

Spring cleaning and Easter newness

Spring cleaning and Easter go hand in hand, and our families can benefit from a fresh approach. The long winter months often find us cooped up indoors, layered in heavy clothing, longing for more sunshine.

Spring is a resurrection of many things: The world around us comes to life, and it's difficult not to feel a burst of energy. Let's tap into the brilliance of the liturgical season of Easter and do some "spring cleaning" in four areas of family life.

House and Home

Pick a closet or cupboard and empty it. Make piles and go through everything in it: the old coats, the boxes hidden in the back corner, and the little surprises you forgot about stashing in there. Put the things you haven't worn or used in a year or more in a box and make a point of giving them to someone else (perhaps a ministry that gives away gently used items or a local thrift store).

Put a vase on the counter or table and take turns keeping it filled with fresh flowers. Don't be fooled, either: Sometimes "weeds" can be arranged and look as lovely as an expensive bouquet, especially in the spring! Having this bit of life in the house can make a big difference.

For Family: Make a prayer corner or prayer table in your home. It can be as simple as a TV tray covered in a pretty pillowcase, with a candle on top. Use this space daily, even if only for a few minutes, and encourage others in your home to use it as well. Keep it clean and attractive.

Spiritual

Remember your loved ones, both living and dead, with a spiritual bouquet of prayers. Make a list of those remembered and pray for them at Eucharistic Adoration.

Set a timer on your phone each day, and when it goes off, stop what you're doing and pray. Perhaps you have a special intention or a pressing need: Take it to God during this planned interruption of your day.

For God: Pray a novena together as a family. Keep the prayers simple, perhaps just a Hail Mary on your first novena. Make a countdown so you know which day of the novena you're on, and decide together what intention you'll be praying for.

Mental

Get outside together and play a game of tag or hide and seek. Hint: Finding and hiding plastic eggs is fun during the entirety of the Easter season, and it's an easy way to get outside and keep the whole family engaged. Take turns hiding and finding.

It can be mentally soothing to use your hands to accomplish something. Throughout the entire Easter season, dye eggs and fill little baskets for homebound neighbors, friends or family members. Plan a time to deliver your baskets and be sure you can visit for a short while, too.

For Peace: Have dinner by candlelight, enjoying the different perspective it gives you of the people at your table. Share the best parts and worst parts of your day as you eat. If you have young children who can't be trusted with open flames, consider getting battery-operated candles.

Physical

Take a walk outside without your phone. Look around you and take note of the different things growing and the many things

happening. Walk long enough for your thoughts to quiet down, your mind to still and your body to get into a groove with the rhythm of your walking.

Make a list of five things you'd like to find in your house. Make it like a scavenger hunt and see who can find the items the quickest. The more active you are, the better.

For You: Instead of a piece of candy, grab a piece of fruit. When you're aching for a crunch, turn to carrots or raw peppers.