

## National Family Week 2011, Celebrating family life in the UK



National Family Week will take place from Monday, 30 May to Sunday, 5 June, and promoters say it will be bigger and better than ever. It aims to celebrate family life in the UK and connect millions of families with the organisations, good causes and services that support them. For the last two years, families have enjoyed thousands of events, special offers, competitions and much more as part of the UK's biggest celebration of family life.

Events can range from the imaginative to the wacky, but they all tie in with the week's core themes : food; learning; health and fitness; environment and safety. These all promote the important elements of family life. This year, the main events will be centred around the cities of London and Liverpool.



"I am delighted that National Family Week is being launched with a call to celebrate family life. We are heavily involved right now in a project called Celebrating Family: Blessed, Broken, Living Love, which recognises the importance of taking time to celebrate the blessings of family life. Families told us these were the times they spend together and the love they share for one another. While we thank God for these blessings, we mustn't forget those for whom family life has been and remains very painful. Nevertheless, families are at the heart of life and love, both at home and in the world in which we all live. Families are also very close to the heart of God. That's certainly something to celebrate!" - Bishop John Hine, Chair



The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales are marking National Family Week by drawing attention to a new resource to promote the holiness of family life. The Home is a Holy Place resource

pack is now available free of charge to all Catholic parishes across England and Wales.

The pack aims to help parishes celebrate the presence of God as love in all loving family relationships and proclaim the holiness of our homes as places of life, love, service, teaching, fellowship, witness and prayer. The pack includes prayer cards, group reflection materials and a DVD featuring interviews with families. It may be used in many different settings, including with parents of children preparing to receive the sacraments, couples preparing for marriage, and parish or school groups.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols, the Archbishop of Westminster, said he hoped that the pack will help families to appreciate the presence of God in their lives: "For most of us, home is the place where the foundations of our faith were laid. Home is the place where we grow in understanding of what faith means in daily practice. Home is the place where we learn how to be patient, forgiving and full of joy. But the home also needs to be the place where we learn how to pray, how to talk to God and how to see ourselves as a family living in God's presence. 'Home is a Holy Place' will help families to appreciate the presence of God in their lives and how an awareness of that presence can build up a life of faith in response to God's love."



Bishop John Hine, Chair of the Bishops' Committee for Marriage and Family Life, is encouraging parishes across England and Wales to collect their complimentary pack from their diocese and use it in whatever way suits them best. "As we celebrate National Family Week, I hope this resource pack will help raise greater awareness of God's presence at home, not only among families but also among all those who serve them within our Catholic community" said Bishop John Hine.

Many dioceses have already begun a systematic programme of introducing the pack to parish contacts and catechists. "The feedback we've had so far indicates that the Home is a Holy Place resource pack is an incredibly useful tool, not just for spirituality but also for encouraging families who may feel on the margins of our parishes" said Elizabeth Davies, Marriage and Family Life Project Officer.

The pack has been welcomed by laity, priests and catechists. "It is wonderful to have a resource that celebrates family life in a world which seems to have turned its back on the family. We hope to be able to use it in a wider parish mission and in our schools" said a parishioner in Cardiff.

Read more about National Family Week on websites here :

Website: [www.catholic-ew.org.uk](http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk/>



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