

# TRÓCAIRE ROMERO FAMILY PROGRAMME

**'No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love.'**

Pope Francis



# Trócaire

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# GETTING STARTED

## Congratulations! You have begun the Trócaire Romero Family Programme.

Saint Óscar Romero was Archbishop of San Salvador, and spent his life in the service of people living in extreme poverty and under brutal oppression. His actions are a model of justice and love for us all and show us the path to God. The Romero Family Programme is a way for families to keep the life and good works of Saint Óscar Romero alive in their homes and communities. By sharing the stories of three families from around the world with your own family we can see how, while living in different circumstances, all families have the same love and care for each other.

Completing this programme could not be simpler – just follow the steps below:

- 1) Download and print your family workbook. If you are having any issues accessing or printing this workbook, please email **anna.keegan@trocaire.org**.
- 2) Register with Trócaire, so that we know your family has started their Trócaire Romero Family Programme. To register, please send your family name and contact details to **anna.keegan@trocaire.org**. (Please ensure that the person registering the family is over eighteen.)
- 3) Gather together as a family and complete the activities. The programme tells the stories of three families. There are activities about the lives of each family. Read each story and complete the activities..
- 4) Complete the family evaluation and return it to **Anna Keegan, Trócaire, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co Kildare**. Each family who returns their completed evaluation will receive a certificate and will be entered into a draw to win an eco-friendly 'Green Family' trip to the Slieve Aughty Centre, Co Galway.

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**'God wants every family to be a beacon of the joy of his love in our world. What does this mean? It means that we, who have encountered God's saving love, try, with or without words, to express it in little acts of kindness in our daily routine and in the most hidden moments of our day.'**

**Pope Francis**

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# ABOUT SAINT ÓSCAR ROMERO: THE GREAT COMMUNICATOR

**'Aspire not to have more, but to be more.'**

Saint Óscar Romero

Óscar Romero was archbishop of San Salvador. He embraced a simple lifestyle and was a popular preacher who responded with real compassion to the people of El Salvador. He became a great defender of the poor, as well as a harsh critic of any injustices he saw. During Archbishop Romero's three years as bishop of Santiago de María, before he was appointed to San Salvador, he came to see the extreme poverty and brutal repression of ordinary Salvadoran people. He became convinced that because of his Catholic faith he was called to radical action. One way Óscar Romero called for justice was in his homilies at Mass; these were broadcast over the radio so the ordinary Salvadoran people could hear someone speaking up for them. He was assassinated on Monday, 24 March 1980 as he was celebrating Mass in the chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence, San Salvador.

Pope Francis has continued to honour the memory of Óscar Romero, namely putting him on the path to sainthood. On 23 May 2015, the occasion of the beatification of Saint Óscar Romero, Pope Francis said that Saint Óscar Romero had 'constructed peace with the force of love'.

His beatification provided both the Salvadoran and the Universal Church with a contemporary role model, a modern-day saint, who, by his actions, demonstrated to us the path to God and how to build his kingdom of justice and love on earth.

Pope Francis approved a miracle attributed to Óscar Romero, meaning he could be canonised. His canonisation took place on 14 October 2018.



Trócaire invites families to undertake the Trócaire Romero Family Programme as a way of keeping the life and good works of Saint Óscar Romero alive in our world. Your family can follow the path of justice and become a voice for the voiceless in our world!

**'All of us are part of a great chain of families stretching back to the beginning of time. Our families are a treasury of living memory, as children become parents and grandparents in turn.'**

Pope Francis



José, Adela and their family, Polochic Valley, Guatemala. Photo credit: Manuel Morillo

## MEET JOSÉ AND ADELA'S FAMILY FROM GUATEMALA

Nearly seventeen million people live in Guatemala, which is in Central America. The name 'Guatemala' comes from a Mayan word meaning 'land of the trees'. Guatemala gained independence from Spain in 1821. The population of Guatemala comprises people of Spanish descent and indigenous Maya people. Spanish is the official language. Additionally, twenty-two Mayan languages and two indigenous languages are spoken.

José and Adela have five children; Edgar, Walter, Ana Flor, Jessica and María. Edgar is married to Flavia and they have a baby called Joel. They live in the Polochic Valley in eastern Guatemala. This has been the home of the Maya Q'eqchi people for hundreds of years. Living on the land is a fundamental aspect of traditional Maya culture; however, indigenous farmers are being evicted from their ancestral lands to make way for industrial biofuel crops, mining, hydroelectric power and motorways.

In 2011, José and Adela's family were evicted from their lands. This came after years of living precariously on their own land because of threats from corporations. After their eviction, the family were unable to grow crops, which meant that they often went hungry. José and Adela ate only once a day so that the children would have food.

