



CELEBRATING THE
Easter season
AT HOME

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ORGANIZE THE DAY FOR SCHOOL-AT-HOME



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hen you're teaching at home, you'll be more successful if you abandon the idea of replicating a regular school day and instead, create an easy-to-learn routine.

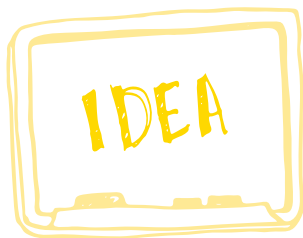
Imagine the day in blocks, divided by mealtimes that create natural breaks. Meals could be the anchors attached to the clock, since setting a designated breakfast, lunch and dinner time can help manage childrens' expectations.

Activities in between can be fluid to reflect that varying amount of time children need to accomplish the day's goals. (Note: experienced homeschoolers say the kitchen should be "closed" between meals, to keep from daylong grazing that isn't healthy and can get expensive.) ▶



UP AND AT 'EM!

While you don't have to set the alarm for an early start as you would for a typical school day, establish a routine by choosing a regular time to start the day. Student athletes might begin with a short workout. Morning chores include making beds, picking up clothes, brushing teeth and getting dressed for the day. Children also can help the household by folding laundry, emptying the dishwasher and walking the dog.



BREAKFAST AND PLANNING

Whether breakfast is a communal meal fixed by mom, dad or another family member or everyone prepares their own, begin the routine by sitting down together to pray, eat and map out the day. Imagine this as a "team meeting" where the game plan is chalked out. Each child should leave the table with a list of tasks that need to be accomplished during the day, as well as a review of longer-term assignments that might be worked on, but not completed. When the dishes are cleared and the table is clean, it's time to start school.

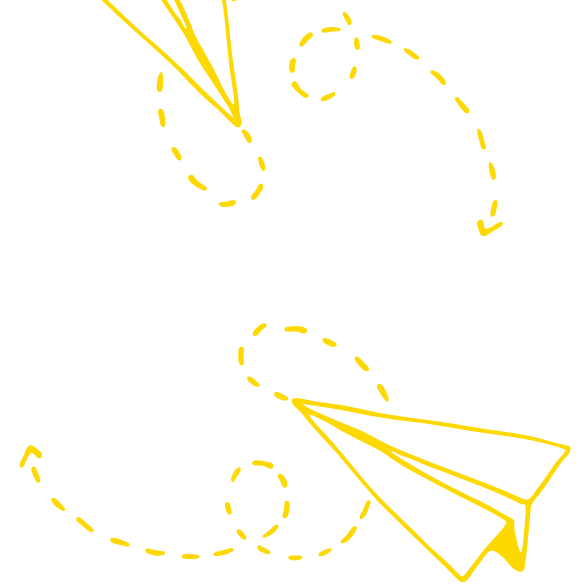
FLEXIBLE SCHOOL WORK IN THE MORNING

Students in grades five through eight are capable of a fair amount of self-directed learning, especially in literature-based courses. For assignments that involve reading from textbooks or novels, they may only need a few minutes with a parent for direction. Depending on the number of children engaged in school-at-home, parents can decide to spend blocks of time with each one individually throughout the day, working on several subjects during their one-on-one time. In addition, since several children at home may be sharing a computer, the day may look different for each child – one may be working on schoolwork for the morning while another enjoys playtime until the laptop is free.



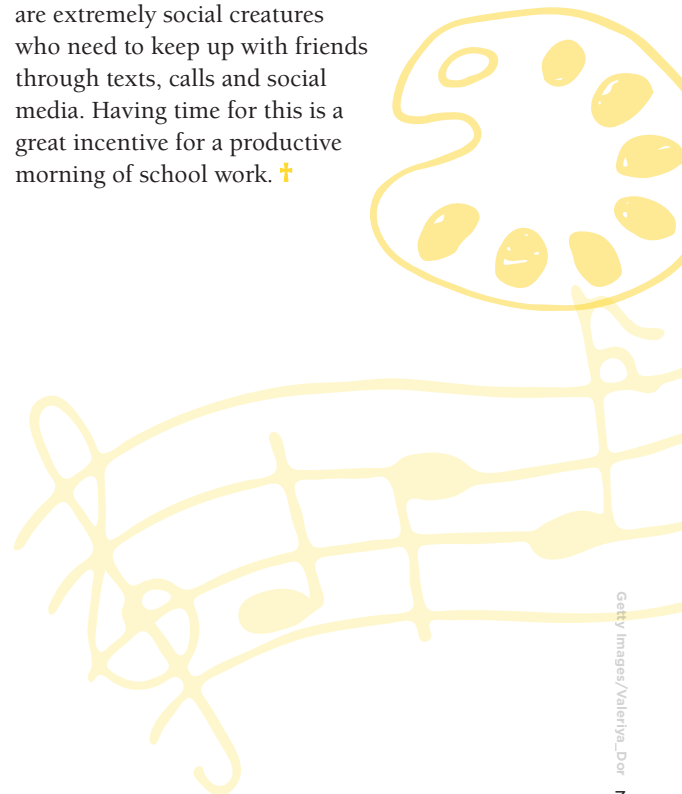
PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE LEARNING

