Pope Francis’ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family

“THE JOY OF LOVE”:
Amoris Laetitia

A Discussion Guide for Couples, Families, Parishes, Schools and Small Groups

Office for Evangelisation
Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay
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“THE JOY OF LOVE”:
Amoris Laetitia

Pope Francis’ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family

A Guide for Couples, Families, Parishes, Schools and Small Groups
The joy of love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church (AL 1). With this affirmation Pope Francis opens his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on love in the family, Amoris Laetitia. Recognising marriage and family as intrinsic to the future of the world and that of the Church, Pope Francis sets before us the beauty and grandeur of family life and the invaluable witness given by married couples to the love, fidelity, and forgiving character of God’s own love.

At the same time the Pontiff, together with his fellow bishops at the Synods of 2014 and 2015, recognises the many challenges and complexities of family life today. These difficulties represent the fundamental trials of human relationships that are as longstanding as salvation history itself (AL 19). As Pope Francis acknowledges, “no family drops down from heaven perfectly formed” (AL 325).

It follows that Amoris Laetitia is a powerful document that presents our Catholic communities with the task of reaching out to families, to encourage with great hope the married vocation and family life.
while exercising the compassion that characterises Jesus’ own response to those who experience division and loss (AL 21).

Among the challenges presented to us, Pope Francis calls for renewed accompaniment of couples preparing for marriage and living marriage. As a Church, “a family of families” (AL 87), this task does not fall only on a select few but is a common project that invites “a missionary conversion by everyone in the Church” (AL 201). Our clergy, lay men and women, dedicated singles, the young, and the elderly all have a role to play in nurturing a culture of self-giving love and commitment. Together as a family of faith we have the project of ‘domesticating’ the world by taking loving responsibility for one another, including our couples and families who embark on this path of life (AL 183).

Amoris Laetitia exhorts us to encourage the young to aspire to marriage and family life all the while fostering realistic expectations that prepare them for mature relationships that inevitably experience change through time. It speaks of the need for married couples to be open to the prospect of new life, to educate children in virtue and to foster their natural inclination towards goodness (AL 264). It speaks of inclusion and affirms the Gospel as a word spoken to all people in every circumstance as a source of hope. Pope Francis also offers practical ideas to encourage husbands and wives in their journey of constant growth, and urges parishes and faith communities to be bearers of comfort and consolation for those who await mercy, who seek oil for their wounds (AL 309-310).

For Pope Francis, as for the Church, families are indeed good news. They are not only the subject of pastoral care, catechesis and spiritual accompaniment but also active agents of God’s evangelising mission. By witnessing to love and fidelity, even amidst imperfections and struggle, the family brings hope to the world and inspires us to never stop seeking the fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us (AL 325).

I hope this discussion guide encourages you, your family and faith communities to encounter anew the love and merciful abundance of God, made flesh in Jesus Christ. May we grow together in the demanding ideals of the Gospel and in compassion and closeness to all those who remain, as we are, pilgrims walking on the road of humanity.


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HOW TO USE THIS
Discussion Guide

This discussion guide is intended as a companion to the Apostolic Exhortation. Corresponding to the format of *Amoris Laetitia*, the guide is comprised of an introduction and nine chapters. Each chapter includes questions to prompt both individual and group reflection and discussion.

For small group study, three options are proposed. Your family, parish or group should choose that way of reading which best suits your circumstance.

- **For the time-limited**, you might choose to identify one or two chapters that are of particular interest and focus on these. For example, couples may wish to concentrate their reflection on Chapter 4, focused on St Paul’s reflections on love, as a form of evening meditation. Otherwise, you might select the most interesting or challenging of the questions in this guide as a spur to reading and discussion.

- **For the fast-moving** or those accustomed to group discussion, you might like to consider three 2 hour gatherings, grouping chapters 1 to 3, 4 to 6, and 7 to 9 with pre-reading of upcoming chapters in between your gatherings.

- **For the leisurely or unhurried**, a group which would prefer to explore *Amoris Laetitia* steadily and in depth, you might prefer weekly 1 hour sessions covering a chapter per session, with the option of combining smaller chapters, and with pre-reading of the relevant chapter(s) prior to each gathering.

However you engage with the Apostolic Exhortation or configure your group, we wish you the grace of hearing God’s call to a deeper appreciation of the vital role of marriage and family in the world and the Church.

For further assistance in fostering the conversation about *Amoris Laetitia* in your group or community, or to provide feedback on your experience of unpacking Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation, please contact evangelisation@dbb.org.au
Introduction

Amoris Laetitia, 325 paragraphs in length, is distributed over nine chapters. Presented as an “aid to reflection, dialogue, and pastoral practice,” Amoris Laetitia is written “as a help and encouragement to families in their daily commitments and challenges” (AL 4). Thus, it is “an invitation to Christian families to value the gifts of marriage and the family” (AL 5) as well as a source of encouragement for families in need of support, compassion and understanding. In our pastoral response to families, Pope Francis encourages “continued open discussion of a number of doctrinal, moral, spiritual, and pastoral questions”, sensitivity to a variety of cultures, and faithfulness to the unity and truth of the Gospel as well as the concrete situations in which families live today (AL 2-3). Given the Apostolic Exhortation’s discussion of a wide variety of questions concerning marriage and family life, the Pope advises against a rushed reading of the text (AL 7).
Chapter One begins with an exploration of Scripture as it sheds light on marriage and family, drawing from both the Old and the New Testaments. The Bible is “full of families, births, love stories, and family crises” (AL 8). While the biblical texts do not exclude the “pain, evil, and violence that break up families and their communion of life and love” (AL 19), Scripture affirms the love and tenderness, the beauty and grandeur of marriage and family as a part of God’s plan for humanity. The Word of God is therefore not a “series of abstract ideas but rather a source of comfort and companionship for every family that experiences difficulties or suffering. For it shows them the goal of their journey” (AL 22).
1) Pope Francis begins his teaching on family and marriage by reflecting on Scripture, particularly Genesis, and the persons of the divine Trinity. In what ways does the personal story of love of a father and mother, and the fruitfulness of the human couple, reveal or image the mystery of God himself (AL 9-11)?

