



**WELCOMING
CHILDREN
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA**



Faith and Freedom

Adaptive Activities for Children



**National Catholic
Partnership on Disability**

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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

Each monthly edition incorporates the following:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

Prayer

This prayer service is written to acknowledge the importance of Ordinary Time in our Liturgical Season. We have entered into a lengthy season of Ordinary Time that encourages our growth as disciples of Jesus.

Supplies Needed: Liturgical Calendar (Optional: Green cloth, plants, items from nature)

Leader: We have now entered a long period of Ordinary Time in our Liturgical Year. Which color is Ordinary Time on this calendar? Ordinary Time is still very important. Just because it is called “ordinary,” that doesn’t mean that it is less important than our greater feasts and celebrations. What color was Ordinary Time again? Green, right. In nature, what kind of things are green? Green is a color that represents growth. Plants, trees and grass all grow when they are green. During Ordinary Time, we are growing as disciples in Jesus. What are some things that we can do as we grow as disciples? As we think about growing as disciples, let us pray...



Song Suggestion:

Gather the People (by Dan Schutte)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QV7k_S4Ku8o)

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader:

We ask God for his mercy to help us as we work to follow Jesus. Repeat after me as we ask God for his mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.



Image from Midjourney

Leader:

Loving God, we ask for your help during this long period of Ordinary Time to continue to grow as disciples of Jesus. Grant us the grace to continue to grow in faith like the plants, trees and grass, so that we can become more like your son, Jesus Christ. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son, through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reading of Sacred Scripture:

Matthew 14:13-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

After Jesus heard about John, he crossed Lake Galilee to go to some place where he could be alone. But the crowds found out and followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus got out of the boat,

he saw the large crowd. He felt sorry for them and healed everyone who was sick. That evening the disciples came to Jesus and said, "This place is like a desert, and it is already late. Let the crowds leave, so they can go to the villages and buy some food." Jesus replied, "They don't have to leave. Why don't you give them something to eat?" But they said, "We have only five small loaves of bread and two fish." Jesus asked his disciples to bring the food to him, and he told the crowd to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up toward heaven and blessed the food. Then he broke the bread and handed it to his disciples, and they gave it to the people. After everyone had eaten all they wanted, Jesus' disciples picked up twelve large baskets of leftovers. There were about five thousand men who ate, not counting the women and children.

The Gospel of the Lord.



Image from Midjourney

Gospel Reflection

In this month's Gospel reading, Jesus provided a miracle and feeds many people who have gathered to hear him speak. The people came to listen to Jesus because they were interested in what he was saying, and curious about who Jesus was. They were not told to go to the gathering. They wanted to go to listen to Jesus. And because they stayed for a very long time, Jesus fed them. Do you get to go listen to Jesus? Of course you do! Where can you hear Jesus?



Image from Midjourney

At Mass, when watching TV, when you are alone? You are free to choose to be with Jesus anytime you want. Jesus told the crowd gathered to hear him speak how to live lives as good people, he shared the Good News. They were free to choose to say yes or no. Should you be like the people in our Gospel reading, and listen to and follow Jesus? Or should you stay home and close your ears and your heart to him? You are free to choose. I know I choose Jesus.

Faith in Action

In the month of July, the celebration of America's Independence is celebrated on the 4th. We celebrate by gathering with family and friends enjoying picnics, barbecues, ice cream, and fireworks. As Catholic Christians we can celebrate our freedom every single day. This month, we are reminded of the freedom we experience as children of God, and as followers of our Lord, Jesus Christ. What a wonderful time to celebrate this amazing freedom, which the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility" (CCC 1731). The

Catechism goes on to say, “The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just” (CCC 1733).

This July, as a family, let’s celebrate our faith inspired by our love of Jesus and the lives of the Saints, and exercise our freedom by choosing to do good. Gather as a family to read about the life of the Saints whose Feast days are celebrated this month. Let’s begin with St. Elizabeth of Portugal whose Feast Day is July 4th. St. Elizabeth was a Spanish princess who had a strong faith and devotion to Jesus. She was kind and beautiful and celebrated her freedom by participating in Mass every day. In honor of Saint Elizabeth of Portugal, with your family, plan to participate in at least one daily Mass each week this month, in addition to regular participation on Sundays. Before Mass sit down as a family and discuss how awesome it is that we live in a country that allows us to exercise our religious freedoms, and more importantly, that we believe in a God who loves us and in turn gives us the freedom to love him.



Image from Midjourney

Because daily Mass is a little different from Sunday Mass, you may want to take the time to prepare your family for what to expect. Let them know that there may be fewer people present at a daily Mass, and that there are only two Scripture readings, and very little singing. Mass is also shorter than a Sunday Mass. Prepare by meditating on the Scripture readings before Mass. Read aloud the Scriptures and invite every member of the family to reflect on what the readings mean to them. What words stand out for them and how do the words make them feel. Have each person express themselves in the way that is most appropriate for them – drawing, writing, speaking, typing, moving their bodies, or signing their responses. It is important to allow everyone to share their impressions of the readings as best they can and for the family to affirm their contributions.

