

# Family Page

## Background Reflection

What does it mean to be thankful? This question lies at the heart of our happiness. In his Letter to the Philippians, written while he was in prison, Saint Paul tells us that we should be thankful for the love of God within us—the gift of God’s grace.

Paul tells us to pray with a thankful heart, and not to worry, because we have what we need in God. Knowing the difference between what we need and what we want is key to being centered in God’s love.

We offer our prayer of thanksgiving to God through the celebration of Mass. The word *Eucharist* means “thanksgiving.” In celebrating the Eucharist, we express our gratitude for and faith in the glory of God. The next time you join in the Eucharist, approach the celebration with a thankful heart for the grace of God in you.

## Family Activities

- Give each member of your family a small notebook to use as a gratitude journal. Each evening, sit down together as a family and invite each member to write down three things he or she has been grateful for during that day. Then invite family members to share their lists as they feel comfortable.
- Read together the Featured Story on page 1858 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (Philippians 4:4–7). Talk about ways you use words and actions in your family to say thank you.
- Watch the video “(I’ve Got the Joy) Down in My Heart in ASL & CC by Rock Church Deaf Ministry” (YouTube, 3:49) together. See if you and your child can learn the signs for joy, Jesus, and heart. Tell your child that the joy of God’s love goes deeper than just what we feel at a given moment. The joy of God becomes part of who we are and how we live.

## People of Faith

### Saint John Bosco (1815–1888)

Father John Bosco was deeply moved by the struggles of young boys who lived on the streets. He drew them to God with his joy and love of play, but he also helped them in practical ways. He gave them a home, taught them, and prepared them to live good and honest lives. Saint John Bosco’s feast day is January 31.

## Prayer

*Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.*

Loving God, we are so thankful for all the good things we have in our lives. May we always be aware of the many gifts we have been given, both big and small. Amen.