2) Reminding us that “Jesus himself was born into a modest family that soon had to flee to a foreign land” (AL 21, 30, 46), we are called to take into our concern families the world over who confront dislocation and dangerous circumstances. How does your own family, parish or school relate to the suffering of these families? How might you express support and solidarity with these families?

3) As Pope Francis notes, Scripture also attests to the presence of pain, evil and violence that impacts families and fractures their communion of life and love (AL 19-22). In what ways does Jesus himself respond to the difficulties of, and suffering in, family life?

4) What other causes of family suffering are named by Amoris Laetitia in this opening chapter? What response does Pope Francis call forth in us as people of faith (AL 27-28)?
The second chapter of *Amoris Laetitia* begins, “The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church” (*AL* 31). It is for this reason that Pope Francis maintains, “we can hardly stop advocating marriage simply to avoid countering contemporary sensibilities, or out of a desire to be fashionable or a sense of helplessness in the face of human and moral failings” (*AL* 35). While upholding the sanctity of married and family life as good news, Pope Francis recognises that it is not helpful to simply decry present-day evils or to “impose rules by sheer authority” (*AL* 35). Addressing the style or manner of the Church’s approach to evangelisation, the Pontiff advocates for a “more responsible and generous effort to present the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and the family” (*AL* 35). Too often we have proposed a far too abstract, almost artificial ideal of marriage or have otherwise been “on the defensive” at the expense of being “proactive in proposing ways of finding true happiness” (*AL* 36-38).

Pope Francis also considers at length the current situation of families. Citing a “culture of the ephemeral,” weakening of social bonds, lack of affordable housing, long workdays, the experience of migrants, and a myriad of other concerns, he provides a context for understanding the real challenges for marriage and family life in our time (*AL* 39-56). He speaks of the need to empower the lives of people living with a disability, laments the lack of respect for the elderly, and expresses concern for the welfare of children and various forms of violence against women (*AL* 54).
1) According to Amoris Laetitia, how does a culture or tendency towards extreme individualism undermine marriage and family life (AL 33-34; 39)?

2) “As Christians we can hardly stop advocating marriage simply to avoid countering contemporary sensibilities, or out of a desire to be fashionable or a sense of helplessness in the face of human and moral failings” (AL 35). How might we better promote marriage with conviction, generosity and realism in the midst of our contemporary culture (AL 35-37)?

3) Amoris Laetitia affirms the role of conscience in the discernment of moral matters, noting the formative nature of the Church’s mission, “We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them” (AL 37). Pope Francis recognises that the faithful, “very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations.” What are the essential elements in developing an informed conscience?

4) Pope Francis observes that Jesus “set forth a demanding ideal” on marriage and the family “yet never failed to show compassion and closeness to the frailty of individuals” (AL 38). How might we uphold the demanding ideal of marriage and also show mercy in the face of difficulties?
5) What cultural pressures and societal factors can disincline young people from starting a family according to Pope Francis (AL 40-44)? What other factors could also influence their decision making?


6) Amoris Laetitia affirms that “Families have the right to be able to count on adequate family policy on the part of public authorities in the juridical, economic, social and fiscal domain” (AL 44). Consider and discuss an issue or a policy that supports the full flourishing of family life and one that you consider to work against the best interests of families. How does policy on education, healthcare, transport, employment, disability and the environment, for instance, impact upon family life today?


7) Responses drawn from the consultation process prior to the synods on the family, “spoke of a great variety of situations and the new challenges that they pose . . . In many cases, parents come home exhausted, not wanting to talk, and many families no longer even share a common meal. Distractions abound, including an addiction to television. This makes it all the more difficult for parents to hand on the faith to their children. Other responses pointed to the effect of severe stress on families, who often seem more caught up with securing their future than with enjoying the present” (AL 50). Reflecting on your own family situation and those in your community, how do such factors impact upon relationships?
FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION: What is one thing you could do to better connect with others in your family and to be fully present to them?


8) In paragraphs 45-51, what situations of exploitation and injustice are named by Amoris Laetitia as causing great damage to family life and the vulnerable? How are these situations manifest in Australian society at this time?


“The strength of the family ‘lies in its capacity to love and to teach how to love. For all a family’s problems, it can always grow, beginning with love’”

– Amoris Laetitia 53
Chapter Three summarises the Church’s teaching on marriage and the family, with constant reference to Scripture, and presents the Holy Family of Nazareth as the model of family life with “its loving communion, its simple and austere beauty, [and] its sacred and inviolable character” (AL 66). Pope Francis highlights the consistent and esteemed place of the institution of marriage and the care and concern for the flourishing of family life. In affirming marriage as a sacrament, he notes the marital bond is not a mere “social convention, an empty ritual or merely an outward sign of a commitment” but a means of grace and permanent reminder of the love between Christ and the Church (AL 72). Pope Francis also notes the Church’s pastoral care for those living in imperfect situations and avows that the Gospel of the family “nourishes seeds that are still waiting to grow” (AL 76). Pope Francis acknowledges the complexity of various situations and the distress some people endure because of their situation (AL 79). The chapter then moves to underline the importance of couples being open to the prospect of new life and protecting that life, the raising and education of children as the God-given vocation of parents, and the way in which the experience of love in families is a perennial source of strength for the life of the Church (AL 80-88).
1) In the midst of the many challenges facing marriage and families today, Pope Francis affirms the beauty and light of the Gospel. In what ways does Jesus “restore and fulfil” the meaning of marriage? (AL 61-66). Also, what can we learn from the Holy Family of Nazareth?

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5) In encouraging parents to respond to God’s gift of marriage with “commitment, creativity, perseverance and daily effort,” Pope Francis offers sage advice to couples: “invok[e] the assistance of the Holy Spirit who consecrated [the] union” (AL 74). What are the sources of spiritual strength, consolation and vitality for your family relationships?


