



## WITH A FATHER'S HEART - PATRIS CORDE

On December 8, 2020, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope Francis announced a year dedicated to St. Joseph. It is fitting that Pope Francis encourages us to spend time reflecting on St. Joseph in conjunction with our Blessed Mother. After Mary, the saint that the Church most reveres is her spouse, St. Joseph. As we turn our minds and hearts to reflect on St. Joseph, we find an extraordinary man, like us in our humanity, who gave himself totally to God through his vocation of father and protector of the Holy Family.

There are no recorded words of St. Joseph in sacred Scripture, but his life gives witness to abiding faith in God and willingness to do whatever God asked of him. To highlight his important role in salvation history, several Popes have bestowed titles on St. Joseph: Pope Pius IX named St. Joseph the Patron of the Catholic Church; Pope Pius XII claimed St. Joseph as the Patron of Workers; and most recently, St. John Paul II called him the "Guardian of the Redeemer".

In his letter *Patris Corde* (With a Father's Heart); Pope Francis invites us to share in his devotion to the foster-father of Jesus. Pope Francis reflects, "How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teacher are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all". (*Patris Corde*). In proclaiming this year to St. Joseph, we are invited to "discover in Joseph - the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence - an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble." The life of St. Joseph helps us to see that we each have an incomparable role to play in God's plan of salvation.

Following the virtues of St. Joseph highlighted in *With a Father's Heart*,

- A beloved father
- A tender and loving father
- An obedient father
- An accepting father
- A creatively courageous father
- A working father
- A father in shadows

Families are invited to embark on a seven-week journey of discovery and reflection on life of St. Joseph. In this year devoted to St. Joseph, may each member of your family increase his/her love for this great saint, turn him regularly for his intercession and imitate his zeal in growing in holiness.





Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph,  
whose power makes the impossible possible,  
come to my aid in these times of anguish and difficulty.  
Take under your protection the serious and troubling situations  
that I commend to you.

Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain,  
and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary,  
show me that your goodness is as great as your power.

Amen.

Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary.

Dear St. Joseph, your "yes" to God  
and loving care for Mary and Jesus make salvation possible.  
I ask you to come to my aid in this difficult time.

I ask you to pray for my intentions,  
my family, and the world.

St. Joseph, you, who are the patron of the universal Church,  
inspire and guide us as we too do everything  
with Jesus and Mary to bring God's love  
and goodness to the world.

Amen.





The greatness of Saint Joseph is that he was the spouse of Mary and the father of Jesus. In this way, he placed himself, in the words of Saint John Chrysostom, "at the service of the entire plan of salvation"

*Patris Corde*

## A Beloved Father

### Parent Reflection:

Christians have always shown great respect for St. Joseph as the foster-father of Jesus and beloved spouse of Mary. It is fitting that Pope Francis invites us to increase our love for St. Joseph by dedicating a year to this remarkable saint. Joseph is righteous man, who gives us an example of a loving fatherhood modeled on the perfect fatherhood of God. God the Father chose St. Joseph, a man of faith inspired by grace, to care for Jesus. Just as God, our Father shows His love for us through His constant protection, love, forgiveness and guidance, so too did St. Joseph show vigilance in his love and care as a father and spouse.

### Family Conversation:

St. Joseph was chosen by God to be our Lord's earthly father. God is the Father of Jesus, but Joseph is the foster father called by God to care for Jesus in his earthly needs. Joseph faithfully fulfilled his role to love, protect and provide for the Holy Family. This responsibility required that Joseph think first of his family and their needs. Mary and Jesus could turn to him in times of trouble, knowing that Joseph would listen and care for them. St. Joseph loved Mary and Jesus; they must have loved St. Joseph very much in return. Now, in heaven, St. Joseph cares for us the same way. As the patron saint of the Church, we should love him as Jesus and Mary did, learn from his life of faith, and turn to him in times of need.

Think about a day in the life of the Holy Family

- What did they do?
- How do you think they prayed?
- How did they show love and care for one another?
- How can our family learn from the Holy Family ways to show love and care for each other?

