

# The Family Cube

- The art of loving in the family -

**focolare**  
movement



1. Roll The Family Cube every morning and see which face of the cube it lands on. Then read The Family Cube Card corresponding to that face.

2. Try to put that Gospel-based phrase into practice for the rest of the day.

3. Share what happened at family meal-time or at evening

Little by little we discover this Art of Loving and experience the Joy of Love.



## GOD IS LOVE

"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." (1John 4:7-8)

The Family Cube is based on the spirituality of the Focolare Movement which came to life in 1943 when Chiara Lubich and her young companions decided to put the words of the Gospel into practice in their everyday lives.

As Chiara Lubich wrote: "Love. That is what God expects of every Christian, because in Christianity love is everything" (The Art of Loving, p. 23)

Pope Francis wrote in a letter for the World Meeting of Families 2018:

"I wish to underline how important it is for families to ask themselves often if they live lives based on love, for love and in love. In practice, this means giving of oneself, forgiving, not losing patience, anticipating the other person, respecting. How much better family life would be if every day we lived according to the words, 'please', 'thank you' and 'I'm sorry'."

## THE FAMILY CUBE

This pack includes a cube that can be assembled and also has pages where we can read short excerpts from The Art of Loving by Chiara Lubich, and from The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia) by Pope Francis, which will inspire us and help us to discover ways of bringing the Gospel alive in our families. The pages also include links to scripture, as well as prayers and shared experiences.

Love is an art and something we can learn in the family - the school of love. It needs practice and we can keep improving. It is also challenging, and makes great demands. When we fail we can always begin again.

The Family Cube can help us practice and learn the Art of Loving.

In this way, our family can become artists of love, learning to give of ourselves to others, to put them before ourselves, to make room for all.

"Only starting from love can the family manifest, spread and regenerate God's love in the world. Without love, we cannot live as children of God, as couples, parents and brothers." - Pope Francis in his letter to World Meeting of Families 2018



### Texts

1. The Art of Loving by Chiara Lubich, published by New City Press, (New York, 2010).
2. Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love). Apostolic Exhortation on 'Love in the Family', written by Pope Francis and published by Veritas Publications, 2016.



### CONTACT US

Why not share some of your experiences of trying to live out the different faces of The Family Cube! Send your family stories to:

[thefamilycube@focolare.org](mailto:thefamilycube@focolare.org)



# Love Everyone

**Love accepts each person just as they are**

*(The Joy of Love - Amoris Laetitia)*

**"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love".**

*(1John 4:8)*

## Pope Francis

"Patience takes root when I recognise that other people also have a right to live in this world just as they are. It does not matter if they hold me back, if they unsettle my plans, or annoy me by the way they act or think, or if they are not everything that I want them to be. Love always has an aspect of deep compassion that leads to accepting the other person as part of this world even when he or she acts differently than I would like."

*(The Joy of Love – Amoris Laetitia, 92)*

## FAMILY PRAYER

God our Father, you love everyone. Help us to be more like you, loving everyone in our family and everyone we meet. May no one escape our love, even if they annoy me or act differently than I would like. Since we are all brothers and sisters help me to love everyone just as they are.

## Chiara Lubich

"We must break through all the barriers and open our hearts to the one human family, so we can say: I live for the one human family!"

Since we are all brothers and sisters, we must love all. We must love everyone. This may seem like a very small thing, but it is revolutionary!"

*(The Art of Loving, p. 32)*

## LET'S DO IT!

"It's amazing! Everyone needs a Family Cube in their home.... This little thing, although so small, has more power than you could imagine. It has made me stop and think as a parent how to best live out the gospel using such a simple thing and to introduce this to my family home which I did do. It has brought encouragement, hope, along with much love (especially when my 3 boys are fighting). Although we, like many other families, have our ups and downs the Family Cube for the 2 secs or less it takes to roll it has certainly made us think and allow us to be better people – to be that child of God, and bring love and happiness to everyone we meet."



