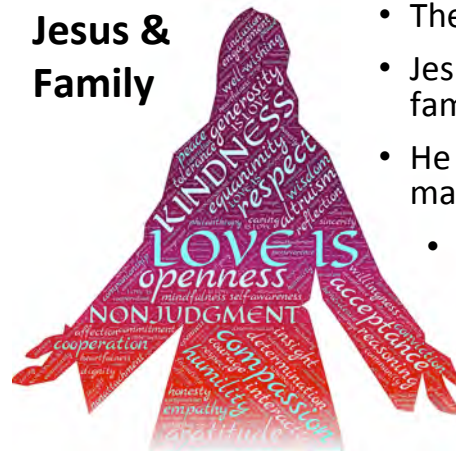
# God is a Family

- The Trinity is a relationship
- We mirror God in our families
- God dwells in our families



# Jesus & Family

- The Holy Family
- Jesus knows families well
- He spoke about marriage & love
  - Jesus is our model



## Love & Tenderness

- The law of love
- Mercy & forgiveness
- Tender intimacy



## Reflection

## The State of the Family

### The Family Matters

- Important for the world
- The domestic church



## The Family Has Changed

- Many improvements
- Many challenges
- Family issues are complex



## The Culture of "Me First"



Isolated individuals

Family bonds

What we want

What we can give

Ephemeral & disposable

Permanent decisions & commitments

# ***The Joy of Love Presentation Talking Points***

## ***Amoris Laetitia***

by **Paul Canavese & Ann Naffziger**

Thank you for your willingness to learn more about Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation and to share his vision with others. These talking points are provided as a companion to our Powerpoint presentation, although they can also be used separately.

### **Our Approach**

It is challenging to summarize a 53,000 word document, and it requires prioritization. It isn't possible to include every point Pope Francis makes in the document. We have done our best to represent the main concepts he offers, prioritizing what is most relevant to a general parish audience.

### **Structure of the Presentation**

We have chosen not to strictly follow the structure of the document. We have organized the presentation and talking points into an overview and six main sections, with discussion questions at the end of each section. You can present this in a single session or break it up into multiple sessions.

### **Preparation**

We strongly encourage you read the document for yourself before presenting on it. While it will take some time, Pope Francis' writings are much easier to read than other Church documents of which you may be familiar. We have referenced related paragraphs of the document in parentheses after each point.

### **Make It Your Own**

This resource has been created with the intention of being flexible. You are encouraged to modify the presentation and these notes to best suit your needs.

### **Presentation Recommendations**

Following the approach used by many strong presenters, we have designed the slides to support you, rather than compete with you. They include a minimal number of words so that your audience will listen to you, rather than read.

You are welcome to make copies of these talking point pages to give to your audience as a reference, but we strongly recommend distributing them at the *end* of your talk. Otherwise, their noses will be in the handout while you are talking.

### **Next Steps**

Consider what your hopes are for what happens after your presentation. How can you help your people take next steps? Could they gather in small groups? Could they work through existing ministries or create new ones? Put some thought into this before you present.

### **Additional Resources**

The Pastoral Center is developing additional resources to help parishes implement *The Joy of Love*, so check back at <http://PastoralCenter.com/joyoflove.html> regularly.

We carry the full text of the document in book form, a group reading guide booklet, prayer cards, and more.

