

# Family Retreat

## Gathering Rite

### Procession with the Word

*Sing together. We Believe, We Believe, We Believe.*

**Leader:** Let us begin.

**All:** *Pray the Sign of the Cross together.*  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

**Leader:** God, our Loving Father, we are gathered here in your presence. We belong to you. Send us your Holy Spirit to help us live as your children. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** Baptism claims us for Christ. By water and the Holy Spirit we received the gifts of faith and new life. On that day our families and the members of the parish remembered their baptismal promises. Today we remember those promises together.

### Renunciation of Sin

**Leader:** Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

**All:** I do.

**Leader:** Do you reject the glamor of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin?

**All:** I do.

**Leader:** Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

**All:** I do.

### Profession of Faith

**Leader:** N., do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

**All:** I do.

**Leader:** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord...

**All:** I do.

**Leader:** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?

**All:** I do.

Based on the "Rite of Christian Initiation," 224-225

**Leader:** This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** Let us come to the water and thank God for the gift of our Baptism.

**All:** *Come to the water as a family group and sign each other by praying the Sign of the Cross with the holy water.*

## Family Retreat *(continued)*

*When everyone has done this, one family member takes a lit candle from the leader(s) and presents it to the candidate, saying:  
[Name], You are the light of Christ.*

*Family groups return to their seats.  
Candidates remain in the prayer space and form a semi-circle.*

**Leader:** *(to candidates)* May you be enlightened by the Holy Spirit to walk always as children of the light. May your light burn brightly and be a source of faith to others.

**Candidates:** Amen.

*Candidates extinguish candles and return to their seats.*

## Celebration of the Word

**Leader:** Loving God, we belong to you. We are your children. In Baptism we were united to your Son, Jesus. Open our hearts to the Holy Spirit as we remember our Baptism. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And also with you.

**Leader:** A reading from the holy Gospel of John.  
*Read John 15:1–12.*  
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Reflect on the question below and share your reflection in your family group.*

**How do you understand the image of Vine and Branches in your own faith journey?**

## Closing Prayer

**Leader:** Loving God, we thank you for the gift of Baptism. Send us forth to share your love with others. Help us to remember always that we are your children. We belong to you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

*Exchange a sign of peace with one another.*

# Family Retreat

## Catholic Social Teachings

**Solidarity of the Human Family** The light of Christ is in me and “this light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine!” Like so many others, I can choose to believe that God calls me to be in solidarity with those who are hurting—to walk with them and be with them. With the eyes of faith, I can see and serve Jesus in them. I can start by befriending someone in my own community who is sick, poor, or disabled, and believe that my love will move the mountain of indifference at least a little.

**Call to Family, Community, and Participation** “Spirit Wind, Breath of God,” is breathing new life in the world. Others may not see it or get involved, but that shouldn’t keep us from doing so. God has given us his Spirit. That’s why we don’t think (and act) the same way the people of this world think. The Spirit works in the world by inviting us to participate more fully in our family and community. We can reach out to the children in our community who need tutoring, through programs like Head Start. We can also help our younger siblings with the skills and schoolwork they struggle with.

**Care for God’s Creation** Isaiah describes God’s kingdom as a beloved community of all God’s creatures, where wolves and lambs lie down together and calves and lions eat together. Every creature, every species is precious to our Creator. But species are becoming extinct and the world’s resources are being gobbled up with little thought of future generations. We can adopt a new attitude toward the earth as a community to which we belong, not a commodity belonging to us. We can use less, recycle more, and be open to God’s Spirit calling us to focus more on people and less on things.

**Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers** Isaiah provides a vision for us. Anointed by God’s Spirit, we are sent to bring Good News to the oppressed and freedom for prisoners. Advocating for jobs with a living wage for ex-prisoners and minimum-wage workers through groups like Jobs with Justice and the Living Wage Campaign are good ways to do this. Acts of kindness to those mourning because they lost their jobs, are helpful reminders of God’s love. Isaiah says that God’s people will rebuild cities and hire foreigners to help. We can advocate for a generous immigration policy and an end to war.

**Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person** Jesus’ example challenges us to accept our responsibility to be advocates for the rights of others, especially those denied these rights because of their race, gender, age, nationality, or sexual orientation. We are called to “hunger and thirst for justice.” We can definitely volunteer at a food pantry and cut back on unnecessary purchases and share those savings with the hungry.

## **Catholic Social Teachings** (continued)

**Life and Dignity of the Human Person** Sometimes we are afraid of associating with people that others mistreat. But with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can become humble and respectful to everyone. Who are the outcasts or unpopular people in your school or community? As a first step toward becoming their friend or advocate, you might offer them (and everyone) a smile of respect and love.

**Option for the Poor and Vulnerable** Jesus gave his life totally for others, especially the poor and vulnerable. We can make the poor and vulnerable a priority in our lives by setting aside a portion of our time and money or other resources for them. We can see and faithfully serve Jesus in the persons of the poor and vulnerable, by getting to know at least one of them. Local soup kitchens and shelters are a great place to start; so are nursing homes and senior centers or assisted-living facilities.