# The Family Cube



# Be the first to love

## Love constantly opens doors

*(The Joy of Love- Amoris Laetitia)*

**"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he first loved us and sent his Son..."**

*(1 John 4:10)*

## Pope Francis

"Saint Ignatius of Loyola said: 'Love is shown more by deeds than by words'. Love thus shows its fruitfulness and allows us to experience the happiness of giving, the nobility and grandeur of spending ourselves unstintingly, without asking to be repaid, purely for the pleasure of giving and serving."

*(The Joy of Love – Amoris Laetitia, 93)*

## FAMILY PRAYER

God our Father, you love us! You are always the first to love us. Help us to remember your love for us each day. Help us to take the first step in loving others, and not wait for others to love us, so that our love for others can be a reflection of your love for us.

## Chiara Lubich

"Another step in the art of loving is being the first to love by always taking the initiative, without waiting for the other to go first. This can be a real challenge for us... (but) if we are to love like God and develop the capacity to love which God has placed in our hearts, we must love as he does. He does not wait for us to love him but has always in thousands of ways shown us that he is the first to love, regardless of our response."

*(The Art of Loving, p. 49)*

## Let's do it!

"This morning the cube landed on 'Be the first to love'. Later in the day my brother came home from school crying because he fell on the way home and cut his knee badly. I ran upstairs and got the box of plasters for him. He said, 'Thank you!'"



# The Family Cube



# Love your enemy

## Chiara Lubich

"'Love your enemies' (Mt 5:44) This overturns our normal way of thinking and alters the very course of our life! Let's face it. It includes any enemy whatever... and we all have enemies of one kind or another.

... It does require courage. But it is not the end of the world. It just takes a little effort on our part, with God doing the other 99 percent.

Soon our heart will be overflowing with joy."

(The Art of Loving p. 41)

## LET'S DO IT!

"When the family threw the Family Cube it landed on 'Love your enemy'. Sean said 'But I don't have any enemies,' very sure of himself. 'Maybe not real enemies,' said his brother Aaron, 'but when Mum gets mad at me I get angry with her.' 'Yeah,' said Sean, 'I get angry too when Mark takes my things just because he's a bit bigger than me.'

That day Sean decided to lend his bike to his brother Mark and later on was delighted when Mark let him have a go on his play station for the first time."

## Love never gives up.

(The Joy of Love - Amoris Laetitia)

**"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven."**

(Matthew 5: 44-45)

## Pope Francis

"It is one thing to sense a sudden surge of hostility and another to give into it, letting it take root in our hearts. 'Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.' (Eph 4:26). My advice is never to let the day end without making peace in the family. 'And how am I going make peace? By getting down on my knees?' No! Just by a small gesture, a little something, and harmony in your family will be restored..."

(The Joy of Love- Amoris Laetitia, 104)

## FAMILY PRAYER

Jesus, you asked us to love everyone, even our enemies. Help us to show our love to people who upset us and to make peace with everyone in the family before we go to bed. Help us to show mercy to those who offend us.

# The Family Cube





# Love the other person as yourself

**Love imitates Jesus' own gentleness.**

*(The Joy of Love - Amoris Laetitia)*

**"Love your neighbour as yourself"**

*(Matthew 19:19)*

## Pope Francis

"A love that fails to grow is at risk. Growth can only occur if we respond to God's grace through constant acts of love, acts of kindness that become ever more frequent, intense, generous, tender and cheerful. Husbands and wives 'become conscious of their unity and experience it more deeply from day to day'. The gift of God's love poured out upon the spouses is also a summons to constant growth in grace."

*(The Joy of Love - Amoris Laetitia ,134)*

## Let's do it!

"Kate had to move schools and she was introduced to some new 'cool' friends! She was delighted. Some days later a new boy arrived and he didn't get some 'cool' new friends but was left alone. He was shy and not good at making any friends. Kate decided to go over to him during the break and chat to him. Her friends didn't understand why she would do that and she told them that she had felt welcomed to her new school and she wanted to treat him the same."