## A. Overview

1. The Joy of Love
2. Presentation Roadmap
  - After an overview, we will explore the document in six sections:
  - **Family and the Bible.** What does Scripture have to say about marriage and family?
  - **The State of the Family.** There are many challenges facing families today that are important for us to understand.
  - **The Ideal and Real Life.** Pope Francis wants us to embrace mercy when families don't meet our ideals.
  - **The Joy of Love & Marriage.** Marriage is a wonderful gift from God, but it is often a place of challenges.
  - **The Joy of Parenting.** Parents are the main ones who educate their own children. How can we best support them in preparing their children to be disciples in the world?
  - **Next Steps.** What can your community do next to respond to Pope Francis' call to action?
3. Pope Francis' Papal Statements
  - ***The Light of Faith* (Lumen Fidei):** June 2013, encyclical based on a draft by Pope Benedict XVI.
  - ***The Joy of the Gospel* (Evangelii Gaudium):** November 2013, apostolic exhortation.
  - ***The Face of Mercy* (Misericordiae Vultus):** April 2015, papal bull.
  - ***Praise Be to You* (Laudato Si'):** June 2015, encyclical.
  - ***The Joy of Love* (Amoris Laetitia):** March 2016, apostolic exhortation.
4. Previous Church Statements
  - **Vatican II** emphasized love and the role of Christ in the family. (¶67)
  - **Blessed Pope Paul VI** wrote *Humanae Vitae* (Of Human Life) on married love and responsible parenthood. (¶68)
  - **Saint John Paul II** also spoke extensively about these topics, especially in his Letter to Families (*Gratissimam Sane*) and On the Role of Christian Families in the World (*Familiaris Consortio*). (¶69)
  - **Pope Benedict XVI** wrote about the nature of love and how it relates to marriage (*Deus Caritas Est, Caritas in Veritate*). (¶70)
5. Synods on the Family
  - *The Joy of Love* flowed from **two “Synod on the Family” gatherings** in Rome (in 2014 & 2015).
  - The meetings had **hundreds of participants** from around the world, including bishops, priests, married couples, women, and leaders from other Christian denominations.
  - Pope Francis quotes extensively from **Synod documents** in *The Joy of Love*.

6. Document Structure

- **About 53,000 words**, a little longer than all the epistles in the Bible put together. (The word cloud diagram shows words found in the document, with font size based on frequency.)
- **326 paragraphs.**
- Divided into an **Introduction and nine chapters.**
- 366 footnoted citations.

7. Apostolic Exhortation

- **A letter.** This document is an apostolic exhortation, a letter usually addressed to the church.
- An apostolic exhortation **teaches and moves us to action**: it encourages us to implement recommendations from the document.

8. The Audience

- This document is written to **everyone in the church**: bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated people (e.g. religious), married couples, and all lay people.
- Pope Francis particularly focuses on **pastoral leaders** and **married people**.



## B. Family and the Bible

### 9. Family and the Bible

- Chapter 1 gives an overview of families in the Bible, and additional references can be found throughout the document.

### 10. The Bible is about Families

- “**The Bible is full of families**, births, love stories, and family crisis.” (¶8)
- **Scripture is concrete and relevant.** It is not a set of abstract ideas, but “comfort and companionship.” (¶22)

### 11. God is a Family

- **The Trinity is a relationship.** We understand God as a relationship of love. (¶11, 71)
- **We mirror God in our families.** Married couples and families express this communion and God’s work. (¶29)
- **God dwells in our families.** God is truly present, through our “daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes.” (¶314-315)

### 12. Jesus & Family

- **The Holy Family.** God entered a human family through Jesus. The Holy Family is an “icon.” (¶18, 30, 65-66)
- **Jesus knows families well.** He visited families, sharing their joys and struggles. He used them in parables. (¶21)
- **Jesus spoke about marriage and love.** He preached a “demanding ideal,” but always showed compassion and mercy. (¶12-13, 38, 62-64, 325)
- **Jesus is our model.** He is a model for children (¶18), for the church (¶64), how to live with our emotions (¶144), how to relate to the world (¶289), and how to show love (¶323).

