



Celebrating **Fatherhood**

Father's Day pack for Schools

Gift of the

Fathers

A resource from the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life.

The Gift of **Fathers**

A letter to school principals & staff

Fathers Day September 6th 2009

In a nutshell

Aim of this communication :

- Affirmation of fathers, specifically on Fathers' Day

Broad Strategy

- Strengthen family life
- Affirm the family as a major resource for evangelization.

This kit contains :

1. A reproducible leaflet *'Thinking about Fatherhood'*.*
2. Notes for the liturgies around Father's Day.
3. Newsletter inserts.

* Ideally, a copy of this leaflet might be given to students and their parents as an affirmation of fatherhood.

Thank you for
celebrating the
gift of fathers



Dear Friends,

There has been a trend towards increasing news stories about fathers in recent years.

There continue to be reports of prominent public figures who resign their positions to allow more time for their children. There have also been tragic stories about the problems that families face when fathers are absent or unable to meet their responsibilities or have given up hope.

Our faith gives us new hope and 'new eyes' to see Christ present in the ordinary events of daily life. It is often in the 'ordinary' things that we discover the sacred and the profound.

It is with such 'new eyes' that we appreciate the contributions that the father makes to family life. He is more than just 'another parent'. Through his male presence and his relationship with the mother, he complements her unique parental role in a special way.

Recent sociological studies confirm that at every stage of child development, the father has a specific role to play. It is important that this role is appropriately developed and supported.

The enclosed Father's Day Kit is offered for use around Father's Day. It is simple and practical and offers material for use in liturgies and newsletters. It is another resource in the continued efforts to strengthen family life.

Our hope is that schools will encourage their families to grow in awareness of fatherhood by assisting with the distribution of these ideas and stories on 'being Dad' in our world today.

Thank you for your ongoing support for families.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Eugene Hurley
Chairman, Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life

Liturgy Outline

Introduction

In our celebration today, we rejoice in God's gift of fatherhood. We experience God especially through the people in our lives. Fatherhood is one expression of God's presence.

Penitential Rite

We come to the Father through Jesus, so as members of his body, the Church, we pray :

Lord, you show us your love in the caring of those who gave us life.
Lord have mercy.

Lord, you make us sons and daughters of the Father.
Christ have mercy.

Lord, you call us to share your forgiveness and hope.
Lord had mercy.

Prayers of the faithful

Introduction

As adopted children of the Father, with confidence let us express our deepest needs.

Intercessions

- We pray that we may find ways to show our appreciation of our fathers.
- We pray for all fathers – may they be gentle and strong in their fatherhood.

Conclusion

God of love, you gave us fathers to give life to us and glory to you. May we learn to develop that love with all members of our families and to share that love with others. Amen.

Final Blessing

May our relationships with our fathers be marked by appreciation and love. Amen.

May the intimate love of Jesus for the Father lead us to be a sign of his love of others. Amen.

And may the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you and your family forever. Amen.

Newsletter

Clipboard

Dads do make a difference

For Father's Day, write down some of the specific times in your life when something your father said or did positively affected the direction of your life.

Every father is different

'Designer cards': The best Father's Day card is the one you write for him, telling him of his particular qualities that are important to you.

Absent Dads

Write to your father. Sometimes the most effective communication is the gentle reminder, a loving reminder that you are still his child.

Abba, Father!

The history of the Jews is the story of a loving God and his people. However, Jesus brought a new dimension to this relationship, calling God by the affectionate term 'Abba'. Through Jesus, we too share in this special relationship.
Rom 8:15

A Father's Day suggestion

Choose three photos of yourself with your father at different stages of your life. On the back, write a few words about how the photo reminds you of some quality that you appreciate in your father.

Newsletter Notes

A well-known TV advertisement stirs up our sense of belonging to our home country. It shows Australian children's choirs in different locations all over the world singing 'I Still Call Australia Home'. It reminds us that despite all the problems of our nation, no matter how far away we go, deep down we still have a sense of belonging to our own country.

All of us face problems in our families, in the church and in society. Wherever there are two or more people, there can be hurts and divisions. Yet it is also through people that we come to know God and to be fulfilled personally. St Paul tells us that love is one thing that cannot hurt our neighbour. Love is the summation of all the commandments. Our closest neighbours are members of our families. No matter how far we 'roam', home is the house where our family lives.

Father's Day is a good time to pause to appreciate a unique person that God has put into our lives – our father. It is easy to take fathers for granted. The natural hurts that arise in all families can cause us to forget the wealth of goodness and commitment that is also there.

Father's Day gives us an opportunity to recall and affirm the particular gifts that fathers bring to families. This includes our personal fathers, grandfathers, single parent fathers, and children or brothers who are fathers.

There is no 'right' way of showing appreciation of one's father. The important thing is to do it. When expressing thanks to your dad it is a good idea to connect with something specific – a special quality or a specific incident in the past that typifies your father's care and commitment. People can give presents if they wish, but the most important gift is the gift of appreciation. Every father knows that he is human and didn't always do it perfectly. He needs to hear from his children that he 'must have done something right' – maybe magnificently!

