



# NOURISH

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## *Leader Guide*



Faith and Family Life  
Catholic Ministries

# AN INVITATION

You have been invited to accompany families as they discover the love and power of Jesus in the Eucharist. The Nourish experience invites families to connect the beauty of the liturgy with their lived family experiences. This is encouraged through simple faith conversations, shared activities, and prayer. Preparation to receive the sacrament of first Communion is a special time in the life of a family and provides great opportunity to grow in faith together.

## FAMILY MEETINGS

Nourish is a family based curriculum facilitated by parents in 10 at-home sessions. These sessions focus on different parts of the liturgy, tying them into concrete ways families encounter these same themes in their day to day living. The catechesis is presented in the form of family meetings. Each family meeting includes: an opening prayer, gathering ritual, check-in question, experiential activity, teaching, and closing prayer.

## GATHER

Each meeting will begin with a gathering ritual, which includes setting up a sacred space, sharing your family handshake, and having your first communicant read the opening prayer. This becomes a ritual as it is shared together session after session. Rituals are meaningful moments that, when continually shared, help to unite a family.

This blessing ritual will help provide a regular rhythm to begin family meetings.

## CHECK-IN

The check-in is meant to get the conversation started between family members. The question is loosely based on the session's theme, and is one that is easy to answer.

## ACTIVITY AND TEACHING

The activity provided is meant to teach the children through a fun and interactive experience. A teaching is also provided that coincides with the activity. Parents are given the language to teach an essential part of the catechesis related to the theme.

Children remember what they “do” and parents remember what they “teach.”

# PRAYER

To end each family meeting, a prayer is included for families to pray together.

## A FEW TIPS

- By reading and experiencing the content yourself, you will be best equipped to accompany this program. We recommend first becoming familiar with the material before implementing it.
- Families can be placed in small groups of 6-8 families to share this journey with. Parents can learn from each other as they recount their Family Meeting experiences. Companions and catechists can weave together these individual families into a small church community.
- The At-Church Support materials include 2 Sessions and 1 Mini-Retreat for parents and children. If beginning Family Meetings with *Nourish*, use “Time is Holy.” If continuing on from *Seek* and *Root* use “Celebrate.”
- Check in with families regularly using our Family Follow Through system available on Martha or as a PDF. This helps with accountability.
- Share photos from the Family Follow Throughs in your bulletin, newsletter, emails, or bulletin boards.

# SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Family Meeting	Theme	Activity	Values Taught
1	Learn the importance of gathering as a family in your home and as a community at Church. Your family is unique, special and holy, and set apart for a purpose.	-Set up your family gathering space -Create a family handshake -Draw a picture of your family -Find something around your home that reminds you of Jesus	-Community -Uniqueness -Family Bonding
2	Learn about the importance of your daily actions and the opportunity to seek forgiveness when you make mistakes.	-Forgiveness analogy using a tube of lotion	-Forgiveness -Mercy -Reconciliation
3	Learn how reading, listening, pondering, and re-telling Scripture stories helps you to know and share your faith.	-Lectio Divina using a set of Story Tokens	-Contemplation -Reflection -Find Deeper Meaning
4	Learn how to follow Jesus by making good choices.	-Play a game of Pick up Sticks -Fill out a postcard for your priest	-Good Decision Making -Free Will



5	Learn the connection between preparing for a meal in your home and preparing the altar to celebrate Jesus' sacrifice.	-Set your table in a special way -Share a snack together	-Care -Preparation -Participation
6	Learn how bread and wine transform into the Body and Blood of Jesus.	-Bake a loaf of bread together	-Love -Sacrifice -Tran- substantiation
7	Learn how the world God created to beautifully fit together was broken apart by sin. We each are called to help put it back together by being peacemakers.	-Color and put together a puzzle	-Peace -Care for Creation
8	Learn how receiving Jesus is a gift given to you each time you receive Communion.	-Decorate a door hanger for the first communicant	-Giving and Receiving
9	Learn how you are called to take your faith outside of church, by loving and serving others.	-Family foot washing experience	-Service -Kindness
10	Learn how to celebrate faith milestones with those you love.	-An intentional activity for your first Communion celebration	-Evangelization -Affirmation and Encouragement

# NOURISH AT-CHURCH

It is important to have parents gathered periodically throughout the *Nourish* process.