They eventually returned to their home in Paráná but couldn't grow maize. The big companies who had taken over the land had planted sugar cane; so, for the first year when the family came back to the land, they had to live mostly on sugar cane until they could cut it down and plant maize. Now they harvest maize twice a year because this is what they live on as a family. If there is extra beyond what they need for food, they sell it.

Adela says, 'For me, the land is our life, our health and it is for our children who are growing.' The worry of their initial return has subsided and she feels happy, even happier now that Trócaire staff and local organisations are visiting the community and giving them hope.



María, her sister Jessica, her cousin Oswaldo and her neighbour Jennifer playing ball. Photo credit: Manuel Morillo

The family grow their food at the milpa\*. They grow maize, sugar cane, beans, bananas and squash. They also collect firewood at the milpa. Ana Flor runs a small shop next to their house. María and Jessica get up at five in the morning to help with chores before they go to school.

José says, 'We don't have any big worries about our family, and the community is good together. Our biggest fear is being evicted again but we are willing to give up our lives for this land.'

Trócaire and its partners have seen positive outcomes from their work on the resettlement of communities, and the land rights of some communities have already been secured. The community of Pancús has recently had its land rights granted. This community was in a similar situation to the people of Paraná; however, sustained pressure on the government has resulted in the community receiving the title to lands on which to settle.

\*Collective Farm

# FAMILY WORKSHEET A

## Amazing Maize (Ages 5–12)

**Please find the Amazing Maize slideshow at:** [trocaire.org/education/landrights/earlychildhood](http://trocaire.org/education/landrights/earlychildhood)

**You will need:** 'Amazing Maize' slideshow, maize sequencing cards and tortilla recipe. You also will need newspapers (three sheets per child), green paint, tape, scissors, Marimba music (freely available online), and an ear of maize. If you are making tortillas, you will need the ingredients on the recipe sheet.

Explain that in María's community, maize (corn on the cob) is very important. Every community has a special field, called a 'milpa', where maize plants are grown. People in Guatemala have depended upon maize all through their history. They say prayers for a good growing season before they plant the maize seeds, and they offer thanksgiving when they harvest the maize. When the ears of maize are ripe, María's father and brothers cut it down. María and her sister Jessica help their mother to prepare the maize to make tortillas. María's family eats tortillas every day.

**a) From ear to mouth:** Watch the maize slideshow. Talk about each step of growing and harvesting maize, and then discuss the steps involved in preparing maize for the family meal. Emphasise that everyone in the family helps with the maize in some way. After watching the slides and discussing, work together to sequence the maize cards. Use the recipe to make tortillas. If you do not have cooking facilities, buy some pre-made tortillas, and prepare beans and tomatoes to go with them.

**b) Art, music and movement:** Start by making maize plants from newspaper. Using three sheets of newspaper per child, paint one side of the newspaper green, and when it is dry, paint the reverse side green as well. For each plant, place three painted sheets on top of each other. Roll them into a long tube and tape the join. Make a few cuts down the top of the tube to create

leaves. Clear a space in your room or outside and ask the children to gather together, holding their maize plants. Invite the children to imagine that they are maize plants growing in the milpa. Encourage them to move their bodies and their painted plants in response to the following questions: What is it like as they grow under the hot sun? How do they feel in a big rainstorm? What happens as they grow up and up? What happens to them when they are ripe and harvest comes? As the children move, you can play Marimba music from Guatemala.

**c) Conclusion:** Conclude by discussing why maize is so important to María's community. Look at the final slide in the maize slideshow, which depicts a service in which the people in María's community are giving thanks for a successful harvest of maize. You can see the dried husks of maize next to the candles.

## Exploring Palm Oil (Ages 12–17)

To find out more about the role of the palm oil industry in José and Adela's situation, follow the below steps:

- View the video Living in Fear: Guatemala at [vimeo.com/318194227](https://vimeo.com/318194227)
- Why is their land so important to the indigenous communities in Guatemala?
- Who is responsible for the evictions that happened to the community in recent years?

## Activity

Can you find food and cosmetic products in your home that contain palm oil?

