

Thank God for fathers

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the gift of our fathers and those who have been father-figures to us. We thank you for the life and love they have brought to our world.

May we raise our boys to use their masculine qualities for the glory and honour of your name. Amen.

At your next family gathering...

- > Listen to the stories of the fathers in your midst – their growing up years, early work years, sporting stories, their first parish or faith memory, what they did on Sundays as boys ... Perhaps reminisce over old photographs.
- > Get together with your siblings and gift your Dad with a This is Your Life presentation, full of memories of family events and your interpretation of stories of your Dad's youth
- > Pray the Our Father with a little extra care.

Gifts for Father's Day (or any time)

- > Invite your Dad out for the day doing something that he'd like to do, e.g., a football game or fishing.
- > Write down ten positive childhood memories of your Dad. Present the list to him.
- > Get into cheer-leading mode. Make up a family 'war-cry' that champions your Dad's best qualities.
- > Write a special prayer for your Dad and pray it often.



Table topics

- > My earliest / funniest / most cherished memory of my Dad is...
- > How did my Dad react when I was born?
- > What memories of my early childhood has Dad shared with me?
- > One thing I appreciate about my Dad is ...
- > One way my Dad has influenced my faith is ...

Acknowledgements

The reflections and ideas in this leaflet are contributed by families associated with the work of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life, The Story Source and the Ministry of Family Development Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn.

The Story Source
PO Box 1106
Maroubra, NSW 2035



Thinking About Fatherhood

The gift of fathers in the human mystery of love and life

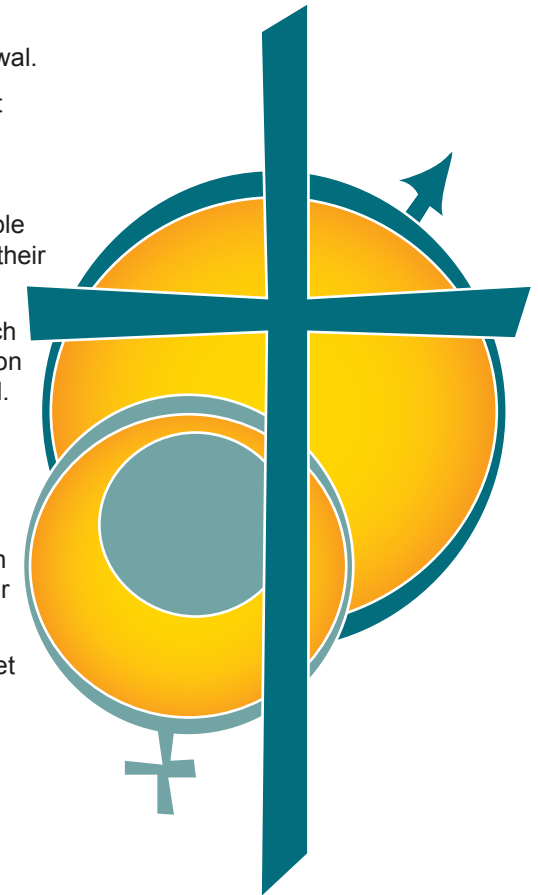
Fatherhood is undergoing a renewal.

Whereas once we presumed a lot of things about fatherhood and perhaps overlooked its need for closer attention, today there is a growing interest in the irreplaceable contribution men offer families in their role as father.

This renewal is something in which we can all take part by reflecting on our own experience of fatherhood.

Our reflections will no doubt be a mixed bag: joyful for many, painful for some, a mix of positive and negative emotions for most. Healing and forgiveness, as much as celebration, must be part of our reflections.

The stories and ideas in this leaflet are offered as a stimulus to your own journey as you think about fatherhood.



So God Created man in his image... male and female he created them

Father facts & Reflections

“My Dad would talk to us around the dinner table, sharing his life experience, his understanding of people, his views and wisdom. Dad was never in a hurry to conclude the meal.”

Sociological research confirms that the self-esteem of children is greater when their fathers are involved in their formation.

“The first thing I would say about Dad is that he loved Mum. He just adored her. This has taught me that, first and foremost, a father is a lover.”

The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. Where husband and wife are estranged, the most important thing a father can do for his children is to forgive their mother, and to seek her forgiveness.

“My parents have divorced, but it has not compromised my Dad’s love for me. I think Dad realises he made mistakes and is able to understand my own mistakes. Our relationship has grown stronger. Now we can talk about anything.”

The wellbeing of young people correlates with their freedom to confide in their fathers.

In families affected by divorce, non-resident fathers continue to be vitally important for the general development of their children.

