

BY HEART

Leader Guide



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

AN INVITATION

You have been invited to accompany your families as they learn prayers by heart. *By Heart* is an ongoing formation experience for the entire family. Families will grow in their relationship with God as they commit prayers to memory through practice. They will not only learn their prayers, but also about where they came from and why we pray them.

Catechesis is part of the Church's anamnesis that keeps the Lord's presence alive. Memory, therefore, has constituted an integral aspect of the pedagogy of the faith from the beginning of Christianity. According to a tradition that dates back to the early centuries of the Church, believers were required to memorize the profession of faith which was not set down in writing, but remained alive in the mind and heart of every believer and thus became daily nourishment. It is important that catechesis, after presenting the value and the explanation of the profession of faith and of other texts from Sacred Scripture, the liturgy, and popular piety, should also assist in the memorization of these in order to offer an immediate content that is part of the common heritage of believers. "The blossoms, if we may call them that, of faith and piety do not grow in the desert places of a memory-less catechesis. What is essential is that the texts that are memorized must at the same time be taken in and gradually understood in depth, in order to become a source of Christian life on the personal level and the community level." "The learning of the formulae of the faith and their profession must be understood in the traditional seed-bed or context of the traditio and the redditio, for which the handing on of the faith in catechesis (traditio) corresponds to the response of the subject during the catechetical journey and subsequently in life (redditio)." This response, however, is not automatic, since the transmission of the faith to the hearer requires an appropriate reception (receptio) and internalization. To prevent memorization from being sterile or seen as an end in itself, it is well to consider it in relationship with the other elements of a catechetical process, like relationship, dialogue, reflection, silence and accompaniment. (Directory for Catechesis 201-3)

CARDS

Includes 23 cards, consisting of a parent guide and 22 memorization cards broken into 5 levels. Most of the memorization cards include a traditional prayer or systematic list and on the back side have a short description.

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.

- Memorizing things can sound awful. It brings to mind remembering things for a test, and then forgetting it the minute the test is over. This is an invitation into something much more than that. This is an invitation into knowing things by heart. Becoming familiar with a language of faith so beautiful that it becomes a part of you.
- The words of prayers are meant to be comforting and peaceful. As they are said over and over they become familiar. In a world with so many changing images all around us, repetition can be meditative and can encourage stillness in our mind and bodies. Repetition can also lead to revelation. As we repeat the words of prayers we can be drawn into wonder. The words can lead us somewhere else, the Spirit meets us there. The repetition of prayers also encourages familiarity. The words when heard even years later are like an old friend welcoming us home.
- When giving these prayer cards out, talk with families about different ways to utilize them. They can use these cards:
 - In the car on the way to school, pick a card each day to pray.
 - At bedtime use these prayers to end your day.
 - Work on a different prayer each week, praying it until you know it by heart.
 - Use the words of the prayers as art. Write them out on paper and decorate, then display in your home.
 - Use the prayer cards to pray specifically for others in need of prayer.
 - Make a small prayer space in your home. Leave the cards there. Make visits to this space together, light a candle, and pray with each other. Encourage family members to come there on their own as well for peace and prayer.
 - Include movement or hand motions with the prayers, this also helps with memorization.
 - As you read the backs of the cards, continue to research the origins of each prayer.
- *By Heart* can be used at any point in the suite and can be used over multiple years.
- Gamification can also help encourage children to learn the prayers. Consider giving out a prize for successfully memorizing each level. For example, after completing level 1 give them a handmade rosary. After the subsequent levels, other prizes could include saint stickers, a stuffed lamb, and candy. You can have them find you after an at-church Session to pray or recite them before you.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Level 1

Sign of the Cross
Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be
Grace Before Meals

Level 2

Apostles' Creed
Prayer to Your Guardian Angel
Act of Contrition
Morning Offering
Prayer Before Bed

Level 3

Prayer to St. Michael
Hail Holy Queen
Prayer to the Holy Spirit
Prayer for the Dead
Fatima Prayer

Level 4

Nicene Creed
The Memorare
The Angelus
Act of Spiritual Communion

Bonus

Ten Commandments
Seven Sacraments
Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit
Mysteries of the Rosary