

## **Jump-Start the Faith of your Families**

Who said New Year's Resolutions have to be an individual thing? The Gottman Institute, a secular organization that researches best practices for relationships, recently published the idea that we should "Make New Years Resolutions a Family Affair."

<https://www.gottman.com/blog/make-new-years-resolutions-family-affair/>

The tag line of the article claims that "Families who make goals together, keep goals together."

This logic is sound and can be pushed even further as we evaluate the faith life of the families we serve. Families who plan rituals and goals around their spirituality strengthen their faith together.

So how about encouraging our families to make some spiritual resolutions this year? This could take place as part of an end-of-year retreat for your families, or simply a bulletin insert or take-home handout after faith formation classes. However, you incorporate the concept, here are a few ideas of family spiritual resolutions to get the ball rolling. Remember, progress is found in choosing one or two ways to strengthen your faith life; not attempting to become spiritual pillars of the Church overnight! We wish you and your families a New Year of growth in faith, and closeness to our Lord!

## Spiritual Resolutions for Families of All Ages

1. **Resolve to honor the Saints:** At the beginning of the year look up the Feast days of Saints that are either your namesake, or for whom you have a special affinity. Put those dates in your calendar as you would soccer practice or a birthday and commit to celebrating and remembering those special Saints on their Feast Day.
2. **Resolve to embrace the whisper of the Holy Spirit:** Choose 5 minutes of the day in your household and commit to observing sacred silence.
3. **Resolve to be intentional about seeing God in your life:** Commit to a family gratitude jar and have each member of the family write one thank-you note to God each Sunday for something that happened in their lives. Where did you see the Holy Spirit at work this week? At the end of the year, read back on all the wonderful ways God has been with you all!
4. **Resolve to celebrate your faith:** Research the baptism dates of your family members and put those in your calendar. On each person's Christian birthday, have a special dessert!
5. **Resolve to pray together:** Commit as a family once a week before bedtime to pray together. Share prayer intentions for your neighbors and loved ones and say one of the traditional Catholic prayers together.
6. **Resolve to understand more Scripture:** Commit to listening to the "Bible in a Year" podcast with Fr. Mike Schmitz on car trips, or another program that walks you through the Bible as 2024 unfolds.
7. **Resolve to know your parish community:** As a family, commit to inviting someone or some family from your parish that you do not see outside of Church over for a homecooked meal. Agree as a family on the amount of times to accomplish this in 2024.
8. **Resolve to share the faith:** Challenge each family member to bring a friend to Mass at least once in 2024.
9. **Resolve to put your faith in action:** Read through the corporal works of mercy and choose as a family one topic where you feel called to donate your time and talents. Commit to serving as a family quarterly.
10. **Resolve to rest in the Lord:** At the beginning of the year, pick one date per season and black it out as a family. No one is allowed to make plans on that date! Instead, experience a true sabbath. Rest, play, pray, and spend time reconnecting with one another!