Father's Day has not traditionally been celebrated by the Church in the same way as Mothering Sunday but, given the wealth of references, both biblical and otherwise, to God as our Father, it seems to be an ideal opportunity to explore what these references are telling us about God, at the same time as celebrating our earthly fathers.

What does it mean to call God our Father? And why do we celebrate our fathers on Father's Day? 'providing for me'; 'loving me'; ‘teaching me right from wrong'…characteristics of fatherhood you can apply to God. And do fathers only father us, or can they 'mother' us, too. God, of course, can do anything, so can be our mother, too.

Make Father's Day cards – one for Dad, or one just for God. Choose an attribute that best represents how you think of your own father, or about how a father should be, or about God, and write a card with the words 'Dear Dad/God, thank you for ...(loving me, being strong, and so on.)' Decorate them lavishly!

Older children might enjoy creating a cartoon character, Superdad. Give him extraordinary powers relevant to the job of parenting. God is not a cartoon character, or a fantasy figure, but an extraordinarily wonderful Father to us all.

 Father's Day presents. Take a square of cardboard and stick on it three cardboard tubes of varying lengths, standing upright. Decorate them with paint, glitter, stickers and so on. Add a few inexpensive pens and pencils to create a desk-tidy.

Use a set of blank postcards, three or four, hole-punched in one corner and tied together. Write a chore offering to do to help fathers. Write in white crayon or use a white candle. The cards are to be given to fathers, to reveal one message a day (using watercolour paint) until they are used up.

Pray: Bless our fathers, God the father of all.
And bless all those who have fathered us in the spirit.
We bless you for their gifts to us – gifts of nurture and strength,
of understanding and dependability,of energy and decisiveness,
of gentleness and wisdom, of peace and courage. We bless you for all that is good in their influence on our lives. We ask you to cherish and sustain them as they have cherished and sustained us. Give them happiness in their relationship with us.
Give them recognition for what they do.
And may we do for others the good things they have done for us.
**Amen.**