During this unprecedented public health crisis, schools have rallied to offer continuity of learning plans and online learning opportunities for students. Many teachers are sending daily emails with assignments that are due online. Whether they're joining a Facebook Live class or watching a lesson previously recorded and posted to YouTube, students will likely be engaged with technology for big chunks of the day. For this reason, it's even more important that children enjoy tech-free recreation when their schoolwork is done.



PLAYTIME, EXERCISE, GAMES, MUSIC AND MORE

The school-from-home day ends much sooner than a typical school day, since working independently on assignments takes less time without the elements of structure that a school day requires. The result? You may announce "Class dismissed!" just in time for lunch, leaving the afternoon open for free play, board games, exercise, practicing an instrument or engaging in a hobby. Keep in mind that fifth- through eighth-graders are extremely social creatures who need to keep up with friends through texts, calls and social media. Having time for this is a great incentive for a productive morning of school work. †



MARRIAGE
MATTERS



HOW DO WE KEEP THE
STRESS AND ANXIETY
OF THIS TIME FROM
STRAINING OUR
MARRIAGE?



SHE SAYS:

I'm enjoying all
this together time



HE SAYS:

I need my
personal space



STEVE AND BRIDGET PATTON

hold master's degrees in theology and counseling and serve as family life ministers for the Diocese of Sacramento.



WHAT DO
THEY DO?

Calamities can bring out the best and the worst in a marriage. Our routines can serve us well by keeping our lives predictable and peaceful, but they can also shield us from seeing and more fully embracing the whole of each other, warts and all. So try to view this disruption to our routines as an opportunity to grow in love.

For starters, keep in mind it's only human to get on one another's nerves whenever we're forced to stay cooped up inside together. Now, as always, "be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Eph 4:2) But don't stop there.

Trust that God is in the plan even when life's wrecking balls come smashing in. "Do not be alarmed when disaster comes ... As gold is tested in the fire, so are we in the furnace of humiliation." (Ecc 2: 2-5)

Here are three verbs to help transform this calamity of forced intimacy into a purifying furnace:

Accept. I have unique needs and limitations, and so does my spouse. This means I should not expect my spouse to fully understand, let alone meet, all my needs. So, my spouse may need more time alone than I do, and I must respect and support that. Likewise, my spouse may need more socializing than I do, and I must respect and support that.

Adjust. Even if we have differing needs and limitations, we are still called to suffer well for one another. So if I think I need 14 hours a day of "me time," could I maybe shoot for 13? If I'm on the other end of this spectrum, could I likewise adjust, maybe by connecting with friends at online meeting spaces?

Pray. If you are sacramentally married, you have God at the heart of your marriage, waiting there to help you grow in sacrificial love for one another. If that sounds hollow and unreal, give this a try. During all these hours of forced togetherness, set aside just a few minutes each day to sit together before God. Light a candle, and say, "God, help us to better appreciate, support and be patient with each other." Sit there quietly for five minutes afterward, and then blow out the candle. You'll be amazed. †

BY PAT MISH

Managing Editor
FAITH Grand Rapids

I FEEL OVERWHELMED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. Every day things seem to get worse, and I feel powerless to do anything about it. Even going to church isn't an option right now.

With businesses and restaurants shuttered and Sunday Masses cancelled, we can quickly feel isolated. But social distancing doesn't mean we can't find ways to stay close to God and one another. Even from inside our homes, we can connect with those around us through small acts of kindness that can have a ripple effect on others.

How can I stay close to God and one another right now?

1 Be generous. Buy a gift card from your favorite restaurant or order takeout (and leave a tip!) where available. Pay or tip your hairdresser or cleaning person even if you have to cancel; they are vulnerable during a downturn like this.

2 Read. Set up a sharing library in your neighborhood and/or a virtual book group; support your local bookstore by purchasing books online as well.

3 Reach out. Call your grandma or friends with whom you have lost touch; encourage your children to write notes or draw pictures to send to those who may be lonely.

