

Showing Gratitude and Joy

1. In ***Amoris Laetitia*** Pope Francis reminds us of the importance of three things said in families, ‘please, thank you and I’m sorry’. (AL 133, 266). He also tells us that “the family is the first school of human values, where we learn the wise use of freedom.” (AL 274). We need to be careful not to take for granted what we receive. We should say ‘please’ when it is right to do so. It is a sign of respect for the giver and what they are giving.

“I said ‘please’ when”

2. Express gratitude for something that has happened. It could be something very small. This is what in ***Laudato Si*** Pope Francis calls an attitude of gratitude! (LS 220).

“I said ‘thanks’ for”

3. Every time you eat a meal at home, say a quiet prayer or a prayer as part of your family in gratitude for the food you are lucky to have. In ***Amoris Laetitia*** Pope Francis encourages families to share meals together (AL 56).

“Saying a prayer before a shared meal was great because”

4. In ***Amoris Laetitia***, Pope Francis tells us that every child is a gift from God. (AL 14). Spend time talking with your parents/guardians, family members and Sponsor about what you are good at. Allow other people to praise you for all that you bring in to their lives! Talk with them about your gifts and talk together about how God is calling you to put your gifts to use for the good of your life and the lives of others (AL, 95). Pray about this yourself as well.

“Recognising my own gifts and talents was good because”

Reconciling myself with others

5. Is there someone you have fallen out with? Is there a chance you could reconcile with one another? Think about this and then try to see a way through the disagreement. (LS 213, AL 266).

“I became a peacemaker by ...”

6. Say ‘sorry’ when you’re not as helpful or cooperative at home as you might be. And then try to do better. (AL 133). Think about how you can be more helpful or cooperative.

“I said sorry ...”

Helping others

7. Take time to consider the people in your class. Is there anyone in your class who appears to be feeling lonely or isolated in any way? Try to talk to them, even just to let them know that they are not alone, that you care. Loneliness is a terrible symptom of modern life, we learn in *Amoris Laetitia* (AL, 43). Is there something you can do, in your life, to help others feel less lonely?

“I helped someone feel less alone by ...”

8. Think about those less fortunate than you in your wider community and in society (AL 183). In our efforts to live according to the Gospel, we should remember Jesus’ words: “As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me (*Mt 25:40*)”. Discuss this with your parents/guardians and try to think of very practical things you can do to help

“I undertook an act of charity by ...”

9. Pope Francis tells us that everyday family love is built on “thousands of small but real gestures.” (AL 315). Keep a close eye out in your family for the little moments you can give someone a helping hand; holding open a door, picking up something that has fallen down, helping someone who is carrying too much, taking time to listen to people properly.

“My simple gesture of kindness was to ...”

10. Pope Francis tells us that your local parish is a ‘family of families’. (AL 202). In what ways are you now being challenging to become more involved in your local parish, to help build up this ‘family of families’? Is there a decision here for you around going to Mass more frequently with your family? What else in your parish might you get involved in as you prepare for your Confirmation? Discuss this with your parents/guardians and your Sponsor.

“I became more involved in my parish by ...”

Making good choices

11. Confirmation is often the time when candidates to take a pledge about how you might look after your body through healthy choices as you move into the next phase of your life. Take some time to talk very seriously about your pledge with your parents/guardians and Sponsor
“I have pledged to”

12. Think about how frequently you use your phone (if you have one) or play games on the internet or use a mobile device. Reflect on whether or not this is good for you and for those around you. Make some decisions around reducing your mobile phone use or mobile device use and let others know what you’re doing so they can support you. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis warns us against the ways in which all the various distractions in our lives, can dull our awareness. (LS 56). He suggests we need to come more and more into the present so that we can become more conscious of who we are and of the great gift that is our world.
“Spending less time on my phone helped me to ...”

13. In Chapter 4 of *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis talks about the various different qualities of love. He tells us for example, that Love is Patient. (AL 91). Spend some time reflecting on how patient or impatient you are in your own life, especially at home. If you have younger brothers or sisters, take some extra time with them to read with them or to play with them. Be patient!
“I showed patience when ...”

Taking care of the earth, our common home

14. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis tell us that if we continue to live as we are living now, “this century may well witness extraordinary climate change with serious consequences for all of us.” (LS 24). As young people, it is you and your families into the future that will be most affected by climate change. Find out more about climate change from Trócaire. Talk about this with your parents/guardians, teachers and your priest. What can you do that would make a difference?

“I acknowledged my responsibility for our common home by ...”

15. Become conscious of waste; try to waste less and less food. Pope Francis suggests in *Laudato Si*, that this kind of waste is one of the great injustices of our time; that so many are hungry in our world, when there is such waste (LS, 50). In very strong language, he compares it to food being stolen from the table of the poor.

“I took more care not to waste food and water by ...”

16. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis tells us that there is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions. (LS 211). Make a chart that you might hang up in your kitchen at home listing the little things you might do as a family to care for our common home. Then take time to be grateful for those efforts knowing that there is something very important about all of us doing our best together.

“I helped my family to care for our common home by ...”