### Family Activity:

Create a Family Shrine to St. Joseph Look around your house. Do you have pictures or mementos of people you love? We keep these reminders in sight and think of our loved ones when we see them. We can do the same to help us remember the saints we love and turn to them to intercede to Jesus for us.

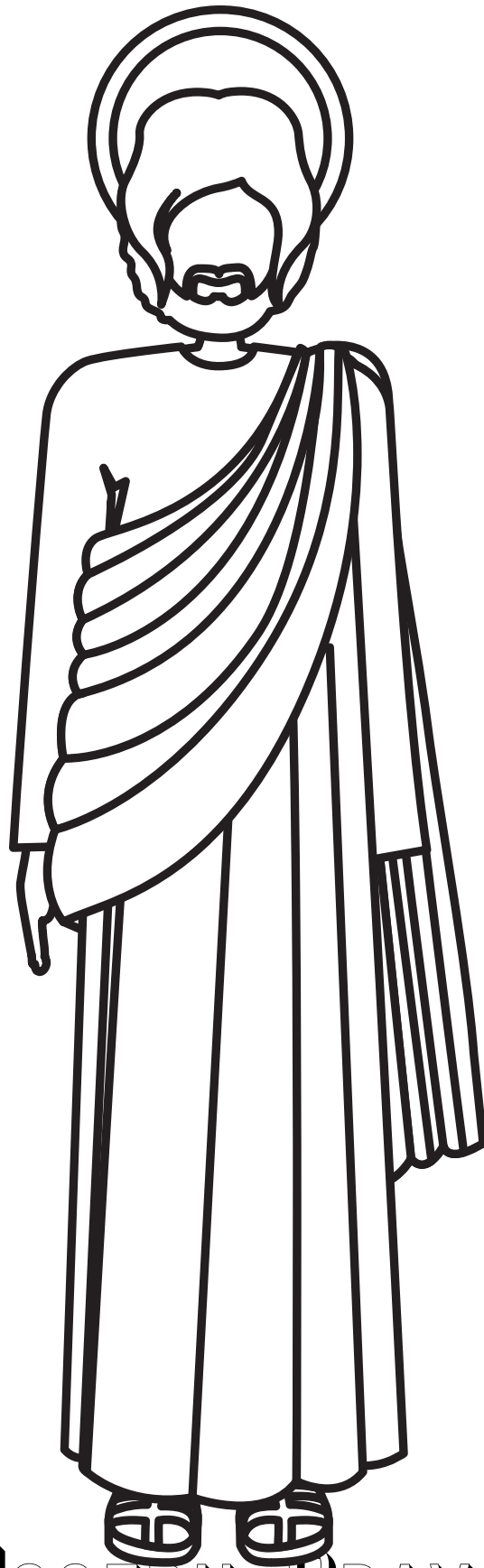
- Begin by finding a place for your Shrine to St. Joseph. This can be a shelf, a small table, a bedside table, and so on. If you would like, you could use a piece of colorful material to cover the space. A battery operated candle, crucifix or bottle of holy water (from your parish) could be added as well.
- Look around your house for items to add to the shrine. Items to consider are a statue of St. Joseph, a holy card, or a picture. You can also use one of the attached images for your shrine by printing, coloring and gluing the image to cardboard so it can stand up.
- Place a small basket, bowl or box on the table with blank slips of paper. Use these papers throughout the week to add prayers and intentions you would like to offer to St. Joseph.
- Gather as a family once a week to read and pray for these intentions. Wednesday is traditionally set aside to honor St. Joseph. End each intention with the phrase, St. Joseph, pray for us.
- Consider adding new items to your St. Joseph shrine as you continue through this year dedicated to our Patron, St. Joseph..
- End by praying the Prayer to St. Joseph included with this packet or your favorite prayer to St. Joseph.





**SAINT JOSEPH, PRAY FOR US.**





SAINT JOSEPH, PRAY FOR US.





All too often, we think that God works only through our better parts, yet most of his plans are realized in and despite our frailty."

*Patris Corde*

## A Tender and Loving Father

### Parent Reflection:

In Scripture, we come to know Joseph as a tender and loving father - in the image of God the Father in heaven. We see the tenderness of Joseph's love expressed in his commitment to accept Mary as his wife, even when he could not fully understand the plan of God. From the moment he accepted Mary into his home, he expressed his love for Jesus as the son he would raise with love and tenderness.