### 13. Love & Tenderness

- **The law of love.** As Christians, we should be known for our self-giving love. (¶27)
- **Mercy and forgiveness** flow from this love. (¶27)
- **Tender intimacy.** The Hebrew Scriptures regularly expresses God's relationship with us as a tender parental love, such as Psalm 131 speaking of a nursing mother. (¶28)

### 14. Reflection

- Sometimes the Church and the Bible are disregarded as being irrelevant. How might it change your perspective to think about Scripture as “**full of families**, births, love stories, family crises,” stories of the human condition that mirror the struggles and challenges people are still facing in their families today?
- **Jesus knew human families** well because he grew up in one of them. He had to be potty trained. He had to learn to walk, talk, get dressed, and feed himself. He experienced normal, everyday family life. How might that have contributed to his ability to relate to families and their struggles?
- Jesus preached a “demanding ideal,” but always showed **compassion and mercy**. Discuss one example of a demanding ideal in which someone fell short but Jesus still treated that person with compassion and mercy.

## C. The State of the Family

### 15. The State of the Family

- The “Experiences and Challenges of Families,” are explored in Chapter 2, as well as later in the document.

### 16. The Family Matters

- **Important for the world.** The family is the building block of society, affects how each person grows, instills community values, and influences morality at every level. (§31, 52)
- **The domestic church.** The Church is a “family of families.” Families are individual cells of the Church, which transform the world. (§31, 86-88, 290, 324)

### 17. The Family Has Changed

- **Many improvements.** Today spouses share responsibilities more equitably and focus more on personal communication than before. Women are treated better. And so many families live in love and mission, in a diverse number of ways. (§32, 54, 57)
- **Many challenges.** However, we’ll explore the many challenges facing the family today.
- **Family issues are complex,** vary across cultures, and need to be considered from different perspectives. (§3, 32)

### 18. The Culture of “Me First”

- Pope Francis is very concerned about what an “extreme individualism” is doing to the family. (§33)
- We see **isolated individuals**—focused mainly on themselves—instead of strong **family bonds** that prioritize the good of the whole family. (§39)
- **What we want** versus **what we can give.**
- We have a culture of the **ephemeral & disposable**—a stressful, fast-paced life where I use what I need now and then throw it away—versus **permanent decisions and commitments.** (§39)

### 19. The Impact on Marriage and Family

- This culture works against forming healthy families.
- **Fewer and later marriages.** More people choose short-term relationships or to live alone. Others postpone marriages for long periods because of money, work, or study. (§33-34)
- **More broken marriages.** They are ended when inconvenient, or so the spouses can be “independent.” Marital problems are not approached with patience or thoughtfulness. (§34, 39, 41)
- **Fewer children.** Many decide not to have children for bad reasons, such as wanting to spend more money on themselves. Some reject life after conception through abortion. (§42-43, 83)
- **Unhealthy sexuality,** including the effects of pornography, objectifying the body, and prostitution. (§41)
- **Rejection of the elderly,** who can be considered a burden, exploited, or even pressured toward euthanasia. (§48, 191-193)
- **Lack of intimacy** and connection within families, caused by the exhaustion of work, distraction of electronic devices, and overscheduling. Many don’t even have time to have supper together any more. (§50)

20. Social Issues Impact Families

- Social issues including the following harm families. They can delay marriages, cause broken marriages, and result in pain within families.
- **Lack of dignified/affordable housing.** (§44)
- **Lack of adequate health care.** (§44)
- **Lack of dignified employment** that allows time and energy for workers to be with their families. (§44)
- **Addictions** such as drug abuse, alcoholism, and gambling (§51)
- **Domestic violence**, whether it be verbal, physical, or sexual. (§51, 54, 153-157)
- **Extreme poverty and forced migration** can be devastating to families (§46)

21. Reflection

- Discuss some factors you experience—or see other families experiencing—that are leading to a **lack of intimacy and connection** within families. (Pope Francis mentions the exhaustion of work, distraction of electronic devices, and over scheduling as some examples.) Speaking for yourself and/or your family, what might be some realistic antidotes to the above stressors?
- We always have the choice between following our culture of the **ephemeral & disposable**—a stressful, fast-paced life where we use what we need now and then throw it away—versus the Christian values of **permanent decisions and commitments**. In what area(s) in your life are you being invited/challenged to re-evaluate lifestyle choices so that they more closely align with your faith?