The goal of gathering is to:

- Find out what is going well and what parents are struggling with in the *Nourish* Box Family Meetings.
- To encourage, deepen, and support their experience of the Family Meetings with any tips, inspiration, or information.
- To meet and hear from other parents on a similar journey. There is wisdom in any room of adults, especially parents!
- To give children a positive and meaningful experience at-church.
- To pray together - for each other and for their families.

This resource has been provided to support you in facilitating family Sessions held at-church throughout the *Nourish* experience. The sessions include separate experiences for parents and children, and a combined family prayer experience to close your sessions.

There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame in the Sessions and a 3 hour time frame for the Mini-Retreat. The Sessions from the Mini-Retreat can also be broken up into additional individual Sessions. This material could be used from start to finish or you can use different sections to supplement things you may have already planned. Session 1 is designed to be used before Family Meeting 1. Session 2 is designed to be used between Family Meeting 2 and 5. Session 3 is designed to be used between Family Meeting 5 and 6. We realize each of our directors have different gifts; some are wonderful teachers, some are storytellers, others are better facilitating small groups, some are gifted in finding volunteers to present material. Use your strengths to lead your family sessions, and look for others who can take the pieces you are not as confident in. It takes a team!

There are supplies that need to be pulled together to help bring these lessons to life. We have given you supply lists. We have also suggested ways to set a mood in the room; candles, music, dimming the lights etc. We feel it is critical to set holy spaces to lead parents into deeper intimacy with Christ and themselves. The children's sessions always begin with gathering around a prayer table covered with different items for each lesson to help draw them into the experience. Depending on the size of the group, you may decide to break the group up into classrooms led by catechists and helpers. We cannot

over emphasize the impact of simple but beautiful decor, great hospitality, and intimate prayerful spaces. Your attention to detail tells everyone this is important, we prepared for you!

As a Church we are just beginning the journey of calling parents into the opportunity of forming their children and themselves more deeply. We realize parents are in different places and stages in their own faith journeys. We have written sessions we feel best take into account today's parents. The majority of the parents we encounter have very little theological background, but have the wisdom of their own lives to reflect on. We have found that when we give them helpful prompts and time to process, they do very well in sharing with each other. Parents, for the most part, are coming to these sessions because they've been told they have to, and probably aren't expecting anything that will truly impact their lives. It is our hope that these sessions meet them where they are at and slowly lead them into something more. Feel free to scale the material up or down. It is most important that families leave with a positive experience of Church and community, feeling like they have a place in it.

## MASTER PLANNER

Download the Pathways Master Planner [here](#) to schedule and organize your implementation of *Nourish*.



# NOURISH

## FAMILY FOLLOW THROUGHS

Time with family is precious. Following through with this family experience tells your child this is important. With your child, please complete the following tasks after each meeting to turn in.



**Family Meeting 1:** Email a picture of your gathering space.

**Family Meeting 2:** Email a list of the qualities that were brought up as you affirmed each other as a family. Try to commit to noticing these and calling out these characteristics in each other more.

**Family Meeting 3:** Now that you have completed the first three family meetings, how has this experience been for your family? Email a short response.

**Family Meeting 4:** Send or drop off the postcard for your priest to the church office.

**Family Meeting 5:** Email a picture of your family table as it is set for this week's family meeting.

**Family Meeting 6:** Email a picture of your freshly baked bread after you have removed it from the oven.

**Family Meeting 7:** Email a picture of the puzzle your family made together.

**Family Meeting 8:** Email a picture of the door hanger after it is decorated and hanging on your first communicant's door.

**Family Meeting 9:** How was the experience of washing and blessing each other's feet for your family? Email a short response.