

Marist
ASSOCIATION OF
ST MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT

ONE HOUR
SPIRITUAL FORMATION
SESSIONS FOR LOCAL GROUPS

THE
BLESSED
Ordinary



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Overview

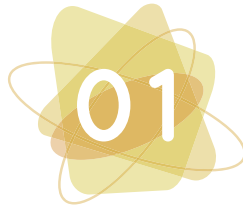
"*The Blessed Ordinary*" is a resource created as a support for the formation of Local Groups in the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat. It includes two x one hour sessions each with a session outline, handouts, suggested readings and keynote/powerpoints.

Each session follows a similar outline with the invitation for those in Local Groups to adapt the material appropriate to their local context. A session template is included for Local Groups to form their own sessions into the future.

Session 1: The Music of Holiness In Our Everyday Lives uses a framing document: the 2018 apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis entitled *Gaudete et Exsultate (Rejoice and Be Glad)*: Segments 14-18 and encourages us to be open to our own call to holiness in our everyday lives.

Session 2: Family. A Homemade Holiness engages us with the joys and challenges of being a family of faith in the Twenty First Century.





THE MUSIC OF HOLINESS

Theme: The Music of Holiness In Our Everyday Lives

Program Objectives:

- To offer three one-hour sessions that can be run by local groups and/or a MLF or Pastoral Team Member.
- To provide resources that are professionally presented but allow local adaptation and input.
- To build local leader capacity.

Session Objectives:

- To see the call to holiness as a call available to each person as called by God in their own community by virtue of their baptism.
- To challenge and empower participants to discern and respond to God's unique call to them as part of their daily living.

Framing document:

The 2018 apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis entitled *Gaudete et Exsultate (Rejoice and Be Glad): Segments 14-18.*

Overall Timing:

One hour

Equipment & Room Requirements:

- Song: We Will Rise Up and Follow (David Haas)
- IT/AV
- Handouts
- Pens
- Butchers Paper/Art Supplies (optional)
- Chairs in a semi-circle (up to 20) then to pods of 3

A person wearing a dark beanie and glasses is shown in profile, playing a silver trumpet. They are standing in a field of tall grass, looking out over a vast landscape towards a bright sunset. The sky is a mix of soft orange and pale blue. The overall mood is serene and artistic.

The Music of Hotness

The Music of Holiness

TIMING

PROCESS

RESOURCES

FOCUS: Content

(Slide 1)

Holding Slide: Pope Francis and titles (*We Will Rise Up and Follow* playing as participants gather).

Prayer Handout
and/or
Keynote/PP
(optional)

5 mins

(Slide 2)

Prayer: framed by *We Will Rise Up and Follow* by David Haas, the Beatitudes, and the artwork of He Qi.

1 min

(Slide 3)

God calls us all individually to be part of the great enterprise of building the Kingdom of God, and no part is too small in this mission. This is one of the beautiful things about being Catholic: there is room for everyone, especially the small, in God's House. All of us have a place and a vital role to play. God calls every person to bring themselves: whether you come from the city, the seashore, a small town, the outback, or from _____ (local community name), God wants and needs what you have to offer.

2 mins

(Slide 4-5)

Our Marist documents ground the holy in the everyday events of our lives. Marcellin knew that God was with us in every moment, no matter how difficult that moments could be. **WFTR 54 & 57**

2 mins

(Slide 6)

Our communities of faith help us to walk this way of faith together so we can be supported and encouraged on the journey. The old phrase "We may not have it all together but together we have it all," shows the power of people bringing their gifts together and making daily choices for the common good. Being holy, Pope Francis reminds us, is simply following Jesus as best we can each day. This might be a new way for some people to think about holiness. How do we work out how we are going to be part of this call to holiness, to follow Jesus? We do have a "Loving Pattern" to guide us, through both the lived witness of Jesus, and Marcellin following Jesus in his own time and place. What are the choices available to each one of us in the small moments of each day to recognise the holy in ourselves, and to make the holy more named and visible in our place?

TIMING

PROCESS

RESOURCES

2 mins

(Slide 7)

You've probably heard of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate: Rejoice and Be Glad*.

It's his third document like this following *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), and *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love). We'll be looking at some of the content of Rejoice and Be Glad today to help us discern how what following Jesus and being holy means. How does it look to respond to this call in a practical way: being holy as we are, where we are, and with the range of people we encounter each day?

(Slide 8)

Here's a short video from Father James Martin SJ from America Magazine in the US to help unpack some of the key concepts of the document. If you haven't heard of James before, he is worth following. He has a gift for breaking open what can seem difficult concepts and framing them for people so they can see God at work in the stuff of their everyday lives:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRweQno8PJA>

5 mins

(Slide 9)

What strikes you in what you see and hear in this video?