Following Mass, celebrate with a special treat befitting a July 4th celebration – hamburgers, hot dogs or ice cream or maybe a family picnic? Whatever the treat you select give thanks to God for blessing your family with the freedom to worship him on this day and every day, and the beautiful example of Saint Elizabeth of Portugal's devotion to him.



Image from Midjourney

Later in the month, on July 14th we celebrate the Feast Day of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha. Saint Kateri's love of Jesus was so strong that she overcame pressures from her family and friends and exercised her freedom to choose Him above everything and everyone else. When Kateri was only four years old, she suffered the partial loss of her sight, and through it all Kateri continued to turn to God in the good times and the bad. Kateri also chose to do good for others. She shared her love of Jesus with children and she gave what she had to the poor. She even exercised her freedom to do good by helping the elderly and the sick in her community whenever they needed her. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this

duty of respect” (CCC, 1738). Saint Kateri exercised her freedom and responsibility to do good, even when she had struggles of her own. As followers of Jesus, we are called to do the same.



Image from Midjourney

Inspired by Saint Kateri’s choice to do good by respecting the dignity of every person, create a “Freedom to Love Jesus” bowl or jar. Place it in a central area in your home where everyone can access it. Place index cards or similar sized paper, crayons, pencils, stickers, and stamps to decorate the cards near the bowl or jar. Gather as a family and brainstorm ideas about how each of you can exercise your freedom to love Jesus by doing good deeds for others. Have everyone write or draw what they would like

to do and place it in the bowl or jar. Identify tasks that can be done independently and ones that may need to involve a partner for additional support. At dinner time each night during the month of July, everyone can pick a card, partner up where appropriate and read it aloud. Decide as a family to do the good deeds written on the card the next day for someone else, either in the family, for friends, or neighbors. Pray over your decision and ask the Holy Spirit to guide and to strengthen each of you in your freedom to choose to do something good for others. At the end of the next day, talk about what you did and share how it made you feel. Make sure to give everyone in the family an opportunity to make the choice to do good and share how it made them feel. Encourage and affirm each of your efforts, give thanks to God, and plan to do good deeds again the next day.

As a family we support each other in living out our faith and exercising our freedom to love and serve others, as Jesus did. Celebrate this freedom and give thanks to God always for it.

Activities with Children

July Activity for Freedom to Practice Our Faith & Love Jesus

In July, while we celebrate our country's freedom, let us also acknowledge our freedom to practice our faith and show our love for Jesus. Throughout the Bible, there are many examples of ways we can proclaim that we are followers of Christ. As a family, read some of the Bible verses below and discuss how you can show your love for Jesus. Your family may choose to focus on one characteristic of Jesus - kindness. The following calendar activity may be used to assist your family with demonstrating your love for Jesus by performing acts of kindness.

1 John 2:6

Whoever claims to abide in him ought to live [just] as he lived.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

1 Peter 2:21

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.



Image from Midjourney

Ephesians 5:1-2

So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.

John 14:15

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

Family Kindness Calendar Activity

Draw a heart on the calendar whenever a family member demonstrates an act of kindness.

Option: Each family member can have a different colored heart.

Family Challenge: Earn at least one heart on each day of the month.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
July 2024	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Possible family activities:

- set aside time to pray as a family
- decorate cards and send to individuals letting them know they are appreciated
- make a simple bird feeder and hang it outside your home
- gather canned goods for a local food pantry
- donate gently used clothes and toys to a local shelter
- do a chore for someone without being asked
- recycle paper, plastic, etc.
- plant flowers at church

Saint for July

Saint Thomas the Apostle

Feast Day - July 3rd



Image from Midjourney

Saint Thomas is one of the twelve Apostles chosen by Jesus. He is the Patron Saint of doubters, architects, individuals who are blind, builders, geometricians, masons, surveyors, and theologians.

<https://mycatholic.life/saints/saints-of-the-liturgical-year/july-3-saint-thomas-the-apostle/>

Saint Thomas might best be known for doubting that Jesus had resurrected from the dead - *Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So, the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."* John 20:24-25



Image from Midjourney

One week later, Saint Thomas encountered Jesus and then came to believe -

Now a week later his disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

John 20:26-28

Saint Thomas is only mentioned a few times by name in the Bible and not much is known about his life after Pentecost. However, in his speech to the General Audience in St. Peter's Square on September 27, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI stated:

Lastly, let us remember that an ancient tradition claims that Thomas first evangelized Syria and Persia (mentioned by Origen, according to Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History 3, 1) then went on to Western India (cf. Acts of Thomas 1-2 and 17ff.), from where also he finally reached Southern India.

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2006/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20060927.html

It is also considered by some individuals that Saint Thomas' life ended in India where he was martyred. Although he once doubted Jesus, Saint Thomas spent the remainder of his life evangelizing people to Christianity. <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/seasons-and-feast-days/st-thomas-the-apostle-24139>

In celebration of Saint Thomas' Feast Day, consider having your family participate in one of these activities:

- Recite the following prayer -

Saint Thomas the Apostle, you became a faithful follower of Jesus. Though you struggled with an occasion of doubt, that struggle transformed you into a new man. Please pray for me, that every struggle and weakness I have will be eliminated and transformed so that God can use me to fulfill his holy and perfect will. Saint Thomas the Apostle, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in you.

