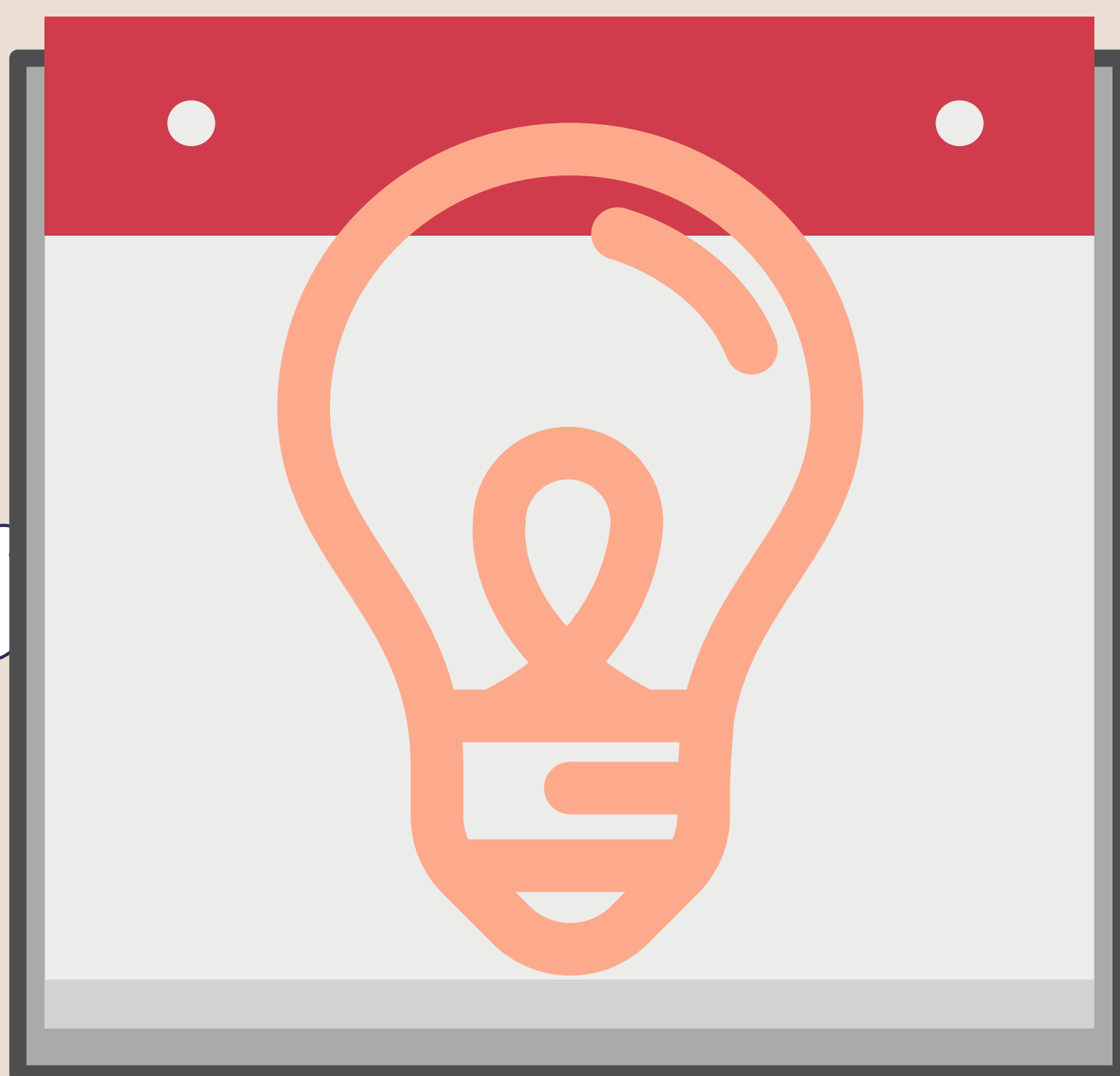


# 10 LIFE-FAITH IDEAS FOR SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



**QUALITY COMMUNITY  
TIME ON & OFF SCREEN**

## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

# FAITH FAMILY FUN!

Discover creative, fun and engaging activities to connect with your family and God during the holiday break. Spark some great faith-filled conversations.

- 1 Build your Own Shelter or Teepee
- 2 Write a Letter of Hope to a Friend or Neighbour
- 3 Gratitude Jar full of Thankfulness
- 4 Bushwalking Adventure
- 5 Faith from the Garden
- 6 Snapshot of Creation
- 7 Cooking Creations Made with Love
- 8 Praying in Colour
- 9 A Talent Night!
- 10 Family Food Tradition



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## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

# Build Your Own Shelter or Teepee

**During the holidays we often go on journeys. This activity aims to help your family to reflect on the journeys that many people around the world have to make as refugees, when they are forced to leave their homes by hunger, war or natural disaster.**

1

Have fun building a shelter or cubby in the backyard or inside the house. You can use sheets, blankets, cushions - don't forget to bring some soft toys, snacks and games along. Invite each family member to write a list of all the things they would like to take on a holiday.

