

Full spring ahead

If your family is like mine, the Church calendar gets a little slippery about now. Easter Sunday was several weeks ago. What seems to be the “main events” of the liturgical calendar are now behind us, so we lose track. Here are three ways for you and your family to stay connected to the Church through the spring and summer.

1. Take It With You.

My family had a cabin in northern Minnesota. We'd spend weeks there swimming, biking, golfing, all the things you do in a little resort town as a kid. And each Sunday morning we'd go to Mass at St. Alice's. It wasn't our hometown parish. We didn't have a “spot” where we sat. You know those mornings when your priest welcomes newcomers and visitors? That was us. Mass was an expectation. A routine. And over time, we became a part of St. Alice's – in a smaller way than we were at St. Michael's back home. But that's the beauty of Catholicism ... it travels well.

2. Don't Get Caught Looking.

In the first reading on Ascension Thursday, the apostles watch Jesus rise into the heavens, and they just ... gawk. It takes “two men dressed in white” (Acts 1:10) to snap them out of it, and when they do, the apostles go back to Jerusalem to begin their ministry. After the Ascension – without the feast day nudges that Christmas and Easter provide – it can be easy to coast through our faith. But Jesus didn't wait for a feast day to do something special. Think about making this the time when your family donates time and money to Families Moving Forward or your local food shelf. Start your family ministry now.

3. Make It Extraordinary.

This time of year the big seasons of Advent, Lent and Easter

have given way to Ordinary Time. I've always disliked that term: "Ordinary Time." It makes up 34 weeks of our Church year and features the readings we all know by heart. It's like a collection of Jesus' greatest hits. This year alone, we'll hear the parable of the sower. The feeding of the 5,000. The time Jesus walked on water. These are the Gospels that show us the "everyday" ministry of Jesus. Use this season to share some of the most beloved of our faith narratives with your families. Listen to them in a new way. Or simply enjoy them again. They're anything but "ordinary."