



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)



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Give a friendly smile to the next person you see.

Help clear the meal table without being asked.

Pray a Hail Mary for your mom.

Tidy up an area of the house.

Give someone a sincere compliment

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

Offer to help someone.

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

Hold the door for someone.

Help with unloading groceries or taking out the trash.

Listen attentively to a family member.

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

Ask Jesus to help you to love like him!

Try to have good posture at the table – sitting up to show your attention and courtesy to others.
Practice good manners at the next meal – a little detail of love for those around you.

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

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

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

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

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

Let someone else go first or have their way.
Pray a Glory Be for your grandparents.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Find one small way to be responsible and do it.

Be respectful to your parents.

Forgive someone when they've hurt you.

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

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

Pray an Our Father for a specific family member.

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

Help someone else with their chore.

Thank the cook!!!!

Next time you feel like complaining, don't!

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

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.

Use your words to explain when you're upset instead of shouting or hitting.

Be extra good and try to listen next time you go to church.

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.