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[Holy Family, Year A, Intermediate](#)

Submitted by lectionaryadmin on Thu, 07/18/2013 - 20:00

Intermediate Session

Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God our Father, help us to live as the holy family, united in respect and love.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

-From the Opening Prayer for the Feast of the Holy Family

Opening Life Reflection

The focus for today is family. To begin, invite the children to plan a “family day” for their household. Provide paper and pencils for each child to write down their plan. Suggest that they make it a fun day, doing the things that they like to do together. Discuss:

- What activities do you like to do with your family?
- What do you like most about your family?
- How do you contribute to your family life?

Allow time for discussion. On the Feast of the Holy Family the Church celebrates that Jesus was born into a family. Because Jesus was born into a family, family life can be a source of holiness.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to what happens when God’s command to honor your father and mother is followed.

Read Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14.

Allow for silence.



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Scripture Discussion Starters

- How are children advised to treat their parents?
- What happens to those who honor their father and mother?
- How is family life presented in this reading?

In today's Gospel listen to find out about the family that Jesus was born into.

Read Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23.

Allow for silence.

- How does Joseph care for his family?
- Why is Joseph told to take Jesus and his mother to Egypt?
- Why does Joseph then leave Egypt and take his family to Nazareth?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings.

On today's feast of the Holy Family the Church celebrates that Jesus was born into a family. The birth of Jesus into a family highlights his humanity. The humanity of Jesus makes holy all of humanity and Jesus' life in a family reflects the holiness of family life. The family, made holy by virtue of Jesus' life with Mary and Joseph, becomes a source of holiness for every Christian.

Today's Old Testament reading stresses the Fourth Commandment, to honor your father and mother. The Fourth Commandment is crucial to both Jewish and Christian understandings of family life. The author of today's reading is concerned with the kind of relationships that make up family life. We are told that God does not forget when reverence and care is shown for one's parents. Today's Old Testament passage encourages families to strive to live in harmony. Family life can be a source of holiness when lived within God's commandments.

Today's Gospel brings to light the importance of Jesus' family life. Joseph guides his family with divine help through dangers to safety. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus listen to God's call and they leave Egypt and settle in Nazareth. In this reading, Matthew identifies Jesus as the new Moses, called out of Egypt. Jesus' human destiny retells the entire history of the chosen people and his upbringing in Nazareth leads to the truth of his identity as Messiah.

Although this Gospel passage does not emphasize Jesus' reverence toward his parents, we can be sure that Jesus' way to holiness would have included observance of the Fourth Commandment.



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Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Why do we call Jesus' family the Holy Family?
- How can family life be holy?
- Did Jesus honor and respect his parents?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Fourth Commandment: Honor Your Father and Mother

The concept of law in the Old Testament comes from an understanding that Israel is chosen by God because of divine love. The commands of God are meant to be a light and guide for the chosen people, not a burden.

In the New Testament Jesus not only fulfills the law, but also follows it closely. When Jesus is asked which commandment is the greatest, he responds with twofold instruction to love God and to love one's neighbor. His attitude toward the law is one of reverence and respect.

Catholic teaching on the Fourth Commandment recites the duties of family members. Children are to respect and obey their parents and guardians. Parents and guardians are to provide for their children's growth and wellbeing, regarding them as children of God.

- What does the Fourth Commandment teach us about family life?
- How do you honor your parents and other family members?
- How does following the Fourth Commandment help you to live as a child of God?

The Gospel in Life

Present your "Family Day" plan to your family and try to live the Fourth Commandment this week.

Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition

At Home Family Guide, theme 25

Grade 4, page 247 parish and page 357 school and chapter 22

Grade 5, page 247 parish and page 357 school and chapter 23

Grade 6, page 247 parish and page 357 school and chapter 22



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Categories:

- [Sessions A](#)