Joseph experienced the same love that biological fathers do. Consider the early days of family life - holding and rocking a baby, teaching a child to walk, tucking them into bed at night. Even as St. Joseph experienced the tenderness of these moments, he would know that Jesus was the Son of God! At the same time, Jesus as a child must have emulated Joseph. Jesus would have learned the skills of a carpenter at the side of St. Joseph. St. Joseph would have felt a father's pride as he watched Jesus grow in "wisdom and age and favor before God and man" (Luke 2:52).

Being a tender and loving parent requires that we hone our skills in listening, and responding to our children. A tender parent commits time to build a loving relationship with their spouse and child(ren). Tender may sound like a soft word, but it takes virtue and practice to be a parent who easily forgives and shows compassion, just as our heavenly Father does for each of us.

### Family Conversation:

Can you imagine what it would be like to have an angel come to you and tell you that God has a big plan for you? That is what happened to both Mary and Joseph. Each of them was asked by God to help bring salvation to the world by being the mother and foster-father of Jesus on earth.

- Do you think it was hard for St. Joseph to be the father of Jesus?
- Do you think he ever reminded Jesus to make His bed, do His homework, or say His prayers?
  - Did this mean that Joseph did not love Jesus? No! Sometimes we show our love by asking people to do things they may not want to do.
- Think about a time when I (we) asked you to do something you did not want to do.
  - What was it? Why do you think you were asked to do this thing?
  - Do you think it could be that I (we) love you and want you to grow into the person God wants you to be?
  - That is what God did with St. Joseph and what St. Joseph did with Jesus - this helped them grow for their specific mission on earth.

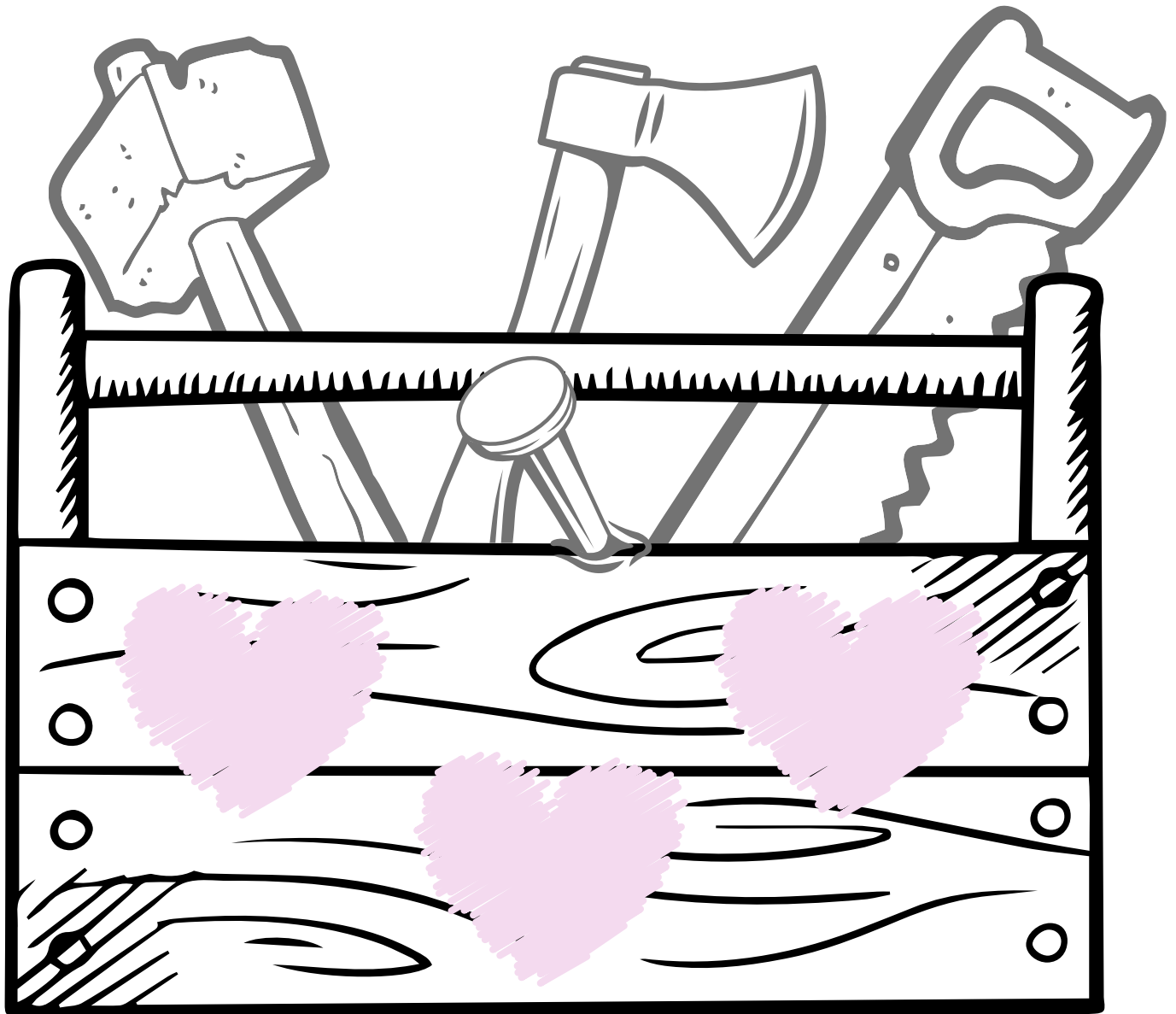
### Family Activity:

St. Joseph used tools to build something strong and durable in his work as a carpenter. Whether it be a chair, a table, a bucket - the same basic tools are needed to build. The same is true for building strong family bonds. Pope Francis has said the three most important phrases in a family are "please, thank you and I am sorry." These are tools for strong families.

As a family, name tools that you can use to help each other show love and tenderness. An example might be setting aside time each day to listen to one another. Write the tools that your family named on the images of tools on the activity page - or draw your own. You can write them on the handles, or cut them out and write on the back of the image. Write the words: "please," "thank you," and "I am sorry" on the toolbox as a reminder of these three essential tools for family love. Place your tenderness toolbox in a place where everyone in the family will be reminded to grow in love and tenderness toward one another.



# Our Family Tenderness Toolbox





Obedience made it possible for him to surmount his difficulties and spare Mary.

*Patris Corde*

## An Obedient Father

### Parent Reflection:

Joseph was a man of faith who had very powerful encounters with God in his dreams. When Joseph learns that Mary is pregnant, but before they have lived together, he is justifiably confused to say the least. He must have been hurt and disappointed. An angel of the Lord assures him “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, (Mt 1:20). The Gospel goes on to say, “When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. (Mt 1:24). Obedience to the will of God, allows Joseph to surmount his fears and turn his concern to Mary. Joseph’s obedience is born of love for God, a love so deep that it casts out fear (see 1John 4:18). For Joseph obedience is an act of love, not fear. In a second dream, Joseph is told to flee to Egypt with Mary and the infant Jesus. Once again, he did not hesitate. Joseph got up and went.

Imagine what he must have been thinking, where will we live, how will I support my family, how long will we be in exile? The same happens in a third dream where Joseph is told it is now safe to return to Nazareth. Joseph shows no resentment, but firm resolve trusting that God is guiding his family. His obedience is an act of fortitude borne of conviction, not blind submission.

### Family Conversation:

Obedience to the will of God is the hallmark of the Holy Family. We see remarkable generosity of heart in listening to God that Mary and Joseph exemplify. Each of them says “yes” to the call of God - either in word or deed - even when what God is asking of them seems impossible. This shows that they are obedient to God. All children learn to be obedient to their parents. Think about what it would have been like for Jesus, who learns from Joseph to the will of our Father in heaven.

- How would explain obedience to someone? What words come to mind?
- Does being obedient sound like a good thing or a bad thing?
- What are the consequences when we not obedient?
  - Some examples - we hurt ourselves, we hurt others.
- Why do you think being obedient to God is important?
  - Because He loves us more than anyone else (even our families) and His plans for us are always the best.

