

# FOSTERING LOVE AT HOME

## *An Advent Practice for Families*

1. **Print** these ideas for acts of love in the family (the first two pages are for older kids and adults, the last two pages are for little kids). Have the kids help **cut the papers into strips**.
2. **Place the strips in a dish or basket** in a central location in your house where everyone will see them frequently.
3. **Encourage all family members to randomly draw out a slip of paper whenever they want** throughout the day. They should read it and try to **do the act of love** as soon as they have the opportunity.
4. **Once** the act of love has been **completed** (maybe you put it in your pocket until you can do it!) **the slip of paper can be placed** in either
  - A wrapped **gift box**
  - Or an **empty manger** (print on yellow paper? Or have a small basket of actual straw near the manger)
5. **On Christmas**, start your gift exchange or your reading of the Christmas story by
  - **Presenting Jesus with the first gift** (the gift box full of acts of love done by your family)
  - **Or placing a figure of Baby Jesus in the manger** (softened by your family's acts of love)

Give a friendly smile to the next person you see.

Think of something you can do to make someone happy. . . and do it!

Help clear the meal table without being asked.

Ask Jesus to help you to love like him!

Pray a Hail Mary for your mom.

Try to have good posture at the table – sitting up to show your attention and courtesy to others.

Tidy up an area of the house.

Give someone a sincere compliment

Practice good manners at the next meal – a little detail of love for those around you.

Write a note to an absent family member or relative; tell them how much they mean to you.

Next time you're tempted to say something negative. . . don't!

Offer to help someone.

Thank God for your family – right now, in your heart.

Make a point of participating more in your next family time – add to the conversation, laugh along, ask about someone's day, etc.

Thank someone in your family for something specific they've done. . .or something they always do without necessarily getting thanked.

Hold the door for someone.

Go to an image of Jesus in your house and pray for each of your family members by name.

Help with unloading groceries or taking out the trash.

Go to the image of St. Joseph in your nativity scene and ask St. Joseph to pray for your dad.

Listen attentively to a family member.

Let someone else go first or have their way.

Unload the dishwasher.

Pray a Glory Be for your grandparents.

Find one small way to be responsible and do it.

During the next time of prayer (even if it's grace before a meal), do your best not to get distracted and really try to connect with God.

Be respectful to your parents.

LISTEN in your heart –if there's something kind you feel you should do for someone, do it!

Thank the cook!!!!

Tell a family member something you admire in them – by note or in person.

Tell a joke or say something funny to make a family member smile.

Pray an Our Father for a specific family member.

Motivate your family to take another slip of paper to do for each other/Jesus today.

Take another slip of paper. (Yep – this one counts too! A bonus! 😊)

Choose some uplifting music for the family, that everyone will like.

Help someone else with their chore.

Try to notice someone's need for help before they ask and help them

Next time you feel like complaining, don't!

Remember your "please's" and "thank you's."

Next time you feel angry with someone, take a deep breath and ask Jesus to help you not say something mean.

The next time you make the sign of the cross, do it mindfully. It is a prayer too!

Forgive someone when they've hurt you.

Organize a tiny "pleasant surprise" for your family. Be creative.

Be the first to apologize next time you've had a disagreement.

Share your toys.

Take turns.

Clean up your toys.

Say “please” next time you need something.

Say “thank you” next time someone gives you something.

Clean up your toys quickly.

Don't fight with your brother/sister next time you're mad.

Stand by a picture of Jesus and pray for each member of your family.

Help your mom.

Help your dad.

Help your brother/sister.

Try not to make a mess at the table.

Listen to your mom/dad next time, so they don't have to tell you twice.

Say "I'm sorry" when you've hurt someone.

Color a picture for your Grandma and Grandpa or neighbor to cheer them up.

Let your brother/sister choose the story or show.

Share your snack with your brother/sister.

Give someone a hug.