4 Get social. Go online to participate in a parish Bible study or meet up for a virtual Easter brunch. Watch a film together via Netflix Party (Bonus: It's OK to "chat" during the movie).

5 Help neighbors. Offer to pick up groceries or share hard-to-find items.

6 Keep holy the Sabbath. Gather with those around you, and watch a televised/live-streamed Mass. Pray a rosary together.

These everyday gestures can be powerful antidotes to the sense of helplessness and isolation many of us feel.

Remember Philippians 4:6-7: "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." †



EASTER SEASON
AT HOME

KEEPING A PRAYERFUL LIFE AT HOME



How to get the most out of Mass online

Preview the televised Masses offered to determine which may be most appropriate for your household.

- Set up a space in your home for prayer/worship. Consider covering a table with a tablecloth or another nice cloth of the seasonal liturgical color. Place a Bible, a candle and a cross or crucifix on the table.
- Straighten the space, and arrange enough furniture for all.
- Have everyone go to the bathroom, get drinks, wash faces and come prepared to attend to the Mass.
- Turn off and remove all devices that can distract from the space.
- Remind everyone that we do not kneel and perform the ritual gestures of Mass while we are watching it, since this does not take the place of attending Mass. But everyone should attend to it prayerfully and make a spiritual communion.
- Before the Mass begins, light the candle. ▶

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The pope has granted a plenary indulgence to those suffering from COVID-19

“The Plenary Indulgence is granted to the faithful suffering from Coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration

of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfil the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father’s intentions), as soon as possible.”

The full text can be found at: tinyurl.com/plenaryindulgence

Catholics encouraged to practice “spiritual Communion” during COVID-19 Epidemic

After the Angelus prayer on March 3, Pope Francis invited the faithful “to rediscover and deepen the value of the communion that unites all the members of the Church. United to Christ we are never alone, but we form one single Body, of which He is the Head.”

Pope Francis encouraged those unable to attend Church to pray for spiritual Communion, “a practice that is highly recommended when it is not possible to receive the Sacrament.” Archbishops and bishops in the U.S. join the pope in inviting the faithful to this practice.

In his encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Pope John Paul II explained how the essential role of the Eucharist in uniting us to Christ led to the practice of “spiritual Communion”:

In the Eucharist, “unlike any other sacrament, the mystery [of communion] is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: Here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union.”

Precisely for this reason it is good to cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist. This was the origin of the practice of “spiritual Communion,” which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. St. Teresa of Jesus wrote: “When you do not receive Communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual Communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you.” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 34:68-70)



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What is spiritual Communion?

Spiritual Communion is the practice of desiring union with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. It is used primarily by individuals who cannot receive holy Communion, such as the ill, the divorced and remarried, and those who have not yet been received into full communion with the Church. St. Thomas Aquinas described it as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the most holy sacrament and lovingly embrace him” at a time or in circumstances when we cannot receive him in sacramental Communion.

Act of spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that you are
present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love you above all things, and I desire
to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive you sacramentally,
come at least spiritually
into my heart. I embrace you
as if you were already there and
unite myself wholly to you.
Never permit me to be
separated from you. Amen.

Saints have encouraged spiritual Communion

“Communion is to the soul like blowing a fire that is beginning to go out, but that has still plenty of hot embers; we blow, and the fire burns again.

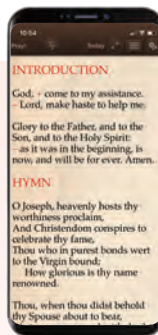
“After the reception of the Sacraments, when we feel ourselves slacken in the love of God, let us have recourse at once to spiritual Communion. When we cannot go to the church, let us turn towards the tabernacle; no wall cannot separate us from the good God.” ST. JOHN VIANNEY

Spiritual Communion is “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him.” ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

“What a source of grace there is in spiritual Communion! Practice it frequently and you’ll have more presence of God and closer union with him in your life.” ST. JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ †

Pray the Liturgy of the Hours

The Church has another liturgy (public prayer) with which people may be unfamiliar. That is the Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office, the daily prayer of the Church. This beautiful liturgy marks the hours of each day and sanctifies the day with prayer. The Hours are a meditative dialogue on the mystery of Christ, using scripture and prayer. Join priests and religious around the world each day, and particularly on Sundays, in praying the Liturgy of the Hours. You can find it at www.ibrevariary.com.



EASTER LESSON FOR KIDS

AT
375°



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHANE FOLKERTSMA

My daughter once asked me, “Mom, what is the best thing that’s ever happened to you?” I immediately answered with what most parents would say, “Well, of course, the day you were born!”