Jesus shows that he has learned this lesson of obedient love in the moment in the garden of Gethsemane, when He becomes “obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). Jesus has learned from Joseph His foster-father and His Father in heaven the love that puts others first that helps us to be obedient to God.

### Family Activity:

We often see images of an empty cross with lilies at the foot of the cross, these are a symbol of new life. We also see St. Joseph holding lilies. This symbol reflects his purity and love for Mary and Jesus.

Make some lilies to add to your St. Joseph altar. Ideas for making lilies can be found here:

- <http://www.catholicinspired.com/2014/04/paper-plate-lilies-super-easy.html>.
- <https://craftsbyamanda.com/handprint-easter-lily/>

Say a prayer to St. Joseph asking him for the strength to be obedient to the will God, our loving Father in all things.







Often in life, things happen whose meaning we do not understand. Our first reaction is frequently one of disappointment and rebellion. Joseph set aside his own ideas in order to accept the course of events and, mysterious as they seemed, to embrace them, take responsibility for them and make them part of his own history.

*Patris Corde*

## **An Accepting Father**

### **Parent Reflection:**

The Gospel of St. Matthew refers to Joseph as a just man. While it may not sound like a particularly glamorous title, it is one of the highest compliments given to a person in the Old Testament. In calling Joseph a just man, the Gospel is saying that he was remarkably faithful to God, and trusted that everything is a gift from God to be shared with others. Even as he is surprised to find out Mary is pregnant with the Son of God, he sets aside his ideas for his future to embrace God's plan. He accepts this fatherly responsibility in confidence again, when he is called to flee from his homeland, to protect the infant Jesus. Taking up his role in God's plan, Joseph, the just man, leaves his home, his job, his friends, as he cares for Mary and Jesus in Egypt.

Pope Francis points out that, "Joseph's attitude encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception and show special concern for the weak, for God chooses what is weak (cd. 1 Cor 1:27)." Justice allows us to see the essential dignity of others, as we help each person to live up to their full potential as intended by God. Jesus, the Son, learns from the witness of Joseph to "love the stranger in our midst" understanding that they too are a gift from God.

### **Family Conversation:**

If someone gave you a compliment and said, you are a very "just" person," what do you think they mean by this? Being just is a great compliment, but it can be a little hard to understand. When we hear the word justice, we may think of courts, or prisons, but Catholics understand justice as a virtue that comes from God that allow us to see other people, and their needs, as God sees them. St. Joseph was a just man, who accepted the gifts and responsibilities given to him by God and used these to help others - especially Mary and Jesus. As a father, Joseph loved and protected Jesus so he could thrive in his mission. As just people, we also do what we can with our resources to help every person have access to what they need to thrive.

- What are some of the gifts and talents we have received from God? How do we show our appreciation for having received these gifts?
- What are things that every person needs to grow and thrive?
  - Some examples - Food, water, shelter, education, health care, work, love, safety, respect
- How can each of us be like St. Joseph and accept what God asks of us, and gives what God gives us to help others?

St. Joseph loved God with his whole heart. He prayed to God each day. He also listened for the voice of God at all times - even when he was sleeping. When he woke up, he did what God asked of him.

### **Family Activity:**

We can learn from St. Joseph how to listen for God when we are resting. We can also ask St. Joseph to intercede for us in prayer. This means, we are asking him to take our prayers to his Son, Jesus. St. Joseph, who was so close to Jesus on earth, is close to Him in heaven too. We can ask for St. Joseph's intercession by praying to the sleeping St. Joseph.

Print the following page. Draw a picture of St. Joseph sleeping. Glue an envelope on the back of the coloring page. When you have a need you would like St. Joseph to sleep on and present to God, write it on a piece of paper and put it in the envelope. Say the Prayer to the Sleeping Saint Joseph.