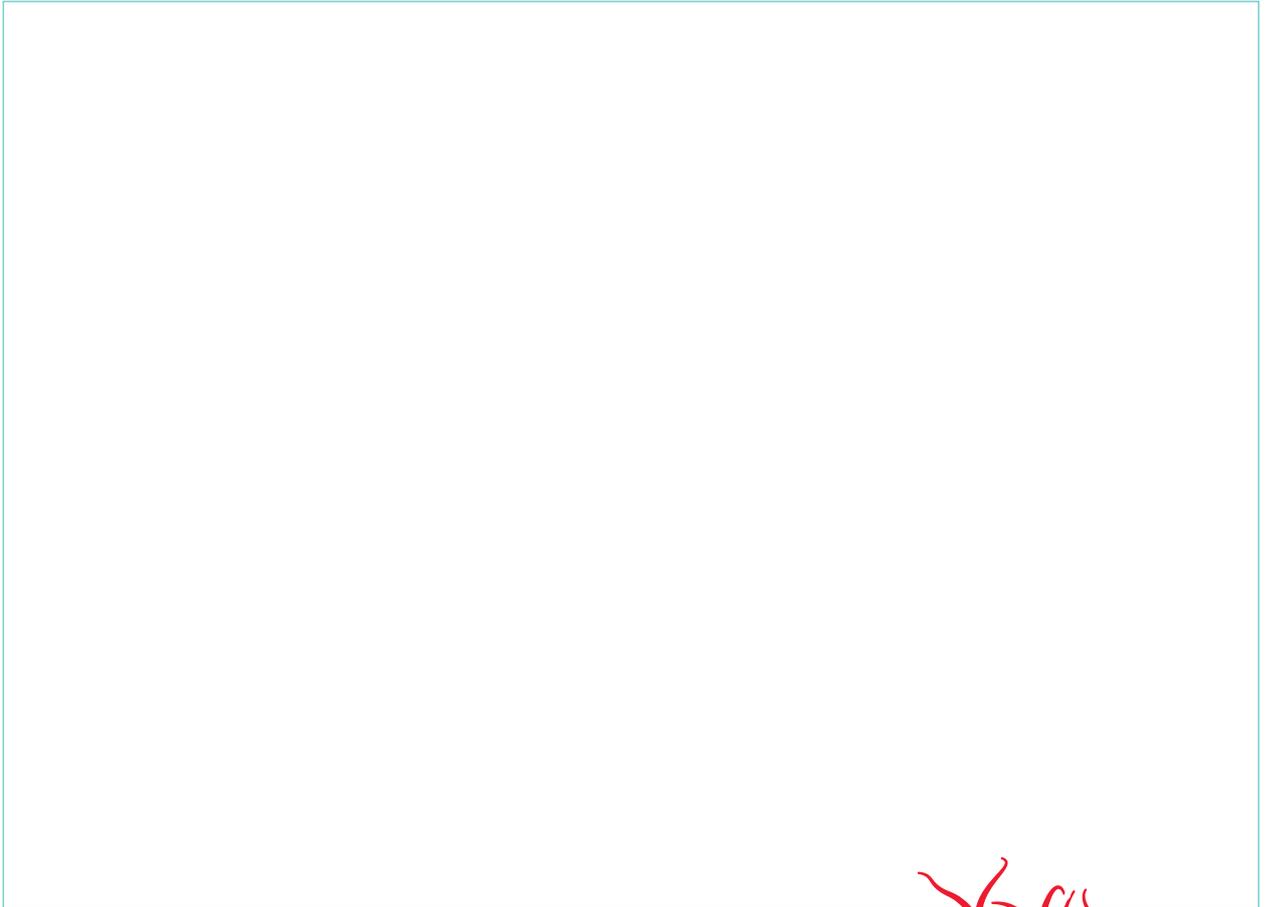
How many can you find? Hint: Have a look in your kitchen cupboard, in your fridge, and in your bathroom.

On your next shopping trip, can you find alternatives to these products that do not contain palm oil.

# FAMILY CHALLENGE: CREATING A FAMILY TREE

## Create your own family tree

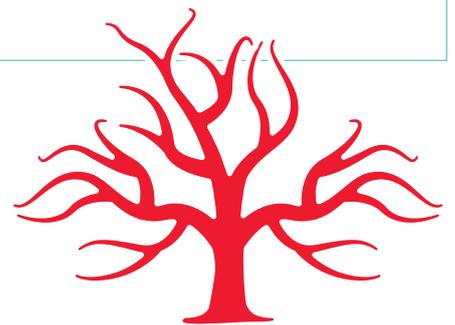
Can you draw your family tree from the members of your family. Be as creative as you like. Use the box provided or use a different page. You may have photos of people in your family that you would like to use.



## Prayer

Jesus our brother, thank you for the gift of all the people in our family and for our home. Help us to help those who are afraid of losing their homes. Amen.