2

When finished writing the list, announce a change of plans. You can only bring two items each. Discuss as a family what you would take, what you would leave behind and why.

3

Many refugees have to leave their homes very quickly and can only take what they can carry. Think about what it would be like to leave your home and not know when you will return. Would that make a difference to the two items you would take?

4

Say a prayer together for people who are forced to leave their homes and most of their belongings behind. You can use your own words or pray the following prayer together:

5

Jesus, our friend and brother, we thank you for our safe homes. We pray that by welcoming refugees we may show our love for our neighbours and be close to you. Amen



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INSPIRING AND ENGAGING  
YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH  
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## Write a Letter of Hope to a Friend or Neighbour

**Your words have the power to lift spirits and encourage, especially to those who feel cut off and isolated at this time. Create and send a card letting someone know you care and are thinking of them.**

1

Recall a time you received a letter or card from a friend. Can you remember how it made you feel? Spend some time thinking about who you would like to connect with. Who needs to receive kind words today?

2

Have fun and get creative making your own personalised card or letter. Decorate any way you like; paint a beautiful picture or attach a photo you have taken recently. You could use this opportunity to learn a new skill such as calligraphy or experiment with watercolour. Perhaps add an origami masterpiece you have created! Don't worry about following any set rules, just enjoy being as creative as you like.

3

Write a message from the heart that shows you care. Let them know you are praying for them and that God loves them too. Once finished, say a prayer for the person you are writing to. Thank God for the blessings of having this person in your life.

4

If writing to a neighbour, you could drop off your card along with some homemade biscuits or a flower from your garden (Covid19 contactless delivery of course). Or, perhaps enjoy a leisurely walk to your local post-box to post it. As you reflect on the day, invite each family member to share the name of the person they wrote to and something special about them.

5

**Pray:** Dear Jesus, we thank you for the gift of family, friends and neighbours. Thank you for reaching out to us with your loving kindness. Help us to show our love through our words and actions. Amen



3

## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

# Gratitude Jar Full of Thankfulness

A gratitude jar is a fun way to create a visual reminder of all the blessings in our lives - a place to record and store everything you are thankful for. Whether it's a person, a kind act or a positive detail in your everyday life, write it down on a slip of paper and place it in your gratitude jar.

1

**Find a jar:** any storage jar will do. Just make sure it is big enough to fill with small slips of paper. Unleash your inner creative and decorate your jar to make it your own. You could decorate with stickers or personalise any way you like.

2

**Get small sheets of paper:** write down what you are grateful for. They can be post-it notes or pieces of scrap paper. Whatever will make you smile when you look at it.

3

**Write down:** three things you are thankful for each day. Place the jar and sheets of paper in a highly visible location such as the kitchen counter. Set a goal for each family member to write down three things they are thankful for each day.

4

**Each evening:** perhaps around the dinner table, take turns to read aloud the things you are grateful for. Take it a step further and pray about ways to connect and express your love for what you are grateful for. For example, if you were grateful for your parent cooking dinner, can you think of a way to express show your appreciation for them? Perhaps you could run a relaxing bubble bath for your parent or give them a hug of thanks? Perhaps you might help your sibling with a job around the house?

5

**Pray:** Loving God, we have so much to be grateful for. Thank you for your abundant and constant love. Help us to express love to others with gentle words and through caring actions. Amen



# 4

## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

### 1

There is something spiritually positive about being in nature, "the oneness", an energy, a sense of peace and reinvigoration. Bushwalking is a wonderful way to celebrate nature. It reminds us of how small we really are, and how beautiful and vast the world really is! Spending time in nature can help us to connect with God and appreciate the world that has been given to us. Enjoy this opportunity to take a "long, loving look" and quietly pray with creation.

Choose a simple trail for your journey. Don't worry about walking fast just take time to appreciate the nature around you. Begin by inviting the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see creation as God does.

Bushwalking makes us want to engage all our senses:

**See:** Notice colours, shapes, textures, the light. Look closely, is there something you haven't noticed before?

**Listen:** Take note of the sounds around you. Snatches of conversation, your own breathing. Distant sounds of birdsong or leaves swaying in the breeze.

**Smell:** Breathe deeply and gently and notice the smells. Can you name the perfume of trees, plants or flowers?

**Touch:** Pay attention to the sensation of sun, wind or rain on your skin. Be aware of warmth or coolness, the contact with the ground.

### 2

Consider taking some photos whilst on your walk and sharing with friends. After or during your walk, take some time to reflect on what you have experienced. If you enjoy journaling, make a note of what you are feeling.

