

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

January 2008



Thoughtful Moments

Give yourself a break

Are your expectations for yourself as a parent reasonable? Ask yourself how organized does your home really need to be. How available do you have to be to jobs or friends? Handle what you reasonably can, and give the rest over to God. After all, he is the one who is really in charge.



They'll be back

Experts say that most children eventually return to the religious values with which they were raised even after time away. The best thing you can do if your children stray from the faith is to pray for them. Also keep communication flowing and be patient. Eventually they'll come home.

Model character

Children watch what we do much more than they listen to what we say. The best way to teach good character traits is to model them. When you have demonstrated honesty, modesty, patience, or another virtuous trait, talk about it with your children.



Celebrate your Catholic family

Catholic families have a unique identity, one which not only strengthens our families, but the entire Church. "Christian marriage and family build up the Church" (Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, #15). Celebrate yours.

Catholic parents are instruments of God's love. Children learn about God's love from their parents and we play a major role in shaping their relationship with him.

There are few (if any) jobs we have that are as important.

Our identities are shaped by Catholic traditions. We are truly Catholic when we attend Sunday Mass and other sacraments faithfully, work for the poor and vulnerable, and observe the seasons of the Church year.

Catholic families breed respect. Our

children know they are valued because we care about their behavior and hold them accountable as followers of Christ. Catholic parents provide structure and boundaries and enforce family rules. We help our youngsters develop good manners and respectful behavior.

Catholic families practice modesty.

Catholics are called to control passions and avoid public and private sin. Christian parents have to make tough choices about how children dress and act, so we encourage children to behave in a manner befitting a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Catholic parents model self-sacrifice. We regularly set aside our personal desires for the good of our family, our parish, and our community.

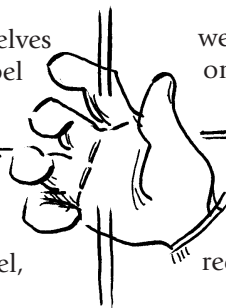


Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics cross their forehead, lips, and chest before listening to the Gospel at Mass?

One reason we cross ourselves before listening to the Gospel is to ask God to let its message dominate our thoughts, words, and feelings.

Before the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel,



we trace the sign of the cross first on the forehead, then the lips, and finally over the heart. Some even say a prayer similar to this, "May the Lord purify my understanding, my speech, and my heart, so that I may receive the words of the Gospel."

Make Sunday your Family Day

Weekly family routines can be busy. Between homework, practices, and lessons, many families even find it difficult to sit down for a family meal each day. Sundays are often no different. Yet, God intended Sunday to be the day when we rest and reconnect with our greatest blessings. Try these tips for making Sunday your Family Day.

Sunday morning, light a candle and announce that Family Day has begun. If you can do so safely, let it burn all day to remind everyone that God wants us to rest and keep Sunday holy. (Of course,



never leave a burning candle unattended.)

Make breakfast the night before and put it out so you can all eat together.

Pick a Mass time that everyone can make. Play sacred music while getting dressed.

After Mass, take a walk together, play games, or watch a movie. No matter what you do, try to do it together. No work.

No chores.

After dinner, blow out the "Sunday Candle" and feel ready to face the week ahead.

Scripture LESSON

Matthew 4:2-23, God's will comes first.

John was Jesus' first cousin, and the prophet of whom Isaiah wrote, "A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD!" (Isaiah 40:3). Jesus must have loved him dearly as a cousin but also as one who did God's will.

Upon hearing of John's arrest, Jesus knew his death was not far behind. Instead of indulging in personal grief, Jesus continued on with his role in God's saving mission. He persisted in continuing to fulfill Isaiah's prophecies regarding him. He put God's will first.



Then Jesus started gathering his disciples. Whoever he called immediately set aside his personal business, desires, and activities, and followed Jesus without question.

These men, too, put God's will first.

What can a parent do? Remind children that we are called to fulfill our part

in God's salvation plan just like Jesus and his disciples. It's not always what we want to do but it is always what we need to do. Followers of Jesus always put God's will before our own.

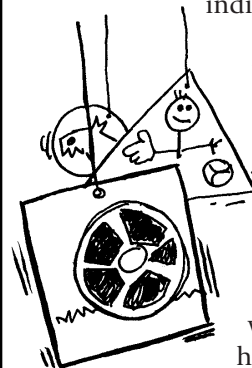
family FUN

Our special family

Object: To build family identity and individual self-esteem.

Materials: Yarn, two sticks, construction paper, crayons, scissors.

From the construction paper, cut out circles, squares, or any other shape that will be interesting to hang from a mobile.



Ask each person to write or draw pictures of at least five things they do well on the cut out shapes. (You can also use photos or pictures from a magazine.)

Put the two sticks together to form a cross and tie it together with a bit of the yarn. Cut different lengths of yarn (between 12" and 18" long) and use them to tie the cut-out shapes to the sticks. Make sure they hang so that each can be seen. Hang the mobile in a high traffic area so that all will be reminded of what's special about each member, and the family as a whole.

Feasts & Celebrations

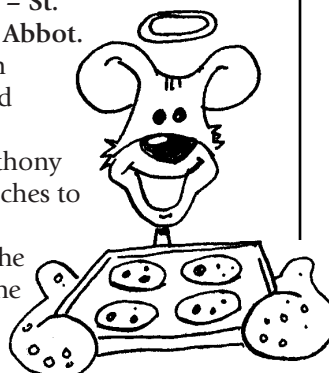
January is the month in which we celebrate the Holy Name of Jesus. "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Philippians 2:10). In fact, the English letters IHS – representing the first three Greek letters in Jesus' name – used to be written over the doors of Christian homes.

January 1 – Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. When we celebrate this feast, we honor Mary, but also Jesus as God.

January 6 – Epiphany of Our Lord. Epiphany is Greek for manifestation. When they honored the infant Jesus, the three wise men bore witness to the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior.

January 17 – St. Anthony the Abbot.

Born to a rich family around 250 A.D. in Egypt, St. Anthony gave up his riches to live a life of simplicity in the desert. He is the founder of monasticism.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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