## PRAYER TO THE SLEEPING SAINT JOSEPH

Dear Saint Joseph,  
whether awake or asleep, you trusted in the love, power and goodness of God.  
As you rest in the Lord, please keep my need (mention your request)  
in your dreams and present it to your Son, Jesus Christ.  
Saint Joseph, help me to learn from you to hear the voice of God as I rest.  
When I arise, may I do what God asks of me with eagerness and love.  
I thank you Saint Joseph for teaching me to trust and hope in God when I rest.  
Saint Joseph, I love you. Amen





If at times God seems not to help us, surely this does not mean that we been abandoned, but instead are being trusted to plan, to be creative, and to find solutions ourselves.

*Patris Corde*

## A Creatively Courageous Father

### Parent Reflection:

We see the creative courage of Joseph from the moment he is asked to be the foster-father of Jesus. He acts courageously in welcoming the pregnant Mary into his home. This action protected Mary from being ostracized by the community and likely being stoned to death. We see his creative courage again when the couple arrives in Bethlehem to find there is no room for them in the inn. As Pope Francis remarks, "Joseph took a stable, and best he could, turned it into a welcoming home for the Son of God to come into the world" (cf. Lk 2:6-7). While in Egypt, Joseph would have had to adapt to a new environment in order to care for his family. These instances highlighted in Scripture are only a few examples of what would have been daily challenges that require courage and creativity - challenges experienced in every family.

Courage is a gift of the Holy Spirit that helps a person to do what is right; even when or especially when, doing what is right might bring about contempt from others. Creativity opens the mind and heart to paths of courageous action. The difficulties that have arisen in light the pandemic have required individuals, families, communities and nations to act with creativity and courage in finding new paths in every aspect of our daily lives.

As parents, you are called to creative courage in sharing the faith with your children. Like Joseph and Mary we "should always consider whether we ourselves are protecting Jesus and Mary, for they are also mysteriously entrusted to our own responsibility, care and safekeeping" (Patris Corde). At its core, passing on the faith, is sharing Jesus with others.

### Family Conversation:

Read Matthew 1:18-25 and Matthew 2:13-15

- How do you think Joseph showed courage in these stories?
  - Explain courage as a gift of the Holy Spirit - it is like bravery, but is often more subtle
- Do you think he had to be creative too?
  - You may need to prompt the creativity needed in making a stable a home, etc.
- When was a time when you were creative and courageous?
  - Did you pray to God for help? The Holy Spirit is always with us ready to help us be courageous and brave.
- When was a time you had to be courageous in standing up for your faith?
  - How did you feel before, during, and after?

### Family Activity:

There is a tradition in the country of Sicily, celebrated on the Feast of St. Joseph that says the fava bean is a "lucky bean." Legend has it, that you will never be without money as long as you carry a bean. Some people believe that if you keep one in the pantry, there will always be food in the kitchen. Good fortune comes our way sometimes from luck, but more often through our own courage and creativity.

Print and decorate the following prayer page. Each time you pray for courage or creativity, or do something creative for God, glue a bean to one of the letters of the word courage. See how long it takes for your family to fill the letters with beans.





Dear St. Joseph,  
Thank you for caring for Jesus and Mary.  
Pray for me that I may have the courage  
to face hard times by trusting in God.  
Pray for me that I may have the courage  
to share the love of Jesus and Mary with others.  
Pray for me that I may have the creativity  
to see new ways of sharing God's love with  
everyone I meet.  
Pray for me that I can come to love Jesus and Mary  
as much as you do.  
Amen.

# COURAGE





Work is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion.

*Patris Corde*

## A Working Father

### Parent Reflection:

One of the lessons that Jesus learns from Joseph is the value and dignity of work. Pope Francis highlights this when he says, "Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labor" (Patris Corde). Joseph, though born of the royal family of David, worked as a carpenter to provide for his family. We know he was not rich, because when Jesus was presented to the Temple to be circumcised, Joseph offered the simple sacrifice of two turtledoves, the offering of those who could not afford a lamb (Luke 2:24). Joseph reminds us of the satisfaction of doing our work well, whatever that may be. The current employment crisis brought about by the pandemic brings into focus the difficulties, tensions and estrangement that often accompany under-employment or unemployment. We ask St. Joseph to inspire us to not only work for ourselves, but become advocates for others who seek meaningful work.

