



WONDER

Leader Guide



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

AN INVITATION

You have been invited to accompany your families as they learn to wonder and reflect on the word of God. *Wonder* is an ongoing formation experience for the entire family. Families will encounter the power of storytelling in the parables of Jesus through engaging their imaginations, hands-on activities, and meaningful conversations. Families will draw out the moral of each story and apply it to their daily lives.

“We must wonder! We must create an environment of wonder! We must create a climate of wonder! This task is closest to the family. . . . Wonder is needed so that beauty might enter into human life, into society and the nation. This beauty is the foundation and the creative moment of the culture. It is impossible to create culture by administrative means. These means can only destroy it. . . . We need to marvel at everything that is found in man.” (Pope Saint John Paul II)

FAMILY MEETINGS

Over 10 Family Meetings, families will begin with a gathering ritual and opening prayer. They will then discuss the check-in question, participate in a short imagination exercise, pop out the story pieces, read the parable, discuss the teaching that draws out a moral, and close with a prayer. Each meeting is designed to take an average of 20-40 minutes.

GATHER

For the gathering ritual families will need a Bible. They will place the Bible in the center of their gathering space, have each member of their family place a hand on it, and begin with the included prayer together. When families continually share in rituals of our faith, they can become more grounded in Christ and united as a family. This gathering ritual will help provide a regular rhythm to begin their Family Meetings.

CHECK-IN

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

ACTIVITY AND TEACHING

Each of the Family Meetings includes a short imagination exercise for parents to lead. To help their children get quiet and still, parents will have them close their eyes and imagine with their minds what they are speaking to them. As they finish and open their eyes, they will ask them a couple questions about how they imagined and wondered at what the parents said. These simple exercises will be tied directly to the parable text from the Scriptures. It will help them enter into a space of wondering. Along with the content, there is a story background and three pop outs for each Family Meeting to help recall and retell the story. Each teaching is focused on a theme and includes a simple moral.

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.
- *Wonder* is part of our ongoing formation resources. It was designed for post sacramental preparation.
- *Wonder* is designed to be led at-home, and can be accompanied by the At-Church Support Materials. The At-Church Support Materials include 2 Sessions for parents and children.
- 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.

MASTER PLANNER

Download the Pathways Master Planner to schedule and organize your implementation of *Wonder*. It can be found toward the bottom of the Pathways for Parish Use page on our website.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Family Meeting	Theme	Activity
1	Helpful steps to understanding the storytelling and teaching of parables. As a family we too have a story.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
2	God is growing each of us into something wonderful, no matter how small we start.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
3	We are called to embrace everyone as our neighbors and treat them with care and respect.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
4	We are encouraged to bring the light of Christ to the world.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
5	We are meant to build our lives on a strong foundation that can survive all types of weather.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
6	Focus on the blessings you've been given, instead of looking at other's situations.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
7	Pursue a relationship with God. Be persistent in reaching out to him.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
8	God wants us near, he will seek us out when we are lost.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
9	God is a patient gardener who wants us to grow real, true fruit.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.
10	Seeds cannot grow in soil that is not cared for.	Imagination exercise and parable sharing with backdrop and pop outs.

WONDER AT-CHURCH

It is important to have families gather periodically throughout the *Wonder* process.

The goal of gathering is to:

- Find out what is going well and what families are struggling with in the 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 families on a similar journey. There is wisdom in any room of families, especially parents!
- To give children a positive and meaningful experience at-church.
- To pray together - for each other and for the entire community.

This resource has been provided to support you in facilitating family Sessions held at-church throughout the *Wonder* experience. The Sessions are designed to have parents and children together. There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame in the Sessions. Session 1 is designed to be used between Family Meeting 4 and 5. Session 2 is designed to be used after between Family Meeting 8 and 9. They may also be used between other Sessions. 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 Sessions to life. We have given you supply lists. We cannot overemphasize 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! If you have a lot of families, the following content can be done in small groups. It is also important to have a good interactive MC to help the Session along.

We realize families are in different places and stages in their own faith journeys. We have written sessions we feel best take into account today's families. 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.



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 the shapes with your happy, difficult, and laughable moments.

Family Meeting 2: What do you think is the special purpose God is growing your family for? Email a short response.

Family Meeting 3: As a family, what are some ways you can treat others with mercy? Email a short response.

Family Meeting 4: As a family, what are some ways you let your light shine before others? Email a short response.

Family Meeting 5: As a family, what have you decided to build your life upon? Email a short response.

Family Meeting 6: Describe a moment when your family was generous even when it seemed unfair or undeserved. Email a short response.

Family Meeting 7: As a family, how can you better open the door to God in your lives? Email a short response.

Family Meeting 8: What other lessons did your family draw from the Parable of the Lost Coin? Email a short response.

Family Meeting 9: As a family, who are some of the people who never give up on you? What have they taught you? Email a short response.

Family Meeting 10: As a family, what are some ways you can cultivate the soil of your hearts to better receive God's word? Email a short response.