6) Pope Francis asks us to avoid judgement in relation to difficult or complex family situations. He acknowledges the “complexity of various situations” and is conscious of how “people experience and endure distress because of their condition” (AL 79). How might we promote the ideal and grandeur of marriage and family while avoiding any hint of judgment or rejection of others?


7) Amoris Laetitia also affirms the integral bond between marriage and family, spouses, and the creation and raising of children. How does Pope Francis invite spouses to nurture and protect new life (AL 80-83)? What does it mean for a child to be honoured as ‘gift’?


8) Pope Francis refers to the family as the “domestic church” (e.g. AL 87, 200). What does Pope Francis mean by “domestic church”? What qualities and dynamics come to mind as you reflect on this term?
This chapter begins with a beautiful exposition of Saint Paul’s hymn to love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (AL 90-119). Taking one line at a time from this well-known passage, Pope Francis applies the insights of Scripture to the concrete reality of marriage and family life. Patience, kindness, generosity, forgiveness and other aspects of love are covered in depth, providing sure counsel for strengthening marriages and deepening family life.

The reflection then moves to the treatment of conjugal love between husband and wife. Marked by “intimacy, warmth, stability and the resemblance born of a shared life,” marriages represent the greatest form of friendship and are endowed with passion that deepens this union (AL 120; 125). Pope Francis acknowledges marriage as being “a dynamic process [that] advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God,” growing and maturing over time (AL 122). In marriage, “the joy of love has to be cultivated,” reborn and renewed, as marriage is invariably a “mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures” (AL 126). Under the heading “Dialogue” the chapter turns to offer practical suggestions to foster authentic communication and connection (AL 136-141) before turning to address the scourge of violence and manipulation (AL 153-157). In the concluding section of the chapter, addressing “the transformation of love”, Pope Francis speaks to the change that time inevitably brings, including to our physical appearance and the intensity of sexual desire. However, he insists love and attraction need not fade through these later years and that the “pleasure of mutual belonging” endures in a shared life of intimacy which is “deeper than any emotion, feeling or state of mind” (AL 163).
FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION: With Scripture, Pope Francis affirms “even if I have faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:2; AL 89). Love is not only a gift but also a lifelong project, expressed through concrete and practical concern for another. In what ways do you express your love with those closest to you? In what ways do they express their love for you?

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1) This chapter focuses on the well-known, lyrical passage of Saint Paul which shares the features of true love:

“Love is patient,
love is kind; love is not jealous or boastful;
it is not arrogant or rude.
Love does not insist on its own way,
it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice at wrong,
but rejoices in the right.
Love bears all things,
believes all things,
hopes all things,
endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:4-7; AL 90).

Reflecting on Saint Paul’s hymn to love, prayerfully engage in an exercise of lectio divina (that is, a process of slow, prayerful reading and meditation on the text). What words or phrases speak to you as you slowly meditate on this text? What connections do you make to your own family life? To what change or conversion do these words of Scripture call you?

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2) In reading Pope Francis’ extended and beautiful reflection on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, what aspect of true love did you find most striking (e.g. patient, at the service of others, neither jealous or boastful, among others; AL 90-119)?

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3) How might these profound aspects or expressions of love in 1 Corinthians renew married life today? How might such qualities be best shared with couples preparing for marriage in the Christian community, including the parish?

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FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION: Strain and tensions within relationships are inevitable and can be painful, especially within our families. Pope Francis counsels we should “never let the day end without making peace within the family” (AL 104). What relationship in your life do you feel called to repair or restore? What are some practical steps that you might take to bring about healing in this relationship?

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4) Pope Francis observes that “Love does not have to be perfect for us to value it” (AL 113) and that marriage involves a constant process of growth, responding with continual love to God and our spouse (AL 134). How might this dynamic nature of marriage encourage couples in times of change and challenge?

5) “Saint Thomas Aquinas said that the word ‘joy’ refers to an expansion of the heart. Marital joy can be experienced even amid sorrow; it involves accepting that marriage is an inevitable mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures, but always on the path of friendship, which inspires married couples to care for one another” (AL 126). Discuss this description of joy. How does it provide hope and encouragement to married life?

6) In paragraphs 131-132, Pope Francis encourages young people to express their unconditional love through the gift of marriage. In what ways is marriage a gift and in what ways does marriage reveal, protect and nurture life in the other?
7) Pope Francis counsels that, “In the family, three words need to be used. I want to repeat this! Three words: ‘Please,’ ‘Thank you,’ ‘Sorry.’ Three essential words!” He continues, “The right words, spoken at the right time, daily protect and nurture love” (AL 133). Why does Pope Francis recommend these words as pivotal to family life, and what has been your experience in sharing and receiving these words in your own relationships?

8) Amoris Laetitia highlights the importance of dialogue for it both expresses and fosters love in marriage and family (AL 136-141). How can spouses be more present to one another, and also build dialogue with other families as a source of encouragement?

9) What role does Pope Francis assign the passions – desires, feelings and emotions – in marriage and family life (AL 143)? What insights on the sexual dimension of marriage are offered by Amoris Laetitia (AL 150-152)?

10) Pope Francis closes this chapter by describing the transformation of conjugal love as spouses change with age (AL 163). What new dimensions of love reveal themselves in each stage of life?
The fifth chapter of *Amoris Laetitia* addresses the fruitful and life-giving nature of love. Beginning with the welcoming of new life as a gift from God, *Amoris Laetitia* canvases the joys and difficulties of motherhood and affirms the right of each child to receive love from a mother and father for their integral and harmonious development (*AL* 166-177). The reflection moves to discussing the suffering of couples who are not able to have children and the generous act of love expressed by those who adopt and foster children (*AL* 178-184). The chapter also speaks of the wider family of “aunts and uncles, cousins and even neighbours,” embracing a broader community than the nuclear family to ward against individualism and the “creat[ion] of small nests of security” (*AL* 187). We all necessarily belong to one another. Pope Francis identifies the particular needs of the elderly who are sometimes forgotten or marginalised after having contributed so much to family life and society. He states with passion and conviction that a culture that has no room for the elderly “has a deadly virus” and is “torn from its roots” (*AL* 193). The chapter closes with the importance of the relationship between brothers and sisters for mutual support and socialisation, and encouraging aid by the whole community for families with particular needs (*AL* 194-197).
1) The Pontiff remarks “when speaking of children who come into the world, no sacrifice made by adults will be considered too costly or too great” (AL 166). In what ways are parents and families called to give of themselves in receiving the gift of a new child?

