

Grades 6-8/October 20

Grades 1-5, 9-11/October 27

The theme for this home session is praying for our deceased loved ones.

The materials in this session will help your family prepare for our cemetery prayer on Wednesday, November 3rd and to celebrate the month dedicated to the holy souls within your homes.

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

November is the month dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory

- “Normally we remember the anniversaries of the death of people we knew and loved. We might bring flowers or plants to their graves as signs of our continuing love and prayers. We often save pictures and mementos of the loved ones. Somehow, we know that death can separate us only for a while.



On the feast of All Souls (November 2nd)

and throughout the entire month of November, we recall our deceased relatives, friends, and all the faithful departed who may yet be waiting for the full joy of heaven. Christians have always prayed for those who have died. Anniversaries of death have been regarded as “birthday” to new life. In the eleventh century, Saint Odilo, who was an abbot at Cluny, required that his monasteries pray for all the dead on the day after All Saints. Soon this custom spread.” (From Saints and Feast Days by the Sisters of Notre Dame)

- Praying for the dead is a spiritual work of mercy.
- November 1-8 is the Octave of All Saints Day

It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins. (II Maccabees 12:46)

To learn more:

1. Month of the Souls in Purgatory (for adults and older students) https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/overviews/months/11_1.cfm
2. Praying for the others (for adults and teens) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvFiTBAL7AY>
3. Video by Father Mike Schmitz about purgatory (for adults and teens) <https://catholic-link.org/purgatory-fr-mike-schmitz-explains/>
4. About purgatory for children <https://www.teachingcatholickids.com/the-holy-souls-in-purgatory-monthly-devotion-for-november/>

Family project

Each family is being asked to create a luminary with the names of people who have died written on the brown lunch bag that is being provided. The people you wish to remember can be family, friends, people you have heard about who have died, etc. You will bring this luminary with you on Wednesday, November 3rd.

What is a luminary? A luminaria (luminary) is a small paper lantern.

Learn more:

- “Fire has always been a symbol of immortality, and the immortality of the soul was symbolized by lighting fires during the night of All Souls.” From <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/activities/view.cfm?id=902>
- “Throughout history the word “light” has been used to portray goodness, charity, kindness, and salvation. Light, after all, removes darkness—whether literally or metaphorically. People say, “She lit up the room when she entered,” or “He is the light of my life.” We understand the significance of those phrases. During the Christmas season—when the amount of actual daylight is at its most limited—we are most fully aware that Christ is the light of the world. It seems rather fitting that in the long hours without light that we contemplate how He dispels the darkness in our lives. We are able to become keenly aware that He conquers the shadows that sometimes seem to overtake us. During the Christmas season we most fully realize that through the light of Christ we find our way to the Father. A beautiful tradition during Christmastime is to light luminaries. The history behind luminaries is rich and beautiful — and varied. Shepherds marked the way to the Christ child with small fires. Centuries later, the Mexican people would gather around celebratory fires in the town square to sing and give thanks for the Lord’s birth. Elsewhere, small fires would mark the route to church for midnight Mass. Christmas is the time to remember that, in some way, we each are called to be a light to another sojourner—to be a luminary.” By Cheryl Dickow, Dec 30, 2013 <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/column/52772/luminaries>

Steps to creating this luminary:

1. Begin by praying The Our Father as a family.
2. Share the information about All Souls Day from above as a starting point.
3. Use the information from the videos and articles provided to discuss purgatory and why we pray for the dead with your children.
4. Discuss who your family would like to remember in this prayer activity.
5. Write the names on the brown paper lunch bag.
6. Decorate the bag.

Bring your finished luminary with you to the prayer service on Wednesday, November 3rd. We will have sand and candles available for you to complete the luminary when you arrive. A grade 11 student will lead you in prayer and help you place your luminary in the cemetery.

Photo examples