## Family signature



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**'Creation is a wonderful gift that God has placed in our hands that we may enter into a relationship with him and we can recognise the imprint of his loving plan.'**

**Pope Francis**

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# MEET EVELYN AND HER CHILDREN FROM UGANDA

Patricia is a shy girl who likes to read books. She helps her mother Evelyn on the farm and with collecting water. She walks to school with her brothers and sister; it takes them about one hour to walk to school.

The family lives in two small thatched huts with no electricity and no running water. There is a borehole where they can collect water a five-minute walk away. The houses are surrounded by long grass on one side and their neighbours' land on the other. One of the huts is used mainly for cooking. The family sleeps on locally made papyrus mats. When they are in their hut or outside on their land, they can hear children playing in the distance, birds singing, digging with a hoe, a cock crowing, crickets, clothes being washed in water, thunder, cows in the distance, and the sound of goats. They can smell the freshly turned soil, food cooking and grass. They keep doves and have two goats. They do not eat the goats or milk them – they are just there to sell when money is needed. Last year, one of the boys got sick and Evelyn was able to sell a goat to pay for his medicine. In their garden,

they grow cassava, sweet potatoes, okra, beans and tomatoes. Their land is very important to them because it is where they grow their food. All the children help in the garden but they know that there may not be land for them when they grow up.

When Evelyn's husband died, his family did not think that Evelyn and her children should be allowed to stay on the land and so they tried to take the land for themselves. Evelyn tried very hard to hold on to the land because it is so important to her family's future. While she has lost some of the land, she still has a small plot that she can farm. Trócaire and its partner, the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, have been supporting her to be able to farm on the land safely and securely.

Evelyn goes to her local church and her faith is very important to her. She takes strength from the other women who attend her church. She says, 'They have helped me and given me courage.' Evelyn hopes that she will have land to pass on to her children and that they will all have a safe and happy future.



Evelyn and her children,  
Acholi Land, Uganda.  
Photo credit: Gary Moore.

# FAMILY WORKSHEET B

## Gather Together (All ages)

As a family, take the time to read the story of Evelyn and her children in Uganda and see if you can answer the following questions.

- What can the family hear when they are in their hut or outside? What can you hear when you go outside?

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- Why is the land so important to Evelyn?

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Market scene, Acholi Land, Uganda. Photo credit: Gary Moore

### Family Challenge: What's in the market? (Ages 5-12)

Items for sale at the market in Uganda:

**Fruit:** Tomatoes, Avocados, Oranges, Papaya

**Vegetables:** Eggplant, Onions

**Fish:** Silver Fish (dried), Tilapia Fish (dried)

**Grains & Legumes:** Millet, Flour, Beans, Peas

**Meat:** Goat

When Patricia and her mother go to the market, she sees all these things on sale. Can you list all the

vegetables that are on sale in a market or greengrocer near you? What fish can you buy? Where does the food in your kitchen come from? Look at three things in your cupboard and see where they are from. Are there foods on the list above that you have never seen or tasted? If you can, try something new!

Patricia and her family eat a lot of beans because they grow them in their garden. Have you ever tried to plant something in your garden or in a flowerpot on your window? Could you try now? You can start by planting a sunflower seed in a used yogurt pot with some soil. All the seed will need is light and some water.

## Activity: Exploring Courage (Ages 12-17)

Evelyn get courage from her faith and her community, and is showing courage in all that she does for her family.

- What does courage mean to you?
- Who can you think of who shows courage in their actions? How do they show this courage?
- Where do you take courage from?
- Can you share with each other a time when you have felt courageous?

## Prayer

Jesus our brother, thank you for the gift of our homes and our gardens. Help us to help those who are afraid of losing their homes. Amen.

## Signature

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**'Keep this in mind, playing with your children, "wasting time" with your children, is also a way to transmit the faith. It is graciousness, the graciousness of God.'**

**Pope Francis**



Maya and her family, Lebanon.  
Photo credit: Simon Walsh

## MEET MARAM AND HASSAN'S FAMILY FROM SYRIA

Maya is ten years old and she lives with her parents, Maram and Hassan, her two brothers and two sisters in the Lebanon. They are from Syria but it is unsafe there because of the war so they had to leave. Now they live in a place called the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon, one of the countries which borders Syria. They have lots of relatives that live close to them in Lebanon and they visit each other regularly. All of the children have big dreams for the future. Farid would like to be an architect, and Amira and Reem would like to be teachers.

The family often talk about Syria and think about the day when they can return home. Maya's mother, Maram, has been training to become a hairdresser. She likes writing about her life in Syria and telling her children about it. Maram says, 'My family is everything to me. Without family, there is nothing.' Hassan says that their faith and their community is very important to them, 'In our family, we have faith, that's what gives us strength and hope.'