2) Why does Pope Francis maintain in paragraph 170 that a child is “not an accessory or a solution to some personal need”? What are the consequences of such a mentality?

3) In this chapter Amoris Laetitia affirms the right of every child to the love of a mother and a father for their integral and harmonious development. What are some of the shared and distinct gifts that a mother and father bring to a child’s life as described by Pope Francis (AL 172-177)?

4) How can adoption and foster care also express the fruitfulness of marriage (AL 178-180)?
5) What does *Amoris Laetitia* mean when it notes “God has given the family the job of ‘domesticating’ the world” (*AL* 183)?

6) In what ways does the Eucharist enrich and challenge the lives of our families (*AL* 186)?

7) *Amoris Laetitia* upholds the intrinsic dignity and importance of the elderly in family life, drawing upon the thought of St John Paul II (*AL* 191-193). In what ways do the elderly enrich family life, especially the lives of children?

8) Grandparents are increasingly a vital aid to families, providing assistance to their children and care of their grandchildren. Pope Francis speaks of the “charism of bridging the gap” (*AL* 192). Directly, he asserts, “A family that fails to respect and cherish its grandparents, who are its living memory, is already in decline” (*AL* 193). How have you benefited from the loving presence of parents and grandparents in family life? How might we better express our gratitude for the presence of the elderly in our families, parishes and communities?
9) In what practical ways can the generous heart of a “larger family” – the community of the extended family – provide love and support to children without parents, teenage mothers, single mothers, and others in need of wholesome love and intimate concern as envisaged by Pope Francis (AL 196-198)?
This chapter examines some key pastoral considerations in our response to families and commences by noting the evangelising witness that families, as the ‘domestic church’, are for others. It is the parish which is the main contributor to the pastoral care of families. Pope Francis emphasises the need for a renewal of the formation of priests, deacons, religious, catechists and lay pastoral workers to support this outreach (AL 202).

Marriage preparation is extensively discussed by Amoris Laetitia and some of the ingredients for effective evangelisation in this area are outlined. It highlights the need to help couples to not only meaningfully understand and engage with the marriage celebration and words of consent, but to then be able to embark on married life as a lifelong project (AL 205-216). Marriage is more than a wedding day. Couples should hear the proclamation of the kerygma, the core message of the Gospel, be schooled in realistic expectations to prepare them for committed relationships, including mature reflection on the inevitable problems that arise for married couples and family life so they can be ready to face them with understanding and generosity (AL 207-211). Pope Francis stresses that accompanying couples in the first years of married life is essential, while support is called for in the subsequent stages of married life beyond initial attraction. Family prayer and domestic rituals are important, and couples should be encouraged to be “generous in bestowing life,” and to recognise children as a “wonderful gift from God” (AL 222). Pope Francis joyfully adds that “young love needs to keep dancing towards the future with immense hope” (AL 219).
Crises do arise, however, and mark each family in some way. *Amoris Laetitia* emphasises the importance of couples facing crises together as these can be an “apprenticeship in growing closer” (*AL* 232). With assistance and the grace of forgiveness, many situations can be resolved and hasty decisions avoided. The accompaniment by experienced couples, participation in the Sunday Eucharist, devotional practices and the celebration of anniversaries are all resources for the journey of marriage (*AL* 223).

Accompaniment and pastoral care for those who are “separated, divorced or abandoned” is also a concern of Pope Francis, noting that no one should be made to feel excluded and each should participate as part of the ecclesial community as much as they are able (*AL* 242-243). A special mention is made of the suffering of children in these situations. Single parents should also receive encouragement and support (*AL* 252). *Amoris Laetitia* then addresses marriages between Catholics and those that belong to other Christian denominations, other religions, and the unbaptised (*AL* 247-249).

The chapter closes by reaffirming that the dignity of all people should be respected, regardless of sexual orientation, and that any form of discrimination or aggression is to be avoided (*AL* 250). The final paragraphs see Pope Francis offer a poignant reflection on the sting of death, calling for accompaniment of grieving families when a loved one dies and the offer of our presence and merciful love (*AL* 253-258).

1) Pope Francis underlines the need to enable Christian families to become active agents of evangelisation to other families. This calls forth a “missionary conversion by everyone in the Church” (*AL* 201). In what ways can we as Church better foster missionary disciples for this outreach?
2) “The main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the parish, which is the family of families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony” (AL 202). What is needed for the parish to grow in its pastoral care of families and to better proclaim the Gospel of the family? What role can priests, deacons, religious and lay people play in this proclamation? Can you appreciate your parish community as a family of families? What does it mean to be family in this context?

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3) What might belonging look like in your parish context? How might your parish ensure people living with an intellectual or physical disability belong in your community (AL 100, 202)?

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4) How can the local community of faith encourage and support young people to discover the dignity and beauty of marriage? What ‘ingredients’ are named by Pope Francis for a renewed process of marriage preparation (AL 206-211)?

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5) What does Pope Francis mean when he says “For every couple, marriage preparation begins at birth” (AL 208)? What do you consider to be the most important influences for a loving and faithful marital relationship?

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6) Pope Francis notes that “Nothing is more volatile, precarious and unpredictable than desire. The decision to marry should never be encouraged unless the couple has discerned deeper reasons that will ensure a genuine and stable commitment” (AL 209). What do you consider to be the deeper reasons for marriage? How do the motivations for marriage shape the health and vitality of married life?

7) Why does Amoris Laetitia underscore the need for pastoral accompaniment in the first years of married life? How might the Christian community support newly married couples to deepen their decision and commitment to “have, hold and love one another for life” (AL 217-222)?