<https://mycatholic.life/saints/saints-of-the-liturgical-year/july-3-saint-thomas-the-apostle/>



Image from Midjourney

- “We Believe” by the Newsboys -

Listen to the song, “We Believe” by the Newsboys; sing along with the chorus by repeating the words - “We Believe.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjZ01FcK0yk>

- Craft Activity -

Family members can trace their hands onto pieces of paper. Make a hole or place a heart sticker on the palms to represent the nail hole in Jesus’ hands. Color or decorate by adding statements such as:

Stop doubting and believe!

“My Lord and my God!” *John 20:28*

“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” *John 20:29*

I BELIEVE!



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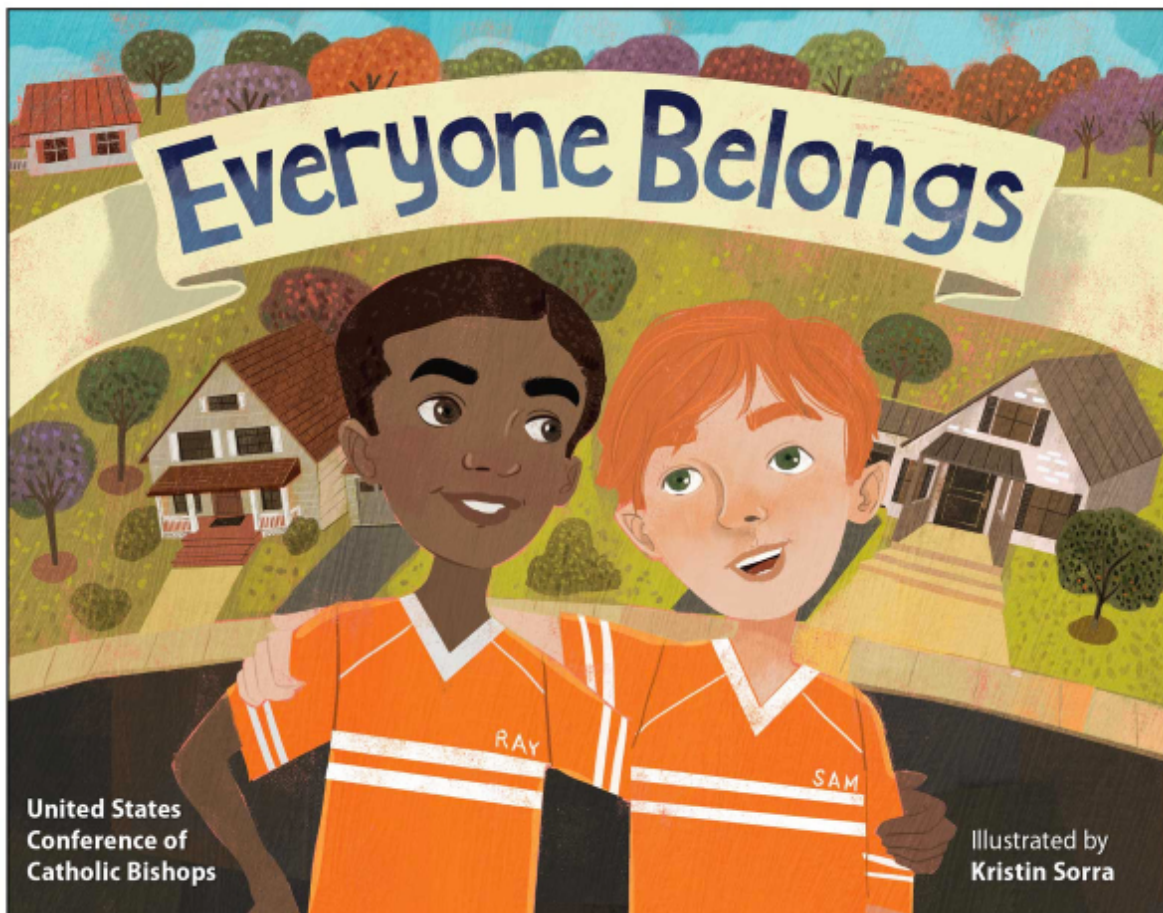
July - Resources

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, USCCB.

“July Feast Days – Catholic Saints to Celebrate with Children” - By Allie Johnston, Sadlier Religion Blog <https://www.sadlier.com/religion/blog/catholic-saint-feast-days-in-july-celebrate-with-children>

In Caelo et in Terra: 365 Days with the Saints. Daughters of St. Paul. Pauline Books and Media, 2020.

“Everyone Belongs” is a children’s book on the reality of racism and our Catholic response. It is available through Loyola Press (<https://store.loyolapress.com/everyone-belongs>). Printable activity sheets to accompany the book are also available at the same Loyola Press website.





July - Bibliography

The Catholic Miscellany, The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Charleston, "Teaching Our Kids About the Real Presence Means Making It Real and Present," 6/1/23,

<https://themiscellany.org/teaching-our-kids-about-real-presence-means-making-it-real-and-present>