

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2009



Thoughtful Moments

Lent begins

Ash Wednesday on February 25th marks the first day of Lent. To prepare for Easter, we are called to spend more time in prayer, perform works of charity, and practice self-denial. Help children pick one reasonable action in each of these three pillars of Lent. The goal is to persevere through the whole season.



Friend vs. Faith

According to legend, Pericles of Athens refused to lie for a friend saying that a good friend won't let friendship violate one's faith or ethics. He contended that this doesn't demonstrate the friendship's limits; it proves its strength.

Through the eyes of a child

In teaching our children about the Catholic faith, we have the chance to learn again for ourselves. Let a child's wonder about the mysteries of God's love awaken your own sense of excitement. In connecting with your children, you may find you are reconnecting with the child in yourself.



Share what you love about being Catholic

As parents, we want our children to be Catholic because we know the Church is dedicated to helping us find joy in our relationship with God. To help children find Catholic joy, share what you love about being Catholic.

"My grandmother said the Rosary every day of her life," said Lisa. "When I was old enough, she gave me one and taught me how to pray it. This prayer has helped me through many tough times in my life and I pray it often with my own children."

"We moved a lot when I was young," said Art. "It was hard but no matter

where we lived, the Mass was always the same. It was my real home. Now I love taking my children to Mass because I want it to be their home, too."

"I did some bad things when I was young and felt too guilty to go to Mass," said Brooke. "Then I started dating a Catholic guy and went once in a while with him. When he proposed, he asked that I go to Confession so we could receive Communion together.

I did it for him, but it was such a thrill to hear the words of absolution and know that Jesus really did forgive me. We tell our children that Confession brought us together."



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics sing during Mass?

"(Address) one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart" (Ephesians 5:19). Dating back to Old Testament times, musical prayers convey celebration and express



joy at the same time. St. Augustine is credited with saying, "He who sings prays twice." Singing the same words at the same time also fosters unity among those gathered. It is the primary way that a group of people can speak with one voice.

Give your children lots of gifts

If you could give your child any gift in the world, what would it be? The truth is that you know that what the world can offer won't make her happy. Instead, pray frequently and fervently for gifts that will. Consider making petitions for these gifts part of your prayers for your children:

Wisdom. Ask that your child be inspired to avoid poor choices and have the wisdom to lead Gospel-centered lives.

Courage. Fortify him to stand for justice and speak out against bigotry, unfairness, and cruelty.

Strength. Pray that as she grows she will

withstand negative peer pressure.

Compassion. Help him them follow Jesus' commandment to love one another.

Discernment. Give children the skills to select healthy friendships.

Independence. Ask that children care less about what other people think of them and more interesting in pleasing God.

Faith. Faith in God, the teachings of Christ, Scripture, and the teachings of the Church are the foundation for a healthy life and eternal salvation.



Scripture LESSON

Mark 2:1-12; the faith of our friends.

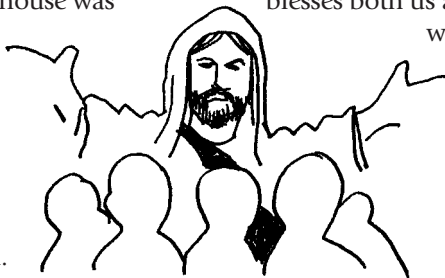
Word had gotten out that Jesus was home and people came from all over to hear him teach. The house was packed and there was no room for a group of friends who arrived to ask for a cure for their paralyzed friend. So the friends tore a hole in the roof and lowered the man down.

Jesus was clearly touched by their devotion. "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Child, your sins are forgiven.'" Had it not been for the man's friends, he might not have been cured.

What can a parent do? Help children

understand the importance of praying to God every day. Prayer blesses both us and the people for whom we pray. Our friends are blessed by the positive effect of our prayers. We are also blessed by the connection prayer gives us to God and by seeing the results of our prayers.

In this Gospel story, Jesus changed a man's life and amazed all who watched. Amazing things can happen when we place our friends' needs before Jesus.



Feasts & Celebrations

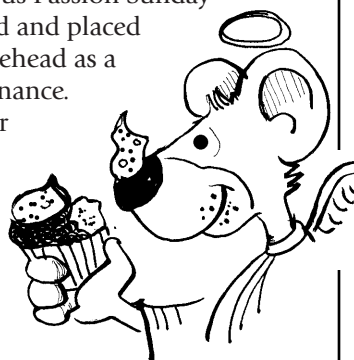
February 8 – St. Jerome Emiliani (1537). While serving as a militia officer for Venice, St. Jerome Emiliani was imprisoned by the enemy. In prison he taught himself how to pray and was inspired to escape safely. In response, he became a priest and with his own resources opened orphanages, a homeless shelter, and a hospital.

February 23 – St. Polycarp (156). Bishop of Smyrna, Asia-Minor, St. Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle St. John and a friend of St. Ignatius of Antioch. He faithfully cared for his flock despite being surrounded by

pagans and a government opposed to his religion. Before he was martyred, he thanked God for making him worthy of a martyr's death.

February 25 – Ash Wednesday. The first day of the six-week season of Lent. Ashes from the burnt palms of the previous Passion Sunday are blessed and placed on the forehead as a sign of penance.

Lent is our chance to amend our ways and become "new" at Easter.



Parent TALK

We usually start out strong on Ash Wednesday but by the time Easter comes, we've slipped back to our old ways. We tried something new last year:

Before Lent began, we made a wreath with six candles, similar to our Advent wreath. We lit the first candle on Ash Wednesday and committed to our Lenten sacrifices. We even wrote them down in small notebooks I bought. We lit the candle at dinnertime every night that week.

The next Wednesday, we lit two candles. Then we wrote down our thoughts about the last week and how we did with our sacrifices. It was a time to recommit to change. We did this throughout the six weeks of Lent.

When Easter came, I took a poll and we all agreed that the visual reminder of the candle and the chance to review our progress each week helped us stay on track.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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