“When I was growing up, Dad would pray the family rosary and grace before meals each day with us. Sunday Mass, confession, prayer and the sacraments were built into our lifestyle, largely through Dad’s commitment to God and Church.”

Fathers have a particular influence on the formation of their child’s image of God, not only in childhood, but throughout life.

“When Dad had a heart attack at age sixty, everybody said things like “He works too hard” or “Stress brought it on.” It occurred to me that I had never thanked Dad for working so hard for me. When I was growing up, his work and all the security and education it provided for the whole family was just something I took for granted.”



Things we do with Dad

Family rituals - the things families do together that express their love - are one way to express the gift of fatherhood

“On Saturdays my father would come to my soccer games. It was great, although sometimes it was embarrassing because he was so vocal. At critical moments he would yell ‘Ba Boom!’ So the team nicknamed me ‘Ba Boom.’”

“When I left home to go to Uni we had a special celebration at home; a family meal with all the best gear. Dad read out a blessing for me and we talked about Uni.”

“On the anniversary of my father’s death we get out the photo album and tell stories about the special times we had together. Everyone remembers a different aspect of Dad. This time is very important for all of us.”

“My father travels from the Philippines each year to spend some time with us. We have the custom of lighting a candle for him while he is travelling to our house and then again when he travels back to his house.”

“During my growing-up years, whenever Dad and I weren’t ‘connecting’ he would start turning up to my netball games. I really liked it when he came.”

“My husband has instituted ‘silly time’ in our household which basically means he and our three little ones go nuts for 15 minutes rumbling and tickling each other amidst squeals of laughter. The kids love it. Sometimes I join in, sometimes I just watch with delight.”

“The best thing about going away for the Christmas holidays with our family is that Dad makes a big deal of breakfast. He cooks bacon and eggs and then we sit around and help him with the crossword puzzle.”

“My son is a single Dad who has raised five boys. One of their household institutions is Friday night pizza. Many fond memories have been built on those Friday night pizza gatherings. Even now, his boys, their wives and girlfriends and mates, will often drop by for Friday night pizza.”

Describe one of your unique family rituals (past or present) expressing your relationship with your Dad.



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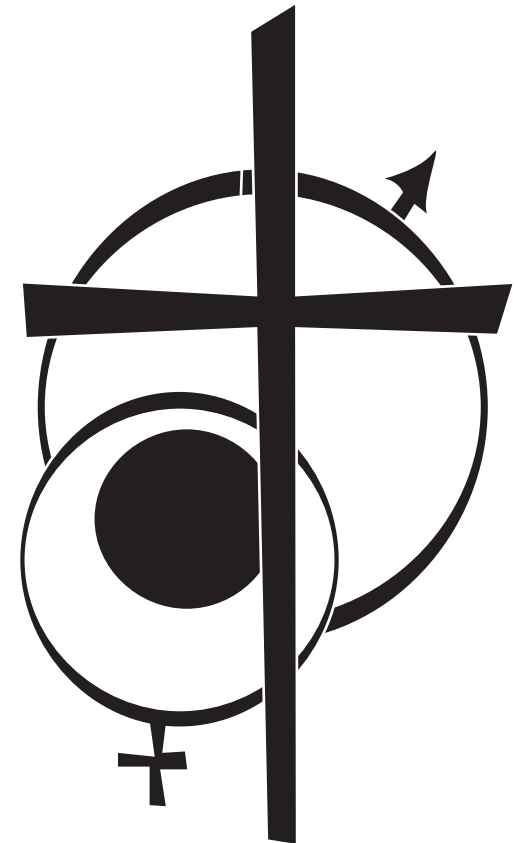
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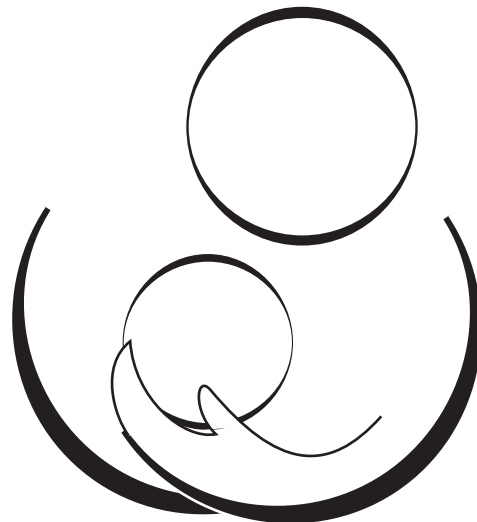
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