8) In paragraphs 223-230, Amoris Laetitia suggests a variety of ways to accompany married couples and families in the ways of faith. What ideas and practices can your local parish take up to strengthen this spiritual and pastoral accompaniment? Who can be invited to be a part of this mission to families?
9) Pope Francis names baptism, first communion, funerals and weddings as opportunities to proclaim the beautiful ideal of Christian marriage (AL 230). In what ways could this be done in the local parish?

10) What does Pope Francis teach regarding the accompaniment of those who have experienced marital breakdown and divorce (AL 241-246)? How can the Church include and care for couples and families throughout and following this painful experience?

11) In Amoris Laetitia Pope Francis addresses families whose members include persons who experience same-sex attraction, as well as the situation of homosexual unions (AL 250-251). What does Pope Francis say, and what are the implications for the pastoral practice of our Church and parishes?

12) In view of the crises that can occur in marriages and family life (AL 231-238), and the grief experienced upon the death of a loved one (AL 253-258), how can we as Christians, and as a community of Christians, be encountered as a people of mercy?
This chapter looks at a number of aspects in the education of children. It begins by noting the need of parents to be vigilant and aware of what their children are exposed to but also warns parents not to become obsessive and controlling. The ethical formation of children is discussed and parents are called to play a major role in “fostering good habits and a natural inclination to goodness” (AL 264).

It is within the family that children first learn about human values and the “wise use of freedom” (AL 274). The family is also where children are socialised, learn to relate to and care for others, and it is here that they are educated in the sense that “the world and society are also our home” (AL 276). The need to school families in care for the environment is also noted, in continuity with the Pope’s encyclical *Laudato Si’*, and the chapter emphasises the need to manage sophisticated technology and entertainment media that can impinge on family life (AL 278). Importantly, Amoris Laetitia also emphasises the vital role that Catholic schools play in assisting parents in raising their children and in encouraging students to understand life as a call to serve God (AL 279).
Pope Francis discusses the need for sex education, especially in a time when sexuality is often trivialised (AL 280-286). He advocates an “education for love, for mutual self-giving” (AL 280) to overcome self-centredness and self-absorption and in order to prepare young people for a “great and generous love” (AL 284).

The chapter closes with the challenge of passing on the faith to children, noting parents as the evangelisers of their own family (AL 287-290). Pope Francis acknowledges that education in the faith has to adapt to each child and it is important that “spiritual experience is not imposed but freely proposed” (AL 288). The family is ultimately an agent of evangelisation through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and “its legacy of varied forms of witness”, including solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, protection of creation, promotion of the common good, and through its practice of works of mercy (AL 290).

1) What kinds of formation are advocated by Pope Francis for the integral growth and education of children (AL 259-290)?

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2) How might parents provide their children with an “education in hope” (AL 275)?

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3) What does Pope Francis make of the role of technology and entertainment media in family life (AL 278)?

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4) What are the principles of sex education promoted by Amoris Laetitia and how are these related to the total commitment of marriage (AL 280-286)?

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5) Pope Francis affirms the primary gift and responsibility of parents to raise their children in the faith (AL 287-290). What does this responsibility demand of parents and how can the community of faith better support this task?

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This chapter speaks to those marital circumstances that do not yet, or no longer, correspond to the Church's teaching on marriage, as a sacramental union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other in a free, faithful and exclusive love, and are open to the transmission of life.

Pope Francis is eager to underline that the Church “does not disregard the constructive elements” in these situations (AL 292) and with regard to non-sacramental unions respects the “signs of love which in some way reflect God’s own love” (AL 294). Pope Francis wishes the Church to offer “pastoral care that is merciful and helpful” (AL 293) beginning with pastoral dialogue between couples and pastors which can lead to a greater openness to the fullness of marriage. He advocates for a gradualness of approach, recognising that people progress through different stages of growth (AL 293-295).

Avoiding judgement is clearly emphasised in Amoris Laetitia, with a need to take into account the complexity of people's concrete situations (AL 296). In the case of the baptised who are divorced and civilly remarried, Pope Francis calls for their greater integration into Christian communities and participation in a variety of ways so as to be able to “live and grow in the Church” while avoiding any occasion of scandal (AL 299). Whatever the circumstance, there is a place for everyone to be touched by God's mercy as “no one can be condemned for ever” and all should be given the opportunity to listen to the Gospel message and its call to conversion (AL 297).
It is acknowledged that *Amoris Laetitia* cannot provide a new set of rules for all situations, but rather it provides encouragement for “a responsible personal and pastoral discernment” (*AL* 300) that can guide people to be more aware of their situation and what steps can be taken to move towards a fuller participation in the life of the Church and a more perfect response to God’s will. It notes that there can be circumstances that mitigate moral responsibility in “irregular situations”, including ignorance, duress, fear, affective immaturity or acquired habit (*AL* 302). Thus the Pontiff contends “while upholding a general rule, it is necessary to recognise that responsibility with respect to certain actions or decisions is not the same in all cases” (*AL* 302). An enlightened conscience is identified as integral to the dynamics of pastoral discernment and can guide the most generous response that can be given to God in a situation while not yet fully the objective ideal (*AL* 303).

Ultimately, this chapter affirms the full ideal of marriage, “God’s plan in all its grandeur” (*AL* 307) as well as the need to accompany couples in other circumstances with mercy and patience, to “enter into the reality of other people’s lives and to know the power of tenderness” (*AL* 308). This is the logic of pastoral mercy, which makes “a place for everyone, with all their problems” (*AL* 309-310).

1) How is the Church called by Pope Francis to respond to those who show signs of a wounded and troubled love (*AL* 291)?

2) What do you understand by the term “gradualness in pastoral care” as raised by Pope Francis (*AL* 293)?
3) While upholding the truth and beauty of lifelong Christian marriage, Pope Francis recognises the need to respond pastorally and with hope to situations that do not yet, or no longer, correspond to the Church’s teaching on marriage. What situations does Pope Francis bring to our attention (AL 292-300)?

4) What processes of discernment and accompaniment does Pope Francis propose to respond faithfully and pastorally to these situations (AL 301-306)?

