



Prayer

Scriptural Reflection:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. 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. (Philippians 4:4-7)

Group Discussion Questions:

What is prayer? / Why is important to pray?

What are some of the ways families can pray together? How can a father incorporate prayer into his family's prayer life in an effective way without it seeming burdensome or boring?

Do you have a daily prayer life? Do you pray the rosary or read Sacred Scripture?

Challenge

Plan for prayer. Do you already set aside time each day for prayer? If not, start by setting aside a small block of time just as you might plan to work out or walk the dog. Ten minutes in the morning and at bedtime can be a good start. Other good prayer commitments might be to attend daily Mass, or make a brief visit the Blessed Sacrament for some quiet prayer in the presence of God every day.

Say a Decade a Day. Start to pray with your family daily if you don't already. Praying the rosary as a family is the perfect way to do so. If timing and schedules are an issue or some family members are resistant to this new idea, try to simply start saying a single decade of the rosary each day (perhaps right after dinner) as a family for everyone's intentions.

Be mindful of God's presence. A good way to do this is through very short prayers (sometimes called "aspirations") scattered throughout your day whenever the opportunity presents itself—perhaps when whenever you stand up from your chair or check your smartphone. Have an arsenal of brief phrases on hand: "Thanks be to God," "God be praised," "Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Write one of these aspirations down and put it somewhere you will see it regularly (in your wallet, on the refrigerator door, on your computer screen) and recite it whenever you do.



Suffering

Scriptural Reflection:

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?" (Matthew 16:24-26)

Group Discussion Questions:

How do you respond when you are not having a great day? Who are some men you know that deal with adversity in a way you admire? What is their secret? How can we emulate them?

What are virtues? *Habitual and firm dispositions to do good.* (Simple Answer: Developing habits of doing good.) How can suffering teach a man about the virtues of humility and compassion.

How does bearing suffering heroically help a man grow in his love for others? (*Take our eyes off ourselves*)

What is a concrete way one can use to grow closer to Christ during a time of suffering? (*Offer it up*) What is redemptive suffering?

Challenge

Mortify yourself. "Death can be robbed of its greatest fearfulness if we practice for it," said Bishop Fulton Sheen. He continued, "Christianity recommends mortification, penance and detachment as a rehearsal for the great event." We can practice for suffering as well, through mortification and detachment. Mortification is the practice training and subduing bodily desires, allowing us to detach from, or be less concerned about, material things. Practice for suffering by regular acts of self-sacrifice, willfully putting up with bodily discomfort. Two good examples of mortification are fasting or abstaining from meat.

Pray the Stations of the Cross. The Stations of the Cross are not just for Lent! This traditional set of prayers and meditation on Christ's Passion not only recalls the suffering Christ endured for us, but it also draws us to unite our own sufferings to his redemptive act.

Offer it up. Suffering is an inevitable part of life, including the dozens of small sufferings we all experience every day, whether it's a headache or getting stuck in a traffic jam. Instead of complaining about these small sufferings, decide to offer them up as a prayer for those experiencing great suffering instead. Choose a specific intention to offer them up for or offer them up for the souls in purgatory. God will be greatly pleased when we accept suffering willingly as he did for us, rather than grudgingly.

Note: Excerpts for this session have been copied from the Knights of Columbus: [Into the Breach Video Series Study Guide](#). (2021)