## Chiara Lubich

"If this one thing alone were practised, it would be sufficient to make the whole world a great family: Love other people as you love yourself, do to others what you would want done to you, do not do to others what you would not want done to you."

This is the so-called 'Golden Rule', which Gandhi expressed so well when he said: 'You and I are but one. I cannot injure you without harming myself.' The Gospel puts it this way: 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.' ( Lk 6:31). The Muslim tradition says: 'None of you are true believers if you do not desire for your brother what you desire for yourself.'

This is the basis for a principle which, if applied, would be the greatest inducement to harmony among all kinds of people, between families and entire societies."

*(The Art of Loving p. 59)*

## FAMILY PRAYER

God our Father, you love us so much. Help us to love others with the gentleness of Jesus, with encouraging words and kind looks. Help us to treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.



# The Family Cube



# Share the other person's joy or hurt

## Chiara Lubich

"There is one aspect of the art of loving which teaches us how to put true love for others into practice. It is this simple formula: make yourself one.

Making yourself one with others means making their thoughts and problems your own, sharing their joys and sufferings."

(The Art of Loving, p. 69)

**Love puts us in the other person's shoes.**

(*The Joy of Love - Amoris Laetitia*)

**"I have become all things to all"**

(1 Corinthians 9:22)

## Pope Francis

"If we fail to learn how to rejoice in the well-being of others, and focus primarily on our own needs, we condemn ourselves to a joyless existence, for as Jesus said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). The family must always be a place where, when something good happens to one of its members, they know that others will be there to celebrate it with them.

"...(Families) that fail to encourage sensitivity to human illness makes the heart grow cold; it makes young people 'anaesthetised' to the sufferings of others, incapable of facing suffering and of living the experience of limitation"

(*The Joy of Love- Amoris Laetitia*, 110, 277)

## Let's do it!

"Patrick was very excited! The day of the race had arrived. Patrick ran fast and was in the lead, but he saw the child behind him stumble and fall. Patrick suddenly stopped and turned round to help him. Some people shouted at him: 'Don't stop, run, run!' But Patrick did not listen and helped the child who fell to the finish line."

## FAMILY PRAYER

God our Father, you chose to show us your love by becoming human like us. Help us to love others in becoming like them by sharing in their celebrations and in their sufferings. Help us to learn from others and to leave lots of space for them to tell us how they are feeling.



# The Family Cube



# Love one another

## Love builds bonds with kindness

*(The Joy of Love - Amoris Laetitia)*

**"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another"**

*(John 13:34)*

## Pope Francis

"A kind look helps us to see beyond our own limitations, to be patient and to cooperate with others, despite our differences. Loving kindness builds bonds, cultivates relationships, creates new networks of integration and knits a firm social fabric. In this way, it grows ever stronger, for without a sense of belonging we cannot sustain a commitment to others; we end up seeking our convenience alone and life in common becomes impossible."

*(The Joy of Love - Amoris Laetitia, 100)*

## Let's do it!

"Michael and his brother Eoin and some of their friends went picking blackberries one day. They gathered lots and Michael was looking forward to eating his when he got home. Then he noticed that some of his friends didn't have many so he gave some of his away. When he got home Michael saw that his bag of blackberries was nearly empty. His brother Eoin came over to him and gave Michael lots of his. 'These are for you' he said. They were both so happy."

## Chiara Lubich

"So when we begin to love others in this way and in the process are loved in return, we find ourselves passing from one level of the spiritual life to a higher one; we are aware of a new surge in our interior life. We experience, in a new way, the gifts of the spirit: a joy we never had before, a peace, a benevolence, a generosity... We find a new way of seeing, which helps us see things as they are before God. At the same time, this mutual love gives witness of Christ to the world. As Jesus said: 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' (John 13:35) "

*(The Art of Loving p. 103)*

## FAMILY PRAYER

Jesus, help us to love one another as you have loved us. Help us to be kind, generous and cheerful at home, so that our love for one another can grow every day. Help us to see each other with new eyes each morning.

# The Family Cube