# *The Joy of Love Presentation Summary*

## Overview

- *The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia)* flowed from two “Synod on the Family” gatherings in Rome (in 2014 & 2015).
- The document is about 53,000 words long, with an introduction and nine chapters.
- Is an apostolic exhortation, a letter addressed to the whole church that teaches us and moves us to action.

## Family and the Bible

- The Bible is all about families, with concrete and relevant advice for us.
- God is a family (the Trinity), and is truly present in our families.
- God entered a human family through Jesus, who got to know families very well, spoke about them, and became a model for us.
- The Bible teaches us about living in love, mercy, forgiveness, and how to follow God's example of tender parental intimacy.

## The State of the Family

- The family matters to the world (as a building block of society) and to the Church, which is a “family of families.”
- The family has changed in many ways, many for the better, but also faces many challenges.
- A “me first” culture of extreme individualism is hurting the family. Selfishness and a culture of the ephemeral and disposable are taking priority over the permanence of family bonds.
- This has resulted in fewer and later marriages, more broken marriages, fewer children, unhealthy sexuality, rejection of the elderly, and a lack of intimacy and connection within families.
- Social issues, such as a lack of dignified and affordable housing, lack of adequate health care, lack of dignified employment, addictions, domestic violence, extreme poverty, and forced migration all harm families.

## The Ideal and Real Life

- The Church teaches ideals of life-long sacramental marriage, an openness to life, children raised by a loving husband and wife, a rejection of domination and violence, and social justice.
- However, life is not perfect, and the Church needs to address this gap.
- It doesn't work to complain about how evil society is, try to force people to live differently, promote abstract theological ideals, shun and exclude people, or try to leave God's grace out of the equation.
- Instead, we need to be humble and realistic, accompany people on their journeys, avoid judgment, help people discern their complex situations, and keep advocating for the ideals in helpful ways.
- To accompany people well, we need to be merciful, understand that people change gradually, realize that crises can be opportunities, and be willing to enter the messiness that comes with real life.
- There are many reasons people enter a civil marriage or live together, and many of these relationships are positive ones where good things are happening. We need to welcome and walk with these people, patiently encouraging them to move toward God and sacramental marriage.
- Those challenged by separation, divorce, and remarriage are in many unique situations. We need to welcome them, accompany them, and always remember the children who are involved and need support.
- We need to be supportive of those in other complex and challenging situations: those married to non-Catholics, those with same-sex attraction, single-parent families, and those who suffer the loss of a loved one.



# *The Joy of Love Reflection Questions*

## *Family and the Bible*

- Sometimes the Church and the Bible are disregarded as being irrelevant. How might it change your perspective to think about Scripture as “**full of families**, births, love stories, family crises,” stories of the human condition that mirror the struggles and challenges people are still facing in their families today?
- **Jesus knew human families** well because he grew up in one of them. He had to be potty trained. He had to learn to walk, talk, get dressed, and feed himself. He experienced normal, everyday family life. How might that have contributed to his ability to relate to families and their struggles?
- Jesus preached a “demanding ideal,” but always showed **compassion and mercy**. Discuss one example of a demanding ideal in which someone fell short but Jesus still treated that person with compassion and mercy.

## *The State of the Family*

- Discuss some factors you experience—or see other families experiencing—that are leading to a **lack of intimacy and connection** within families. (Pope Francis mentions the exhaustion of work, distraction of electronic devices, and over scheduling as some examples.) Speaking for yourself and/or your family, what might be some realistic antidotes to the above stressors?
- We always have the choice between following our culture of the **ephemeral & disposable**—a stressful, fast-paced life where we use what we need now and then throw it away—versus the Christian values of **permanent decisions and commitments**. In what area(s) in your life are you being invited/challenged to re-evaluate lifestyle choices so that they more closely align with your faith?