Joseph also reminds us that all workers are, in some form, cooperating with God himself, in creating a better world around us. Joseph explicitly worked to bring God's love to the world by caring for Jesus and Mary. He placed his talents and efforts at the service of his family so that they could bring God's love to the world. Each parent is called in the same way to help their children grow in faith so that they too can bring God's love to the world.

### Family Conversation:

Think of a time when you built, baked or created something from scratch.

- How did you feel when you finished the project?
- We know from the Bible that Joseph was a carpenter.
  - How do you think he felt when he finished a project?
  - Think about how he must have felt when he sold a project so he could provide for the needs of Jesus and Mary.
  - How would he have felt if he could not provide a home or food for them?
  - How do you think Jesus and Mary felt when he cared for them this way?
- There are so many people today who do not have jobs, or means with which to provide for their most basic needs - shelter, food, medicine.
  - How do you think they feel?
- Do you realize that when you help around the house, that you are acting like St. Joseph as care for your family?

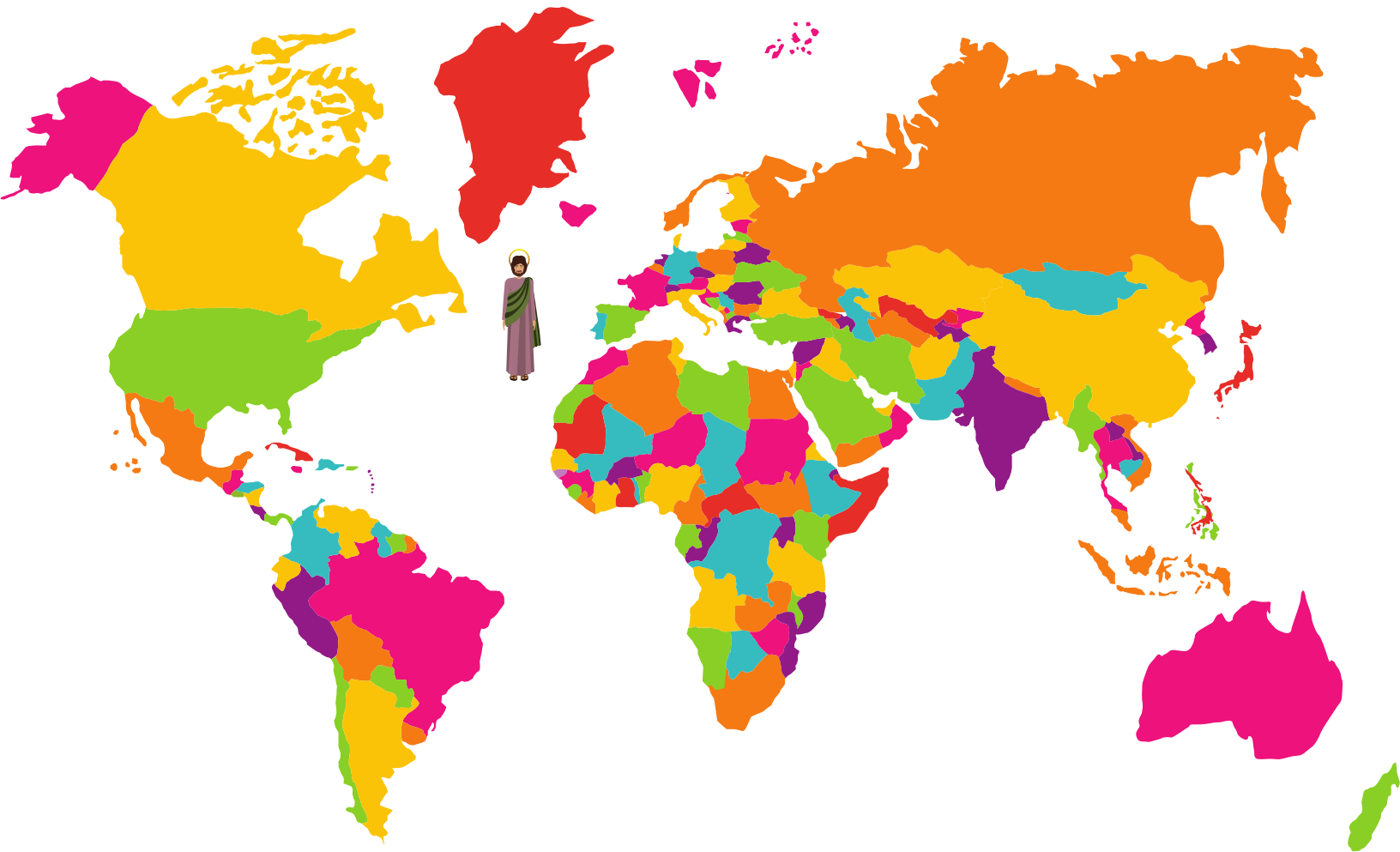
St. Joseph teaches us to be thankful for our work, so that we can help our families and communities. St. Joseph not only worked to take care of their physical needs, but he worked to bring God's love to the world by his care for the Holy Family. St. Joseph can inspire us to work to bring the Good News of God's love to our part of the world.