### 3

**Pray:** Loving God, thank for opening our hearts to the world you have created for us. We thank you for your presence amongst us and for the quiet space to listen to your voice. We pray for blessings and peace in our communities. Amen.



# 5

## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

# Faith from the Garden

We are part of the beautiful intricate web of creation. We care for the things God has made, and we also notice how God cares for us through these same things. May the following idea inspire your family prayer time around the wonders of God's creation.

1

Prepare some soil and a space in your garden or gather some small pots. Gather some seedlings - sunflowers, lettuce and tomatoes are good and easy choices to grow. Show children how to pull weeds. Ask them to imagine God is doing the same work in their hearts. How is God preparing you? What weeds do you need to make room for God to work in your life?

2

Take time to imagine what the garden will look like together. Will it be a bounty of beautiful flowers or rows of tomatoes? Reflect together on the power of a seed. A tiny seed if given water and sunlight is powerful.

3

Encourage each other to look after their seeds by watering them and pulling out weeds. Create some plant labels by painting rocks. Remember that fertiliser is an important step in gardening! After fertilising ask your children to think about the good things they can add to their daily lives that help their love for God to grow.

4

**More conversation starters:** Together think about some of the situations in the world where peace is needed. Thank God for the people who help bring peace to our world. What are some of the situations in the world where peace is needed? How can you offer peace to others?

Patience is often the challenging part! Waiting for tiny seeds to become plants is a test of patience for both grown ups and children alike! Where do we need patience in our lives? Keep a gardening journal recording or illustrating what you see, starting with when you planted the seeds, following through over the weeks of growth.

5

**Pray:** Loving God, we ask you to bless our garden with rain, sun and pollinating bees! We pray that you will continue to work goodness in our hearts in the same way. We pray for patience as we wait for our garden to grow. Amen.



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## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

# Snapshot of Creation

There are two great ways to help children see that God is alive and active in our world today. One is by pointing out to children every time you see God working in the world. Another great way for children is to begin seeing God through photography. These prompts are designed to help you and your family appreciate God's creation and pray together through creative photography.

1

Offer your children a challenge along with the camera. Encourage them to take photos that show God at work. It could be in nature or capturing how people interact with each other. Whatever speaks to your children and reminds them God is alive and active in their world.

2

Some suggestions to get you started:

- Take a picture of the sky that speaks to you of how big God is
- Photograph something that makes you feel happy
- Take a picture of some leaves or trees
- Photograph what is a peaceful and safe place to you
- Take a picture of something/someone that inspires you

3

If you are able, print off a selection of the best photos and display them around your home. You might want to have a rotating exhibit and put on a "gallery" show. Perhaps you could attach the photos to your front fence or doorway as a way to share some joy and connect with your neighbours. it might lead into a great conversation!

4

Submit your favorite photo (one per family member) and a description (30 words max) to [met@parracatholic.org](mailto:met@parracatholic.org). At the end of the school holidays, we will choose 2 winners who will receive a Pastoral Formation Prize Pack! We'd love to see your photos! You can also tag us on social media with #pastoralformation

5

**Pray:** Dear Jesus, thank you for all the ways you love us. Thank you for showing us ways to experience you through creation and for helping us to see new perspectives. Help us grow in love and see all the world, including people, with eyes of faith. Amen.



## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

# Cooking Creations Made with Love

Baking, cooking or preparing food is often an act of love and a way of expressing care for others. Sharing a meal connects us and it can be a beautiful way to connect with God. Make food fun and enjoy the chance to spend time together these school holidays. May some simple baking allow us to show a tiny sliver of the same love and compassion for others as Christ shows for us.

1

Encourage children to get involved in choosing simple and easy to make recipes your family will enjoy. Small finger foods, mini pizzas, fruit skewers, cookies and slices are a few favourites. Cupcakes are an ideal way of introducing big and little helpers in the kitchen. Use a range of colourful toppings and let your creativity shine as you decorate. Keep in mind it doesn't have to be difficult - simple food is often the best.

2

Whilst putting on your apron, or getting out equipment, begin by inviting each "chef" to share what they desire for this time. Is it to enjoy spending quality 1:1 time together, to celebrate, to create or to share love with a neighbour? Remember, the essential ingredient will be the love of God in your hearts.

3

Have fun and enjoy the cooking activity. Laugh and talk as you work alongside each other. Wonder out aloud about the times Jesus shared meals with his friends. What do you think Jesus would have enjoyed eating?

4

When you have finished cooking consider delivering some home-baked goodies to your neighbour's doorstep with a card telling them that God loves them. What a lovely unexpected gift that would be to receive! And oh, how they would feel loved!