I often ponder that miraculous event that took place in my life. Of all the events of my life, the birth of my children remains the most powerful and beautiful in my memory. But of course, as Christians, we know even something as miraculous as childbirth actually pales in comparison to the single most important event in human history, something that has happened to all of us and the most important truth and proof of our Christianity – Christ’s resurrection. It is that which has given us “a new birth into a living hope.”

(1 Pt 1:3)

But, of course, at her young age, I could have never expected my daughter to grasp the significance of Christ’s resurrection, right? Surely a reference to her own birth is a safer and more understandable response. I’m certain it makes more sense to wait for her to be a bit older before I bore her sincere question with some heavy response about human salvation.

Or does it?

It should never be too early to make the reality of our Christian inheritance known to children. I know that we are better able to grasp theology as our minds develop into adulthood, but children are smarter than we think. With the right tools and delivery, we can start them toward a better understanding of the most important, and beautiful, part of our life – our relationship with God.



**MICHELLE
DIFRANCO**

is a designer and the busy mom of three children.

One such way is to bake “resurrection rolls.” I wish I would’ve known about these when my daughter was much younger. These little gems are not only a great way to teach younger kids about the resurrection but also a quick and delicious sweet roll to make for any Easter gathering. How delicious? Well they aren’t going to be “the best thing that ever happened to you,” but they will rank highly on your list of Easter treats — and they certainly reference well the best thing that ever did happen to all of us! †



Resurrection rolls

- 1 (10 ounce) can refrigerated crescent rolls
- Package of large marshmallows
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

SYMBOLISM

Marshmallow – Body of Jesus

Butter – Oils used in burial

Sugar and cinnamon – Spices used in burial

Dough triangle – Cloth used to wrap Jesus

Baked roll with empty center – Empty tomb

■ Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Prepare a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray or parchment paper. You may also use a cupcake tin. Separate dough into eight triangles and set aside. Combine sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl and set aside.

■ Dip each marshmallow into bowl of melted butter and roll in cinnamon-sugar. Place on each dough triangle. Pinch dough around marshmallow, sealing all edges. Make sure to seal well to prevent marshmallow from leaking.

■ Brush tops of dough balls with remaining butter and dip in cinnamon-sugar. Place roll with the sugar side up on baking sheet (or in muffin pan).

■ Bake for 13-15 minutes. The marshmallow melts into the dough, and the result is the appearance of an empty tomb upon breaking one in half. Best when served warm.

RETREAT

RETREAT
at HOME

TAKE A *gratitude* WALK



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Getty Images/PhotoDisc

I *n times of trouble, our hearts long for peace and turn to God. One way to re-center ourselves on our relationship with the Lord is to retreat, or withdraw, from the world. We can do so even at home, and this period of social distancing can be an opportunity to grow closer to God. Taking the time to retreat means that you are focusing inward and calling the Lord to come into your heart. The experience should help you feel more at peace and more aware that God is truly with you.*

One retreat you can do easily is a Gratitude Walk. If you are near a forest or beach, that is a lovely setting. But if you live in an urban or suburban area, walking around

your neighborhood is just as good. The point is to go outside by yourself, unaccompanied, without checking news, social media or email. This Gratitude Walk is solely for you and God.

As you leave your home, invite God to come walk with you. Say, "Lord, I know you are near and ready to be with me. Come, walk beside me, and I will follow you." Then, begin your walk. You have no destination and no specific route. Simply walk wherever your feet take you. It can be for 20 minutes or an hour, depending on the responsibilities you may have at home. If you see someone you know during this retreat, kindly wave and smile at them from afar, but try not to engage in conversation. This is your time with God.

Because this is a Gratitude Walk, focus your thoughts on being thankful. Remain mindful to what's around you: observe the people, animals, sights, sounds and smells. Whatever you encounter, praise God for his creation and for this

moment with him. Whether it be a bird chirping, a daffodil newly bloomed or the breeze upon your face, thank God for his care and mercy upon even the most fragile of creation.

A modified version of the Gratitude Walk is Gratitude Watch. Sit from the comfort of your home near a window and carefully examine everything you see. Focus on minute details and say a word of thanks for each one. You can say, "Thank you, Lord, for [insert observation here]. Truly, you are wonderful!"

This retreat should put you in a positive mindset and help you realize that even when life is stressful, there is always something to be grateful for – most of all, God's love for us. †

“

Lord, I know you are near and ready to be with me. Come, walk beside me, and I will follow you.”

*PRAY WITH US
via our televised Mass*



*Check our diocesan
televised Mass
options*



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WatchtheMass.com

*Your parish
brings you the
light of Christ.*

**Please help keep the
light shining by giving
through your parish's
online program or app.**

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