5) What role does Pope Francis ultimately assign to mercy in the care and support of the immense variety of concrete family situations that we encounter today (AL 307-312)?
This final chapter promotes familial spirituality and reminds us that “the Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes” (AL 315). If a family is centred on Christ, “he will unify and illumine its entire life” and his closeness will make it possible for them to surmount pain and difficulty (AL 317). Pope Francis affirms the role of family prayer and the Eucharist in strengthening this paschal faith (AL 318). In a beautiful way, Pope Francis attests to the faithfulness of the couple in marriage as a mirror of God’s own faithfulness and that “each spouse is for the other a sign and instrument of the closeness of the Lord” (AL 319).

Pope Francis speaks with a rich metaphor for the spiritual and social significance of the family, declaring “the family has always been the nearest hospital” (AL 321) where life is bestowed and cared for. We are called to see Christ in our loved ones, to give them our complete attention and act towards them with tenderness. Amoris Laetitia concludes with a message of hope for all families: “What we have been promised is greater than we can imagine. May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us” (AL 325).
1) The concluding chapter of *Amoris Laetitia* recommends itself for spiritual reading and reflection on married and family life. What was, for you, most striking about this final chapter?

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2) How does Pope Francis’ teaching on marriage and family life speak to your own life, to your community of faith and to others in the ‘greater family’ of your neighbourhood?

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3) “All of us are called to keep striving towards something greater than ourselves and our families, and every family must feel this constant impulse. Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together” (*AL* 325). How might your family grow in love and with others in the light of *Amoris Laetitia*?

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4) Having now read *Amoris Laetitia*, what word or phrase spoke to you most profoundly? How is this word or phrase calling you to deeper love and life within your marriage, family, parish and community life?

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Say grace before meals, gathering together at the table for family meals, and share thanks for the events and blessings of the day.

Make prayer a part of everyday family life in some of the following ways:

- Create a sacred space in your home. Children can be invited to create and change this space with the cycle of the liturgical seasons.
- Encourage family members to be reflective about their day using prayers such as the Ignatian Examen which invites us to reflect on the joys and challenges of the day and to move forward in faith to the next day. This might be part of a bedtime ritual.
- Read Scripture with your family. Adults and older children may use techniques such as Lectio Divina while younger children enjoy the many stories of Scripture and can be encouraged to reflect on the meaning of events and lives contained within the books of the Bible.
- Encourage children to become familiar with and to pray the prayers of the Church.
- Create and regularly recite a family prayer of your own and also invite family members to share their prayer intentions.

Participate in the Mass as a family and talk about the Mass of the day, including the readings and homily, reflecting on the connections between the Gospel and your personal lives.

Plan to spend quality time together as a family. Perhaps designate a period of time in the week as special family time during which a common activity takes precedence over individual schedules. The possibilities are endless e.g. sharing a family movie, a walk in the neighbourhood, a board game, etc.

Seek to organise a family holiday or a small getaway during which your family retreats from the everyday and spends quality time together without the weight of routine and expectation.

Together as a family decide upon opportunities to contribute to the wider community and especially to people who are marginalised through illness, age, disability, poverty and other circumstances. As we build relationships with others, family relationships are also strengthened. Look for ways to act in both local and global contexts (e.g. www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au offers an extensive list of local opportunities for outreach to others).

Renew your intimacy as a couple, enjoying time for one-on-one conversation, outings and special meals. Put away electronic devices and be fully present to one another.

Visit the Life, Marriage and Family page of the Diocese of Broken Bay website www.dbb.org.au/family for further practical ideas to enrich and strengthen the life of your family.
WAYS OF Promoting Married and Family Life in Our Parishes

Heart Parishes can encourage and organise small group gatherings to read *Amoris Laetitia* using this discussion booklet as a guide

Parishes can include various quotes from Pope Francis’ vision of marriage and family in parish bulletins, in PowerPoint slides preceding and following Mass, and in other resources (see pages 43-46 within this guide or go to www.dbb.org.au/family for a selection of quotes for your use)

Parishes can provide opportunities for catechesis on the family, drawing on the experience and involvement of committed couples and families in the community, and make available resources that support couples and family life (e.g. visit www.dbb.org.au/family and www.csme.catholic.org.au).

Through personal invitation and accompaniment, parishes can form a ‘Prayer and Care Group’ to offer support and understanding to individuals hurting because of difficult domestic situations, family grief, isolation and loneliness, or forms of poverty or sickness. Pastoral care can take the shape of listening to others’ concerns, making appropriate referrals when needed, cooking and sharing meals, and assisting others in domestic duties as a sign of solidarity and accompaniment

Parishes can include in their ‘Prayer of the Faithful’ intentions dedicated to the flourishing of marriage and family life

Parishes can sponsor marriage enrichment retreats for spouses to rededicate themselves to the sacredness and inviolability of their marriage (e.g. FOCUS & Partners for Life at http://www.catholiccaredbb.org.au or learning about SmartLoving courses at www.smartloving.org)

Hold an annual family Mass followed by a gathering or social picnic to encourage a sense of parish as a ‘family of families’, engaging this liturgy to especially welcome and engage new families in the life of the worshipping community

Make available in your parish the ‘Prayer to the Holy Family’ which closes the text of *Amoris Laetitia*. Recite the prayer regularly as a parish community in the context of liturgy, and encourage its use in the home to supplement family prayer (available at the back of this guide and at www.dbb.org.au/family)

Encourage and invite young families and social groups to meet in parish facilities to strengthen the wider sense of family, such as youth groups, playgroups, young mum support groups, and seniors groups. In these ways the parish can become a hub for family activity and community belonging beyond the context of Mass

Parishes can form or revive a parish hospitality ministry that recognises and welcomes families and individuals as valued members of the parish community

At appropriate times such as liturgies and events in the life of the parish, call for important milestones, birthdays, anniversaries and achievements of the community to be named, acknowledged and celebrated
WAYS OF Promoting Married and Family Life in Our Schools

Staff can be encouraged to engage in professional learning about *Amoris Laetitia*, reflecting about how the Apostolic Exhortation relates to the context of families in our schools (the full text of *Amoris Laetitia* can be found at www.dbb.org.au/family). Teachers may spend time developing an understanding of family issues and special needs, thereby fostering an appreciation of appropriate pastoral responses to changing circumstances.

