



Family Dynamics

Tips & Tools

Created by an IOCC Frontliner Advisory Group comprised of Orthodox clergy, licensed clinicians and counselors.

FAMILY FOCUSED

1. Make a personal inventory of the positive reality which your family's impact has had on the life of your parish. This will be different for every family, but actually sitting down one evening with your family and discussing the positive things you have brought to the community may help bring to light ways that the family can continue to use those positive gifts more for the glory of God
2. Encourage one another to acknowledge individually how they contribute to making your home a better place and how they can do so in the future. This exercise can open huge doors to greater affection and trust in your home!
3. Encourage each family member to participate in the healthy hobbies, interests, or stress relievers which give them joy and release.
4. Seek out fun or even new experiences, together as a family, regularly. Find activities that you all enjoy together. Don't be discouraged when trying something new which doesn't work out, but rather learn from the experiences together and continue to seek out opportunities to laugh and experience fun together, as often as is reasonable.
5. Encourage and learn to share expectations with one another openly and without attack about the things each family member can do to insure that the home is safe and in good order.

Youth and Young Adults Focused



Seek Out Authentic Connections: Find ways to connect authentically with resources and individuals; many times we forget it can be done right at home.



Seek Out Inspiration: Be influenced by people who inspire you, whether professionally or through character; people such as saints, church fathers, or historical figures. Now more than ever, saints' stories can come alive for all of us; we are able to understand suffering on a group level when it used to just be individually – this may be new for some of us.



Seek Out Authentic Connections x2: This can't be more important! It is easy to be superficial and develop surface level relationships through social media. Remember to continue to see each other (when appropriate) and build authentic connections together.



Be Discerning About Social Media: Technology and social media can pull us in many directions with different ideologies BUT there are great, wholesome Christian social media accounts. Discern what to consume virtually.



Set Boundaries: Our world is always in the palm of our hands with digital access – which can be really tricky. Create a routine that allows you to separate school and personal; or work and personal. It can be healthy to create a distinction between the two!

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Parent/Spouse Focused



God the Father is the ultimate Good parent. The world has set us up to believe that we are in control and must map out our entire life – but in “God’s Will” tradition, we lean on God and trust that we are His and ultimately He will bring us home if we allow Him.



Name your struggles, strengths, weaknesses, and grace: as a family, work on naming what parts of the family are working well and not so well, prior to a crisis. This will allow you to discern what new damages are and what were preexisting. You will also be able to see the new strengths that have come out of the storm. If you recognize unhealthy dynamics, start with yourself when addressing them. If you become healthier, by nature, the rest of the “body” or family will also become healthier. Some issues may be things you need to work alone on; some may be things that the whole family needs to work on.



We all need each other. St. John Chrysostom teaches “the poor person exists for your salvation; to be able to give and love that person with mercy.” Go to your spiritual family: the Holy Trinity, the Theotokos, the saints. Learn about their seasons of struggle and ask them for help and intercession. You may want to seek a spiritual Father or Mother. Glorify God by seeking out help both inside and outside the Church.



God is calling your family to holiness: recognize that suffering is part of life and can be redemptive. Have these conversations with your family. We are called to model Christ’s mercy, love, and forgiveness to the world.



Share the love: Practice almsgiving as a family. Offer loving service for others to witness your gratitude to God as this can serve as joyful asceticism for your family.