Maya goes to the Safe Haven Centre with her brothers and sisters. This is a place where they can play with other children and do arts and crafts. There is a big playground surrounded by flowers at the centre. The children love to play on the swings and clamber on the climbing frame. However,

life is not always easy in the refugee camp. It is overcrowded and the weather can be very cold in winter and very hot in summer. The children love playing together. They play marbles, skipping, football and cards. Nabil has a small red plastic car that he can sit in. Maya loves WWF wrestling.



Maya, Lebanon. Photo credit: Simon Walsh

# FAMILY WORKSHEET C

## Gather Together

As a family, take the time to read the story of Maram and Hassan and their children and see if you can answer the following questions.

- Why are the family not living at home in Syria?

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- What gives Hassan hope? What is important for Maram?

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## Additional Exercise (Ages 12–17)

View the following video about the UN Refugee Convention [vimeo.com/310571312](https://vimeo.com/310571312) and consider the following questions:

- 1) Why was there a need identified to have a specific convention to protect refugee rights?
- 2) What rights of refugees does the convention protect? Which of the twelve rights highlighted in the animation do you consider the most important?

# FAMILY CHALLENGE: PLAYING GAMES AS A FAMILY

What games do Maya and her siblings play? What games does your family like to play? What games do you play together? What games do you play in school?

Take time one evening this week to play a board game with your family or friends. What do you like most about playing games with your family?

## Prayer

Jesus our brother, thank you for the gift of fun and laughter in our family. Help us to enjoy being with one another. Help us to include other children and families in our games. Amen.

## Signature

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# OUR FAMILY EVALUATION

To receive your certificate and be entered into a draw, please complete your family details on the form below. Finally, please complete the family evaluation form to let us know about your experience of completing the programme and what you have learned.

Return this sheet by email to **anna.keegan@trocaire.org** or by post to **Anna Keegan, Trócaire, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare**

- Family name:

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- Address:

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- Email:

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- Phone number:

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## Family signature

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Please sign if you have completed learning about all three families.



**Having reached the end of this workbook, answer the following questions.**

1) Do you think you and your family have a greater sense of what life is like for families in other parts of the world?

2) Has your understanding of Trócaire's work around the world changed?

3) How has learning about Saint Óscar Romero and completing the Trócaire Romero Family Programme inspired you as a family?

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**'Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home. Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, and life to grow in faith.'**

**Pope Francis**

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# FINAL CHECKLIST

- 1) Make sure that you have completed each family worksheet (A, B and C) and your family has added a signature.
- 2) Fill in the family evaluation (pp. 13–14) with your thoughts on the programme.
- 3) Once you are happy, please submit our family evaluation to Trócaire:

By post to: **Church Team, Trócaire, St Patricks College, Maynooth Co. Kildare**

Or by email to: [anna.keegan@trocaire.org](mailto:anna.keegan@trocaire.org)

The closing date is **Thursday, 20 June 2019**.

## What happens next?

- 1) Every family that returns their completed family evaluation form will receive a certificate.
- 2) All families who undertake the programme and return their family evaluation will be entered into a draw to win an eco-friendly 'Green Family' trip to the **Slieve Aughty Centre, Co. Galway**.

## Other Resources

There are many other resources available, including *Children's Sacred Space* and *Parish Resource Pack*, and on the education page of our website you can see videos of the families mentioned in this programme. To find out more, please go to: [trocaire.org](http://trocaire.org)

Here are some ways that your family can support the families of María, Maya, Patricia and many more like them around the world:

- Have a Trócaire Lenten box in your home, these can be requested and returned at any time of the year.
- Write a letter to the families – you can send your letters via Trócaire, **St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare**
- Sign up to find out more about Trócaire's current campaigns (over eighteens only) [trocaire.org/getinvolved/become-a-campaigner](http://trocaire.org/getinvolved/become-a-campaigner)
- Pray the Blessing of the Land together in your garden, in a park, woodland or any outdoor space. [trocaire.org/sites/default/files/lent\\_2019\\_-\\_prayer\\_for\\_the\\_blessing\\_of\\_land.pdf](http://trocaire.org/sites/default/files/lent_2019_-_prayer_for_the_blessing_of_land.pdf)

**Thank you for joining in the Trócaire Romero Family Programme.  
We hope you have enjoyed learning more about families around the world.**

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# TRÓCAIRE IS THE OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND



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watch our videos



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see our photos and videos

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Front cover: Evelyn and her daughter  
Apio Patricia (7), Acholi Land, Uganda.  
Photo credit: Gary Moore

