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IDEAS FOR LIVING BETTER FROM THE FAMILY LIFE OFFICE

Family Ritual

October 4—Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis was known for his simple lifestyle and his love of nature. What better time in our lives than now to simplify—get rid of the clutter and addictions that take up too much of our time from others. Take your family for a walk (pet included) and notice all the changes that are happening: leaves turning colors, weather getting cooler, fields being emptied of their abundance. Pray for a simpler lifestyle and be grateful for nature.

Strength and Courage

It takes strength to be firm.
It takes courage to be gentle.

It takes strength to stand guard.
It takes courage to let down your guard.

It takes strength to conquer.
It takes courage to surrender.

It takes strength to be certain.
It takes courage to have doubt.

It takes strength to fit in.
It takes courage to stand out.

It takes strength to feel a friend's pain.
It takes courage to feel your own pain.

It takes strength to hide your own pains.
It takes courage to show them.

It takes strength to endure abuse.
It takes courage to stop it.

It takes strength to stand alone.
It takes courage to lean on another.

It takes strength to love.
It takes courage to be loved.

It takes strength to survive.
It takes courage to live.

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"Apple Seeds"
Fr. Brian Cavanaugh, T.O.R.

His Most Productive Crop

One growing season a farmer had a beautiful crop of grain. But a week before the harvest it was wiped out by a hailstorm. His son expected the farmer to lash out in bitterness and despair. But instead he accepted the loss in a spirit of faith and quiet acceptance.

Today this farmer's son is a person of faith who has also learned to live with failure and loss. He thinks of this devastated grain field as his father's most productive crop because it taught him a lesson he has never forgotten.

When it comes to our own children, we should remember that lessons and values which we try to teach them are more easily *caught* than *taught*. Modeling the right behavior before our children is a lot more effective than lectures and empty words.

Clip-Art Features for Church Newsletters4
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"Every believer in this world must become a spark of light."

-Saint John Paul II

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Spiritual Resolutions

We work on our physical fitness but what about our spiritual fitness?

OCTOBER: Row toward Jesus, even when seas become stormy.

"When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.'" (John 6:19-20)

With whatever strength you have, pull toward Jesus. When He shows His power, trust. Let go of the fear of letting Jesus into the storms of your life. Watch the storms subside.

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Families and the Gospel

October 7

Mk 10:2-16

In today's gospel Jesus encourages married couples to throw away the marriage rule book. Rules are for those with "hardened hearts." Married couples are called to be a sacramental reflection of God's faithful and selfless love... a place where people live and love beyond rules and formulas.

October 14

Mk 10:17-30

Having possessions is an illusion. In today's gospel Jesus told the young man to give up his need to control and put his trust in God. He couldn't let go! In families our need to control destroys relationships. We can lead, teach and encourage, but we can't control anyone but ourselves.

October 21

Mk 10:35-45

"Advise" books abound on marriage and parenting. Jesus tells us in today's gospel the real secret: satisfying relationships depend on how well we sacrifice our needs to serve others. It is not about "getting," it's about "giving" ourselves. If you feel like you are a servant to your children and spouse, then you are doing it right.

October 28

Mk 10:46-52

When Jesus asked the blind man, "What do you want from me?" he asked for sight. If Jesus asked you the same question, what would you say? Okay, that is your prayer.

October 31

Halloween

Masks are common at Halloween. Is your family hiding behind the mask of the "Conforming Family" and quietly blending into the culture?

A "Christian Family" is baptized to be different and to make a difference.

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A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar



Faith-Filled Ideas to Celebrate Fall

- ♥ Go apple picking at a local orchard. Marvel at the different types and colors of the apples. Consider the ways of the Lord, delight in His handiwork.
- ♥ Take a nature walk...and **pray!** Just like the many colorful leaves that dance among Autumn's breeze, reflect on the many different types of blessings God has displayed in your life.
- ♥ Enjoy a hayride with friends who could use an afternoon of good clean fun. Share laughs and uplifting conversation.
- ♥ Bake an apple pie with little ones. Have the children use cookie cutters to cut delightful scenes in the top crust. Serve with ice cream!
- ♥ Visit a pumpkin patch with your family. Families who pray and play together, stay together!
- ♥ Cuddle up with a cup of hot-chocolate, topped with an extra heaping of marshmallows and watch a faith-based film, focused on marriage, with your spouse.
- ♥ Make spiced apple cider. Warm it up to share with family or friends on a cozy fall evening.
- ♥ Catch a local high school football game in the evening. Take a warm blanket and cheer enthusiastically for the home team.
- ♥ Light a spiced or Fall scented candle. Take delight in the smells of this warm and comforting season. Thank God for your senses!
- ♥ Reflect on change. Just like the seasons of nature, our lives also go through times of change. Practice trusting in God as you walk through the times of change and uncertainty in your life.

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Having more is never enough.

Being more is paramount.

—United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

Collecting Stuff

One autumn day, my daughter and I were enjoying a visit to a small town filled with shops and antique stores. She was inspecting every teacup and heirloom hankie. When I tried to hurry her along she became indignant and responded, "Mother, you have your stuff. I am just beginning to get mine."

On the way home she explained her philosophy: We spend the first part of life gathering our possessions, the second part enjoying them and the third part giving them away. Life is all about your stuff.

This story reminds me yet again how we pass on our values to our children. When we put emphasis on a particular way of living, we can expect our children to do the same. Children are sorting out what they see and hear, and deciding how they want to live. It is our role as parents to offer formation that is grounded in values that are consistent with our faith. Coveting things, whether they belong to our neighbor or simply entice us from a shop window, leads us right into the hands of our consumer society. Society preaches that things will make us happy. Our faith teaches us the opposite—that happiness is found not in acquiring things but in knowing Jesus Christ.

We encourage our children to live without accumulating more things by choosing not to live that way ourselves. Family life should be more focused on people and times shared than on getting an additional pile of stuff.

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