## *The Ideal and Real Life*

- How does our parish **respond to people in less-than-ideal family situations**? Do we respond with judgment, criticism, and/or exclusion, or do we welcome them and accompany them in the messiness of real life?
- What are some specific, concrete **ways that the church could be more supportive** of you and/or your family and friends with the particular challenges you face?
- How can you be more **merciful like the Father** in offering understanding, comfort, and support for married couples or families who you know are struggling?

## The Gift of the Family

*God of tenderness and love,*

*You gave us the gift of the family,  
a place where we can come to know you  
and become more like you.*

*Your Son entered a human family  
in order to love us more.*

*Open our hearts so we can love all families:  
those in our parish,  
those in our neighborhood,  
those throughout the world,  
and those closest to us,  
who are sometimes the most difficult to love.*

*Forgive us for the times  
when we don't love enough  
and give us the strength  
to always share your unbounded mercy.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

***Amen.***



## As Families Go Forth

*Merciful God,*

*You gathered us together today  
to reflect on your love for us  
and the ways you want us to love others.*

*You have touched us in so many ways  
through members of our families,  
and the family of families that is our Church.*

*We now call out the names of those family members  
who have gone before us to be with you.*

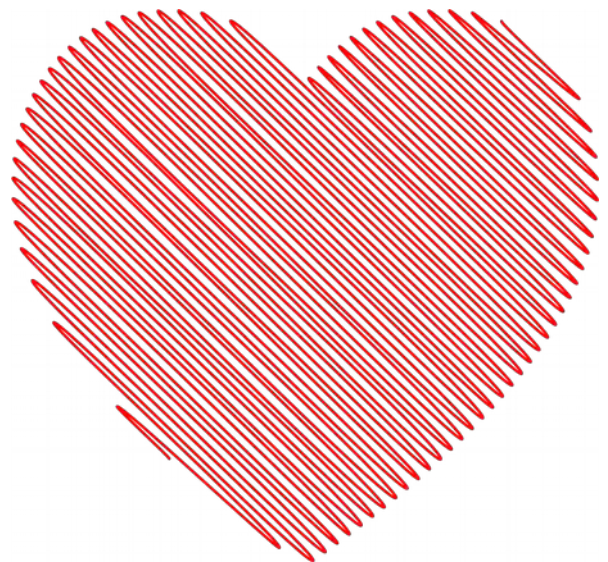
*(Pause here as people speak names aloud.)*

*As we go forth today,  
give us the strength to  
reach out and accompany those we encounter.*

*Give us the openness to be welcoming,  
the humility to listen carefully,  
the wisdom to ask the right questions,  
and the generous hearts to love.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

***Amen.***



## A Family Prayer

*Loving God,*

*In your love you have brought us together  
in this loving family.*

*We thank you for the gift of this family,  
a place where we are learning  
to give ourselves to each other.*

*(Pause here to offer specific prayers of thanksgiving for others in the family.*

*For example, "I pray in thanksgiving for Mom and that she packed a great lunch for me today.")*

*Help us to live in love,  
do what you call us to do,  
and keep moving forward,  
even though we fall along the way.*

*Help us to love more and more,  
and learn from each other  
how to love better.*

*We ask this in the  
name of Jesus the Lord.*

***Amen.***





## A Prayer for Couples

Almighty God,

We thank you for the gift of this relationship,  
where we strive to give ourselves to each other.

Give us what we need to love each other well:

*(pause after each word)*

patience, kindness, understanding, gentleness, thoughtfulness,  
generosity, tenderness, forgiveness, and joy.

Help us to set aside selfishness, bad habits, and distractions,  
so we can be the best lovers we can be.

Give us the strength to work through challenges,  
and always remain centered  
in your love and will for us.

Keep us dancing toward a future of great hope,  
and an appreciation  
for all you have given us.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

