

# GROWING A FAMILY CULTURE

Creating a Family Culture is a powerful way to influence our children in a way that goes beyond our relationship with any one individual child. It is greater than just you or your spouse. Family Culture is the unspoken system that binds your family together and communicates your expectations, beliefs, and values more powerfully than any written word. It is a natural construct, but it is actually spiritual also because it creates an invisible web that binds your family together, like a vine. The elements of a family culture can be compared to parts of a grape vine. Just like cultivating a vine, parents need to be thoughtful and intentional about the culture that they are growing within their home.

**EACH FAMILY FINDS WITHIN ITSELF A SUMMONS THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED AND THAT SPECIFIES BOTH ITS DIGNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY: FAMILY, BECOME WHAT YOU ARE"** *Familiaris Consortio, #17*

## ELEMENT 1: SPIRITUAL LIFE OF YOUR HOME

**Soil: where things come from, the foundation, connects us to the earth, in common with all others**

It's our connection with God that gives meaning to our lives. Helping our children develop a relationship with God, who will never leave them or fail them, is the greatest gift we can give to our children.

## ELEMENT 2: YOUR MARRIAGE

**Roots: anchors the plant, nourishes the plant, comes before anything above ground, roots start dying the plant looks good for a while but eventually dies.**

There is no sacrament of motherhood or fatherhood, it's your marriage that is the sacrament that brings grace, God's life, present in your home. It should be understood by all the children that your marriage relationship is the primary and most important

relationship in the home.

## ELEMENT 3 : SYSTEM OF RELATIONSHIPS

**Trunk and the canes: what people see, intertwined with each other, can be many or few, need to be directed and cultivated or they can grow in ways that are not healthy and will not bear fruit.**

Children must know they are KNOWN by you. Nothing can replace the love of a father and mother in the life of a child. Parents are irreplaceable. The sibling relationships also can never be taken for granted. Parents need to cultivate and work on those relationships so they are healthy and strong.

## ELEMENT 4: DEVELOPING UNIQUE GIFTS OF EACH PERSON AND, THEREFORE, THE FAMILY

**Fruit: every cane has its own fruit that it bears, needs to be tended and drawn out, picked at the right time, given the right environment**

Goal of the family culture is the full flourishing of the giftedness of each person as they are designed and called to be - every person is called and gifted and so is every family.

## ELEMENT 5: FAMILY OPERATIONS

**Leaves: practical side, needed to collect rain and sun and make into food for the plant, without this fruit cannot grow, more effective the other elements are, the better the leaves are and the better the fruit is.**

This is where the rubber hits the road in service to each other. As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "Wash the cup not because it is dirty or because you are told to wash it, but because you love the person who will use it after you"

## GROWING A FAMILY CULTURE WORKSHEET

*Evaluate the strengths and areas of improvement that are needed in each element of your family culture. Identify the one area that needs immediate action. Make a plan of action with your spouse.*

Element	Our family's strengths in this area	Our family's areas of improvement	Immediate Action
<b>Spiritual Life</b>			
<b>Marriage Relationship</b>			
<b>Family Relationships</b>			
<b>Family Character and Giftedness</b>			
<b>Family Operations</b>			

*Find more information on our podcast "Building a Family Culture" and "Elements of a Family Culture"*