Schools may choose to host parent formation sessions which are led by diocesan or local school staff, focused on families and faith, the education of children in virtues, and other areas of integral development named by Pope Francis in the Apostolic Exhortation.

Include snippets of *Amoris Laetitia* in school bulletins to emphasise to parents and the wider community the Church’s love and concern for all families, and the call for understanding and support for families and individuals in difficult situations. (see pages 43-46 within this guide or go to www.dbb.org.au/family)

School liturgies may encourage family participation and engagement, including family-friendly homilies and the acknowledgment of families in the wider prayer life of the school, including novenas for family members, the sick or those with particular needs.

Invite the participation of parents, grandparents and other significant people in children’s lives in the life of the school, from volunteering to attendance at assemblies, plays, and sporting events.

Invite school families to participate in social justice activities and initiatives that engage the ‘wider family’ as promoted by Pope Francis.

Create parent prayer groups and encourage parents to lead these sessions with supportive resources (e.g. Lenten and Advent groups as well as small groups of faith at other times).

Schools can consider family-based activities including “Dads’ and Kids’ Camps”, “Dads in the Morning”, and “Coffee and Conversation” as a part of school life.

Integrate prayer and liturgy as an important part of Mothers’ Day, Fathers’ Day and Grandparents’ and Friends’ Day celebrations in school.

With the input of students, a class ‘family prayer kit’ can be developed for students to take home and use with family members, connecting the Gospel with their everyday lives and relationships.
Sharing the Joy of Love

Below are select excerpts from Amoris Laetitia which express the beauty of the Church’s teaching on married and family love. Parishes, schools and other groups may like to use these excerpts in bulletins, newsletters and in other ways to share Pope Francis’ teaching on the family and also invite a wide reading of Amoris Laetitia. These are also available online, (in Word) at www.dbb.org.au/family

“… the couple’s fruitful relationship becomes an image for understanding and describing the mystery of God himself, for in the Christian vision of the Trinity, God is contemplated as Father, Son and Spirit of love. The triune God is a communion of love, and the family is its living reflection” (AL 11)

“Begetting and raising children, for its part, mirrors God’s creative work. The family is called to join in daily prayer, to read the word of God and to share in Eucharistic communion, and thus to grow in love and become ever more fully a temple in which the Spirit dwells” (AL 29)

“Like Mary, [families] they are asked to face their family’s challenges with courage and serenity, in good times and bad, and to keep in their heart the great things which God has done (cf. Lk 2:19, 51). The treasury of Mary’s heart also contains the experiences of every family, which she cherishes” (AL 30)

“Families who lovingly accept the difficult trial of a child with special needs are greatly to be admired. They render the Church and society an invaluable witness of faithfulness to the gift of life” (AL 47)

“The strength of the family ‘lies in its capacity to love and to teach how to love. For all a family’s problems, it can always grow, beginning with love’” (AL 53)

“The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear, and within families there is a growing reciprocity” (AL 54)

“The Synod’s reflections show us that there is no stereo-type of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems… In every situation that presents itself, ‘the Church is conscious of the need to offer a word of truth and hope’” (AL 57)

“The indissolubility of marriage… should not be viewed as a ‘yoke’ imposed on humanity, but as a ‘gift’ granted to those who are joined in marriage… God’s indulgent love always accompanies our human journey; through grace, it heals and transforms hardened hearts” (AL 62)
“From the outset, love refuses every impulse to close in on itself; it is open to a fruitfulness that draws it beyond itself” (AL 80)

“The Church is a family of families, constantly enriched by the lives of all those domestic churches” (AL 87)

“But do not let the day end without making peace in your family. Our first reaction when we are annoyed should be one of heartfelt blessing, asking God to bless, free and heal that person” (AL 104)

“Love does not have to be perfect for us to value it. The other person loves me as best they can, with all their limits, but the fact that love is imperfect does not mean that it is untrue or unreal. It is real, albeit limited and earthly” (AL 113)

“Marriage is the icon of God’s love for us” (AL 121)

“Saint Thomas Aquinas said that the word ‘joy’ refers to an expansion of the heart. Marital joy can be experienced even amid sorrow; it involves accepting that marriage is an inevitable mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures, but always on the path of friendship, which inspires married couples to care for one another: ‘they help and serve each other’” (AL 126)

“In the family, ‘three words need to be used. I want to repeat this! Three words: ‘Please’, ‘Thank you’, ‘Sorry’. Three essential words!’… The right words, spoken at the right time, daily protect and nurture love” (AL 133)

“Develop the habit of giving real importance to the other person. This means appreciating them and recognising their right to exist, to think as they do and to be happy” (AL 138)

“For God allows parents to choose the name by which he himself will call their child for all eternity” (AL 166)

“With great affection I urge all future mothers: keep happy and let nothing rob you of the interior joy of motherhood. Your child deserves your happiness. Don’t let fears, worries, other people’s comments or problems lessen your joy at being God’s means of bringing a new life to the world. Prepare yourself for the birth of your child, but without obsessing, and join in Mary’s song of joy: ‘My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant’ (Lk 1:46-48)” (AL 171)

“Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith itself would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth… Dear mothers: thank you! Thank you for what you are in your family and for what you give to the Church and the world” (AL 174)

“We must reawaken the collective sense of gratitude, of appreciation, of hospitality, which makes the elderly feel like a living part of the community” (AL 191)
“For every couple, marriage preparation begins at birth. What they received from their family should prepare them to know themselves and to make a full and definitive commitment. Those best prepared for marriage are probably those who learned what Christian marriage is from their own parents, who chose each other unconditionally and daily renew this decision” (AL 208)

“Young love needs to keep dancing towards the future with immense hope” (AL 219)