Take a minute to reflect on what you have heard and then share one thing that connected with you with the person next to you.

20 mins

(Slide 10)

**FOCUS: Connections – Process –
What does this mean to me in my daily life?**

Source: *Gaudete et Exsultate* 14-18 For You Too

We now have an opportunity to look at some key sections of the first part of the document and reflect on the wisdom there for enriching our personal and communal spiritual life and practice. In groups of three, please read the excerpt and then discuss together what you found most striking.

You will then write down the shared wisdom of your group to share in the last part of our time together.

For each section:

Awareness:

What did I notice? What surprised me?

What challenged me?

Music: Instrumental version of Blest Are They (*the Beatitudes /Rejoice and Be Glad* by David Haas).

Handout and/or butcher's paper, art supplies, pens (optional).

Feedback can be verbal or written depending on the preference of the group/facilitator.

TIMING

PROCESS

RESOURCES

Discernment:

How could I more acknowledge the holy in myself?

Where do I need to see the holy in others?

How do I create spaces of growth in holiness in my community?

Response:

How do I respond practically in love **personally** and **communally**?

20 mins

FOCUS: Summary – drawing out the wisdoms.

Discussion/Presentation from each group and group discussion.

Closing Prayer.



SESSION 1

Resources

Called to Follow Jesus as Marists:

Rejoice and Be Glad!



Jesus Calls the Disciples by He Qi

Presider

We begin our prayer today (Sign of the Cross)
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen

Loving God, you call us.

You call us to be your hands and feet here on earth,
to follow you in all of the simplicity and complexity of our daily living
with lives that show the hope and joy of your resurrection.
And most of all you call us to know your faithful love for us
so that we can ignite this awareness of your grace alive & at work in all lives.

Help us to recognise you in all things, and in all people.
Help us to embrace the holy in ourselves, and in all we meet,
today and always.

All

Amen

We Will Rise Up and Follow by David Haas

From the nets of our labours, through the noise and confusion;
from the city or seashore, Jesus summons us all.
When we faint and grow weary from the bearing of burdens,
with a message of comfort, Jesus summons us all.

***We will rise up, rise up and follow,
Christ before and beside us,
Loving Pattern to guide us, as we answer the call.***

In the eyes of the stranger - tearful, joyous, or frightened -
in the face of each neighbour, Jesus summons us all.
When we hear words of hatred spreading fear and false witness,
words that cry to be challenged, Jesus summons us all.

***We will rise up, rise up and follow,
Christ before and beside us,
Loving Pattern to guide us, as we answer the call.***

In each moment of courage, steadfast even though trembling,
in the yearning for justice, Jesus summons us all.
Like disciples before us, from the city or seashore,
risking selves in compassion: Jesus summons us all.

***We will rise up, rise up and follow,
Christ before and beside us,
Loving Pattern to guide us, as we answer the call.***

Presider Pope Francis calls the Beatitudes the identity card of the saints. The counter-cultural message of the Beatitudes is as fresh now as it was in the time of Jesus. Where do you see God working in your life through the Beatitudes?

All ***Amen***

Reader ***The Beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12)***

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Presider Loving God, you call us to be people of compassion, joy and mercy. We bring before you our needs today, knowing that you hear us and walk with us.

At the end of each prayer: Lord, hear us.

Response: *Lord, hear our prayer.*



Journey with Jesus by He Qi

Together we pray: *Loving God, we give thanks for the gift of our Marist faith community, and for the gifts of life and hope you have so generously and freely given to us. Be with us as we walk with you, as Mary did, today and every day. Amen.*

Presider	Mary, Our Good Mother:	All	<i>pray for us.</i>
Presider	St Marcellin Champagnat:	All	<i>pray for us.</i>
Presider	St Mary of the Cross:	All	<i>pray for us.</i>
Presider	Jesus, our brother and friend:	All	<i>hear our prayer.</i>
Presider	And let us always remember:	All	<i>to pray for one another.</i>

All (Sign of the Cross)
*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.*



Closing Prayer

An Australian Blessing

Together we pray:

***May you always stand
tall as a tree,
be as strong as the rock Uluru,
as gentle and still as the
morning mist,
hold the warmth of the
campfire in your heart,
and may the Creator Spirit
always walk with you.
Amen.***

Elizabeth Pike, 1997.



