



Domestic Church



"The best and surest way to learn the love of Jesus is through the family."
– Mother Theresa

What is a Domestic Church:

Families are the first place many of us learn about Jesus. This is also where we learn about love, how to serve one another and how to pray together. The community we build in our homes with our immediate family and our extended family also represents the community we can find in our churches.

- We can learn how to serve by helping our parents and our neighbors around us.
- We learn how to pray by saying prayers at meals, at bedtime, and at other times with our family.
- We can learn about God and the Bible through our parents and stories they tell us.
- We can learn how to love by spending time with each other and having fun and doing lots of things together.
- Even in sad times, our parents and family can be there for us, to teach us how to heal and grow closer to God.

Questions:

What are some things that you do in your home that are similar to what happens in Church?

How do you see love in your family? What are some things you can do to love your family more?

What are some ways you can serve people in your family or your neighborhood?



The Four Levels of Church

(www.catholiccincinnati.org)

In reality, we can speak of four distinct levels of Church. There is the **Universal Church** led by the bishop of Rome and all bishops in union with him. There is the **local diocesan church**. Led by its local bishop, it is uniquely positioned to guide us on how best to implement our faith in our own time and culture. There is the **local parish church**, from which we receive most of our religious instruction and the sacraments. Finally, there is this fourth layer of Church. The **Domestic Church** plays a key role in our sanctification because it is the primary place where we practice coming to intimately love other persons.

Ways to build up the Domestic Church in your own home: (USCCB.org)

TOOLS FOR BUILDING A DOMESTIC CHURCH

“The family, is so to speak, the domestic church.” (Lumen Gentium #11) This means that it is in the context of the family that we first learn who God is and to prayerfully seek His will for us.

- Find ways to pray as a family: What are some times when you are at home that you and your family can pray together? What are some prayers that you and your family can say? Write one prayer here:

- Place a blessed crucifix in a special place in your home, or in every bedroom. Do you have a crucifix in your home and where is it?

- Pray a Family Rosary (each member leads a decade, and everyone shares intentions).
- Go to the SACRAMENTS together as a family, such as Mass and Confession. What time does your parish offer Mass on Sundays?

- Take a special trip to a holy site such as the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help or somewhere else that is holy. Can you name any other holy places in Wisconsin?

- Serve your family through your words and examples. What is one nice thing you said to your family recently?

- Talk to everyone about God in the joys and sorrows of your life. Have you talked to anyone about God recently and if so who?

- Welcome into your home and support priests, brothers, sisters, deacons, and lay ministers. Who is your parish priest and have you ever seen him anywhere else besides Church?

- Participate in the ministries and activities of your parish community. What is one Church activity you and your family can do together?

- Encourage everyone to pray daily on their own, to listen for God’s call, and if heard, to respond. When do you talk to God on your own?

- Create a prayer space in your home with some holy objects, or a statue of Mary, Jesus or a Saint, and a Bible. Do you have a space in your home that is special or holy, or is there somewhere in your home you can make into a holy place? If so, where would it be?



Making connections with Home and the Church

Think of a time when you and your family gathered together for a special holiday or celebration.

Home (Domestic Church)

Local Diocesan Church

When people come to your home, how do you greet them?	When you enter a Church, is there someone there to greet you?
When we sit together before a meal, do we tell stories? What are some stories your family tells over and over?	What part of the Mass do we sit and hear the stories of God? Where do these stories come from?
When we gather together to share a meal, what do we usually gather around?	How is the Altar at the Church similar to a family eating together around their table at home?
What are some ways you can share love with your family members in your home?	What part of the Mass do we share love and peace with those who are around us?
When the gathering is over, do you ever talk about getting together again? Do you plan for your next gathering?	How does the priest end the Mass? Are there announcements made about other things the Church family can do together?