### Family Activity:

On May 1, the Church celebrates the Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker. He is a hardworking saint in heaven. Not only is he the patron saint of workers, he is the patron of the Catholic Church and of the following countries: China, Canada, Korea, Mexico, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Peru and Vietnam. On the following map, put a heart on each country that St. Joseph watches over as patron. Put a heart in Rome as well - it is the home of the Catholic Church.



Dear St. Joseph,  
Inspired by your loving heart, help me to be grateful for work.  
May I learn from you how to work to bring the love of Jesus and Mary to the world.  
Amen.





Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father; he watched over him and protected him, never leaving him to go his own way.

*Patris Corde*

## A Father in the Shadows

### Parent Reflection:

Pope Francis uses the evocative image of “living in someone else’s shadow” to describe the mutually supportive relationship between God, Joseph and Jesus. A contemporary understanding of living in the shadow of may evoke images of oppression or timidity; but Pope Francis focuses our attention on the strength of being in the Father’s shadow. Living in God’s shadow gives Joseph both roots in faith and God’s love, and freedom to accept responsibility in caring for Jesus.

Joseph loves Jesus generously, even to the point of self-sacrifice. He shows us that generous love is “chaste,” it is not possessive or controlling. God did not micro-manage aspects of everyday family life of the Holy Family, nor did Joseph control Jesus’ growth. Though always attentive to the needs of Jesus, Joseph’s love is rooted in freedom that allows Jesus to grow daily “in wisdom and in years and in the divine and human favor” (Luke 2:52). In this, Joseph created a home that nurtured Jesus for his salvific mission. Joseph understood this child was a gift from God entrusted to his care. So too, all parents must understand that children are a gift from God, entrusted to them for a while, always bearing in mind the responsibility of pointing them to the perfect, loving Father in heaven, and equipping them with faith, hope and love to accept their work of making the world more like the Kingdom of Heaven.

### Family Conversation:

- How must Joseph have felt living with Mary (who was born without sin) and Jesus, the Son of God?
  - Do you think he ever doubted that he could be a good father to Jesus?
- What gives you the strength to do something hard?
  - Prompt: consider love and support of parents/family

Joseph found his strength in his faith and love of God - he learned how to be a good father from the way God our Father loves us. He was a little like a shadow of God because he was the same shape as God, but not God himself.

- What are some of the ways that God shows he loves us?

Use the image of helping a child learn to ride a bike - parents first run alongside the child as they are learning to ride, then as the child grows in confidence, they stand behind making sure the child is safe, finally, the child is secure in riding on their own. This is how God loves us. He gives us families to help us learn that we can do things that may seem scary. God is always with us encouraging us to grow into the people he created us to be. Even though you do not see God with you all the time, he is there. He is like a shadow, always there. On sunny days, you can easily see your shadow. On cloudy days, or in the dark, it is hard to see, but with a little light, you can see your shadow. One light that helps us to see God is with you is prayer. Prayer will always help you to know that he is a close to you as your shadow.

### Family Activity:

Tape a piece of white paper on the wall. Turn on a bright light in the room. Have each family member take turns standing between the light and the paper as you trace the image of their shadow. Take the pieces of paper down and have each person write a prayer of thanks to God for always being with them as their heavenly Father.