FAMILY. A HOMEMADE HOLINESS

Theme: Family. A Homemade Holiness

Program Objectives:

- To offer three one-hour sessions that can be run by local groups and/or a MLF or Pastoral Team Member.
- To provide resources that are professionally presented but allow local adaptation and input.
- To build local leader capacity.

Session Objectives:

- To discover ways to nurture faith in a family.
- To learn how faith fuels an authentic life.

Overall Timing:

One hour

Equipment & Room Requirements:

- Slide Projector with sound
- A4 paper for Handout and Wall Activity Sheets and blu-tak
- Pens/markers



Family. A Homemade Hotness

Family. A Homemade Holiness

TIMING

20 mins

PROCESS

(Slide 1)

Opening Prayer

As we gather may we ask God's blessing on us and we thank him for the gift of family.

We acknowledge that with His help we appreciate the diversity of persons in our homes and in our world.

We accept that within our family lies a homemade Holiness and we strive to be the holy people you call us to be.

Amen

FOCUS: Family is the fundamental building block of our culture.

(Slide 2)

Hands up if you have a perfect family.

Hands up if you can name 2 x perfect families in the bible.

How do you define family?

A quick buzz with the person beside you.

(Slide 3)

Perhaps this is your family motto?

(Slide 4)

Family is a fundamental building block of our Marist heritage. **WFTR 30**

(Slide 5)

And Marcellin's devotion to and love for Mary "Our Good Mother" underpinnes the Marial dimension of our spirituality.

Mary is a woman on a mission, to bring us to her Son, the Saviour, Jesus Christ, by bringing us into the family.

(Slide 6)

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness says...*I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their*

RESOURCES

Keynote/PowerPoint

children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families.

Francis says that *God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community. (6) And all families are complex.*

Without being too complex, let's start with a theological view of family:

We commonly refer to our families as our 'household'. The New Testament talks of the 'household of God' which is the church. Through our Baptism, we are all invited into the very "family" of God.

(Slide 7)

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12)

The Old Testament image of family is entrenched in the understanding that God desires all humankind to be in relationship with Him as well as in relationship with one another.

Examples from Old Testament scripture use family imagery to illustrate the intimate relationship God desires.

(Slide 8)

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son ... Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk ... I took them up in my arms ... and I bend down to them and fed them (Hosea 11:1-5)

(Slide 9)

The imagery of God as a parent is the central message especially in the Book of Isaiah. The Old Testament writers also symbolise God as a mother: *Can a woman forget her nursing child or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even if these forget, I will not forget you (Isaiah 49:15).*

In the New Testament, the Gospels are scant on the family life of Jesus but they do provide a blueprint for a healthy family life.

Jesus constantly affirmed people; he made friends rather easily; he shared meals; he experienced confusion; he studied scripture and understood the patterns in them; he used a lot of common sense; he

trusted and was betrayed. This is the stuff of family life. This is where holiness is found.

(Slide 10)

However, today's families are striving to redefine what it means to be a family.

The term 'family' has been extended to include:

- divorced families
- single parent families
- blended families
- same-sex parent families
- as well as the traditional heterosexual two parent families

Q: How have families changed in the last 30 years?

Process: Discuss in your small group and record your findings on the A4 sheets provided at your table.

Feedback your wisdoms to the large group and encourage discussion.

Possible points of discussion for facilitator:

- The interaction with extended family is minimal compared to that of previous generations.
- Due to economic necessity in many families both parents work in full time employment outside the home.
- Interfaith marriages are more acceptable within a diversity of cultures.
- Many households do not have one set of religious beliefs that binds them.
- With the mobility of the modern family, the population is more transient and thus families are no longer rooted to one part of the world.
- State school systems have become religiously neutral and a falling percentage of children are attending parish schools.

20 mins

FOCUS: Connections – Process – What does this mean to me and my family?

So, how do we nurture faith in our 21st century family?

In their survey of the research literature, David Dollahite and Jennifer Thatcher found the following benefits of a family's religious involvement:

(Slide 11)

"Since many studies now show the beneficial consequences of religious belief, practice, and community support on health, mental health, and relationships, it appears that one of the most important things parents can do for their children is spiritual and religious experience and community." (Dollahite and Thatcher, 10)

(Slide 12)

"Our culture however, is often hostile to the Christian faith. We no longer live in a time or a place where what we believe constitutes the norm, or even an accepted point of view."

5 mins

Today's young people start with foundational questions, such as "Does God really exist?" They have a "prove it to me" mindset. And since Christianity is not provable in the sense of hard scientific data, they look for consistency and authenticity. They want to see a faith that fuels real change, one that reaches out to love and serve others.