5

**Pray:** Dear Jesus, thank you for nourishing our bodies, hearts and minds. We thank you for the times when we can cook together, eat together, be together and pray together. Let the meals we have prepared nourish those we care about with your love. Amen.



## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

# Praying in Colour

We often think of prayer as something we read, say or listen to. But prayer can be a visual experience. We all have a lens through which we see the world and for many of us it is through art. The great thing is that you do not need to be a professional artist to engage in artistic prayer. One of the wonderful things about art is that it is accessible, regardless of age, ability or background. Children who may not be able to read or write can share their prayers through colours or pictures. Have a conversation with God through colour!

1

Painting with colour is a wonderful way to express ourselves and to speak with God. God invites us to experience and express all of our emotions - there are no feelings that are better or worse than others. We know that the world would not be complete without all different emotions - just think how God gifts us with the beauty of a rainbow.

2

Talk about emotion. What does the word mean? What kind of emotions do we experience on a day-to-day basis? Talk about colour. How do certain colours make us feel? Why?

3

Grab some washable paints (red, yellow and blue), an apron and a paint brush - or just use your fingers. Paint inside or if the weather is nice head outdoors and listen to the chirping birds. Set up an easel or a large sheet of paper. Experiment mixing colours. Allow everyone to decide on an emotion or feeling they will express using various colours, lines, textures and shapes. Allow everyone to take as long as they need to paint.

4

Hang up the paintings when they are complete. Invite family members to talk about their own work and to share what they see in each others. Does everyone see similar emotions in the same works? Yes? No? Why? Cherish this family art-time as a special time where you are communicating with God and each other.

5

**Pray:** Jesus, sometimes our best prayers are not built out of words but out of textures, colours and tones. Thank you for allowing us the space to simply be with you and offering us the freedom to explore. Thank you for loving and inspiring us. Amen.



## INSPIRING AND ENGAGING YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



## CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH IDEAS FOR THE SPRING HOLIDAYS

# A Talent Night!

**Talent Nights don't just have to be a school or youth group thing. How good would it be to host a talent show in your own home? You can showcase the gifts and talents that God has given to each person and show how diverse we all are. There may be some hidden talents that you don't know of! This isn't 'The Voice' - have fun, get silly, be creative and dress up!**

1

**Each family member can have an opportunity to share a talent that is new, old, or hidden.** Let everyone know they have 5-8 minutes per person. Some examples include: singing, guitar playing, dancing, stand-up comedy, art, fashion show, magic tricks, and the list goes on!

2

**Set a time and date** for everyone to prepare for the family Talent Night. For example, Friday Talent Night 5pm-6pm ending with a family dinner/dessert. Set up a stage-area in the lounge room, backyard or patio. Optional theme: Love/God.

3

**Be encouraging and affirm each talent.** Each performance has a round of applause. Our talents are a way of expressing ourselves and self-discovery. Everyone should feel safe to share what they love to do. God can speak through the way we practice, perform, and cheer on one another. Emphasize it's a safe space to share any talent.

4

**Have roles for the night.** You could have an Emcee, videographer (or have the phone video recording on a tripod), timekeeper and maybe a judge to decide on one winner of the night. Otherwise, everyone is the audience and performer!

5

**Pray:** Dear Jesus, bless us this night as we share our gifts and talents. Give us the encouragement and courage to give everything our best shot. May everything we do be for your glory and for the love of one another. Amen.



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INSPIRING AND ENGAGING  
YOUR FAMILY IN FAITH



CREATIVE LIFE IN FAITH  
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## Family Food Tradition

For many, cooking & home are the places where we learn our earliest traditions. This time in lockdown could be an opportunity to learn some recipes from other people different households! While you and others are on the phone, you could share a session of cooking and conversation as a way of celebrating God's presence in the other!

1

Contact someone outside your household who you'd like to learn a family food recipe from and set a time & date for when you'd like to cook together and to list the ingredients you'll need for the cooking session. Perhaps this could be a parent, family member or friend!

2

For your live cooking session, you both can be on the phone face-timing or speaker. This will make it easier for the other person to talk you through their recipe and the steps on cooking the dish.

3

While cooking, some questions could include:

- What's the story behind this dish?
- What's a fond memory that this dish reminds you of?
- What are some other family traditions that you treasure growing up?

You can come up with your own questions - but don't forget to share your own responses too!

4

During dinner, conversation could continue over the phone:

- Was there food traditions that were connected with spirituality or religion
- **You might need to share first to allow the other person to feel comfortable** (e.g. we would often go out for lunch after we visited our place of worship, or religious feast days would often include after, like during Christmas)

5

**Pray before or after meal:** Bless us God, for these humble and full gifts we we are about to receive, passed on from generation to generation, as a source of life and nourishment. Like Jesus, friend to all humanity and created things, we ask too that this food may sustain us, as we live our lives in service to the other, especially for those who go without. Amen.