“In the life of married couples, even at difficult moments, one person can always surprise the other, and new doors can open for their relationship, as if they were meeting for the first time” (AL 221)

“Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the fact that children are a wonderful gift from God and a joy for parents and the Church. Through them, the Lord renews the world” (AL 222)

“Communication is an art learned in moments of peace in order to be practised in moments of difficulty” (AL 234)

“It is important that the divorced who have entered a new union should be made to feel part of the Church. ‘They are not excommunicated’ and they should not be treated as such, since they remain part of the ecclesial community. These situations ‘require careful discernment and respectful accompaniment. Language or conduct that might lead them to feel discriminated against should be avoided, and they should be encouraged to participate in the life of the community’” (AL 243)

“We would like before all else to reaffirm that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, while ‘every sign of unjust discrimination’ is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression and violence” (AL 250)

“Whatever the cause, single parents must receive encouragement and support from other families in the Christian community, and from the parish’s pastoral outreach” (AL 252)

“The questions I would put to parents are these: ‘Do we seek to understand ‘where’ our children really are in their journey? Where is their soul, do we really know? And above all, do we want to know?’” (AL 261)

“The family is the primary setting for socialisation, since it is where we first learn to relate to others, to listen and share, to be patient and show respect, to help one another and live as one” (AL 276)

“Faith is God’s gift, received in baptism, and not our own work, yet parents are the means that God uses for it to grow and develop” (AL 287)

“Christian marriage, as a reflection of the union between Christ and his Church, is fully realised in the union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other in a free, faithful and exclusive love, who belong to each other until death and are open to the
transmission of life, and are consecrated by the sacrament, which grants them the grace to become a domestic church and a leaven of new life for society. Some forms of union radically contradict this ideal, while others realise it in at least a partial and analogous way. The Synod Fathers stated that the Church does not disregard the constructive elements in those situations which do not yet or no longer correspond to her teaching on marriage” (AL 292)

“For the Church’s pastors are not only responsible for promoting Christian marriage, but also the ‘pastoral discernment of the situations of a great many who no longer live this reality. Entering into pastoral dialogue with these persons is needed to distinguish elements in their lives that can lead to a greater openness to the Gospel of marriage in its fullness’” (AL 293)

“The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone for ever; it is to pour out the balm of God’s mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart… For true charity is always unmerited, unconditional and gratuitous. Consequently, there is a need ‘to avoid judgements which do not take into account the complexity of various situations’” (AL 296)

“… to enter into the reality of other people’s lives and to know the power of tenderness. Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated” (AL 308)

“I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness, a Mother who, while clearly expressing her objective teaching, ‘always does what good she can, even if in the process, her shoes get soiled by the mud of the street’” (AL 308)

“The Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes” (AL 315)

“Christian couples are, for each other, for their children and for their relatives, cooperators of grace and witnesses of the faith. God calls them to bestow life and to care for life. For this reason the family has always been the nearest ‘hospital’” (AL 321)

“to want to form a family is to resolve to be a part of God’s dream, to choose to dream with him, to want to build with him, to join him in this saga of building a world where no one will feel alone” (AL 321)

“All of us are called to keep striving towards something greater than ourselves and our families, and every family must feel this constant impulse. Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together. What we have been promised is greater than we can imagine. May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us” (AL 325)
Helpful links for learning and living *Amoris Laetitia*

**http://www.dbb.org.au/family** The website of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay includes a link to the full text of *Amoris Laetitia* as well as downloadable quotes from the Apostolic Exhortation for use in parish bulletins and newsletters. It also contains helpful links to articles and resources in support of marriage and family life, such as information on natural family planning, men’s ministry, seniors’ ministry, and disability.

**http://www.catholiccareddb.org.au** CatholicCare is the official social services agency of the Catholic Church of Sydney and a member of Catholic Social Services Australia providing support for the entire community. CatholicCare in the Diocese of Broken Bay provides a wide range of programs, such as counselling, marriage preparation, disability services and many more, to assist children, young people, individuals and families in Sydney's North and on the NSW Central Coast. This webpage provides links to the services offered.

**http://www.acmfc.org.au** The Australian Catholic Marriage and Family Council (ACMFC) is an Advisory Body directly responsible to the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life. This webpage offers resource kits and answers to frequently asked questions about marriage in the Church.

**http://www.nacf.info** The National Association of Catholic Families are ordinary families seeking to provide moral, spiritual and social support in a culture that is increasingly challenging for Christian values. The Association holds simple ‘family days’ where informative talks, prayer and social gatherings are held, and families are consecrated to the Blessed Virgin in the presence of the icon of the Holy Family.

**http://www.loyolapress.com/living-as-a-catholic-family.htm** This webpage offers free and fun ideas for family living, including family activities, fun around the preparation and sharing of meals, and engaging ways to talk to children about faith.

**http://youngcatholicmums.com** The aim of this website is to bring together Catholic mums of Australia with young families to share knowledge and personal experiences, foster supportive friendships, and create a space where information about family life and faith can be shared and affirmed. It also offers tips and recipes for busy parents.

**http://cathfamily.org** This website is dedicated to assisting families in making the home the living heart of the Church. As a Church, we have benefited over the centuries from simple home-based rituals to provide practical faith experiences for children. This site aims to provide families innovative and contemporary resources to continue this tradition.

**https://smartloving.org** SmartLoving is a series of resources supporting couples in their commitment life-cycle. A work of the Marriage Resource Centre (www.marriageresourcecentre.org), the series honours and celebrates the unique strengths of both men and women, allowing each partner to engage freely and confidently. SmartLoving helps participants emerge stronger, as a couple, and as individuals.

**https://www.engagedencounter.org.au** Catholic Engaged Encounter is a marriage preparation course to build the vital skills for a lifelong marriage; skills such as keeping romance alive, relationship skills, conflict management, communication skills, and decision making. This website provides information and dates for weekend programs.

For Church documents concerning the family, please visit the following website: **http://www.vatican.va/themes/famiglia_test/santopadre_en.htm**
Prayer to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendour of true love; to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalised find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
Graciously hear our prayer.
Amen.

Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

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