So, the religious profile of today's parent has changed. Many parents of this generation feel incapable, or at best ill prepared, for teaching faith to their children. In the lives of many parents today the home of their childhood was not seen or understood as central to the faith education of the young.

Process: What helps and hinders nurturing a faith family today?

*Complete the handout in small groups.
Feedback to the large group.*

Possible responses for facilitator:

HELPS	HINDERS	WHAT WILL I TRY?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having time, being relaxed • Having a secure faith themselves • Being intentional • Using everyday opportunities • Having established routines • Loving relationships • God being central in family life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busy family lives, lack of time, distractions • Cultural influences • Not being intentional or giving faith any priority • Not being confident in their own faith • Not being sure how best to nurture faith • Pressure from non-Christians 	<p>Participants complete this column</p>

HELPS	HINDERS	WHAT WILL I TRY?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing how best to nurture faith • Being encouraged • Family activities, events, festivals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not getting the balance right • Lack of encouragement • Difficult life circumstances 	Participants complete this column

(Slide 15)

Young people don't see a connection between what the adults in their lives believe spiritually and how these adults actually live.

We must consistently show our kids that faith is compatible with the harsh realities of the real world. And not just compatible, but also essential for facing those challenges.

Voddie Baucham, in his book *The Ever-Loving Truth: Can Faith Thrive in a Post-Christian Culture?* suggests that there is hope. While church attendance may be down, it's surprising how many of today's young people pray and hunger for real answers. Many desire to live a meaningful life, one that helps mend a broken world. But they're not sure how to do it. They haven't recognized how the faith they were taught fuels an authentic life.

(Slide 16)

If we are to help our kids see a faith worth holding on to, we must show them how that faith is lived out through our actions.

Possible video clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sv80xjE-znQ>

20 mins

FOCUS: Summary - Drawing out the wisdom

It is through the family that children learn the values and core beliefs the family holds.

In the family religious development is shaped, faith traditions are experienced and passed on to the next generation.

So, why is it so difficult?

Patterns of family life have altered and expanded and therefore, structures that enabled parents to nurture and pass on the faith traditions in the past are no longer accessible.

(Slide 17)

By way of summary, let's look at what one researcher suggests are three archetypal understandings of faith...

1. A faith of orthodoxy; speaking of a faith that is grounded in traditions with an emphasis on the literal interpretations of doctrines and Church traditions.
2. A faith as a lived experience; speaking of a faith that has been constructed by the experiences of both faith and life.
3. A faith as an active struggle; a clear understanding of faith has not been reached.

(Suart, C. G. (2007). Nurturing Faith Within the Catholic Home: A Perspective from Catholic Parents who do not Access Catholic Schools (Doctor of Education (EdD)). University of Notre Dame Australia. [hp://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/11](http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/11))

Q: What type of faith do we want for our children?

Process: These three understandings of faith have been placed around the room.

You are asked now, to write on one, two or all of them which aspects of this type of faith you want for your children. *(Keep up Slide 13 to explain process & give examples)*

Regardless of the type of faith we have, faith is the means through which we make meaning of our life and are able to engage in it by doing the will of God.

(Slide 18)

The fundamental element of faith is belief in God. The responsibility of the parent is to be a witness to their children of what it is to have Christian faith. They need to know that struggle is inevitable. Conflict is at hand. Will we bow before the God of culture? Or will we plant our feet, square our shoulders, lift our heads, and give account to all those who ask us not just what we believe but why?

God is on the march.

(Slide 19)

As culture increasingly shifts toward an anti-Christian environment, God is calling our young people to a more authentic faith. We must help our children focus on more meaningful pursuits than their extracurricular activities, their circle of friends or the latest internet trend.

We must join this movement.

Closing Prayer (Closing Slide)

Thank You for the gift of Your Presence within and around us.

Bless us as we continue to deal with family life.

Empower us to forgive as we have been forgiven and to continue to witness to your love and grace.

Amen.

References

Dollahite, David C. and Jennifer Y. Thatcher. *How Family Religious Involvement Benefits Adults, Youth, and Children and Strengthens Families*. The Sutherland Institute, 2005. (www.sutherlandinstitute.org)

Adapted from *The Ever-Loving Truth: Can Faith Thrive in a Post-Christian Culture?* By Voddie Baucham, Jr. Published by Broadman & Holman Publisher, Nashville, Tenn. Copyright © 2004 by Voddie Baucham, Jr.

Suart, C. G. (2007). *Nurturing Faith Within the Catholic Home: A Perspective from Catholic Parents who do not Access Catholic Schools* (Doctor of Education (EdD)). University of Notre Dame Australia. [hp://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/11](http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/11)

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