

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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“To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children. Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of the others and share their burdens. Each one must show concern, not only for his or her own life but also for the lives of the other members of the family: their needs, their hopes, their ideals.” St. John Paul II

“It is better to leave angry words unspoken than to mend the heart those words have broken.” Unknown

“Strong families have roughly 20 positive comments for every negative one.”
John De Frain

“Love your children. In them you can see Baby Jesus. Pray for them a lot, and every day, put them under Holy Mary’s protection.” St. Gianna Molla

“Love gives and serves without expecting to be repaid.” Christopher West



Catch Your Child Being Good

Many parents spend a considerable amount of time attending to their children when they’re misbehaving. However, when the children are behaving appropriately, parents often don’t say or do anything. The attention parents give their children when they do misbehave is generally negative.

Since children crave attention, if they don’t get it for good behavior, then they’re likely to resort to less desirable actions. Parental approval is a powerful force. Being noticed is rewarding. Some children are only noticed when they are causing problems. These children need to be “caught being good.” Consciously use smiles, gestures, and verbal comments



when you like what your child is doing.

Tell them exactly what you liked (behaviors, ideas, or personal characteristics). **Be specific.** Praise the behavior, idea, or characteristic—not the child. Example:

“I liked how you pick up your room” rather than “Thanks for being so good.”

Be physical. Try using a hug, a smile, or a touch on the shoulder.

Catch them in the act, if you can. The more immediate your recognition is, the more likely your child will associate the good feelings she has with the behavior she did.

Adapted from Family Information Services

Recommended Reading: *BeDADitudes, 8 Ways to Be an Awesome Dad* by Gregory K. Popcak

In *BeDADitudes*, internationally known marriage and family expert Greg Popcak draws on more than twenty years as a counselor as well as his own experience as a father to show how the Beatitudes can be viewed as a practical guide to understanding the love of God and applying that love to being a better father. In the first book to uniquely focus on the Beatitudes and fatherhood, Greg Popcak helps you stop focusing on yourself and instead focus on God, learning how to be the father God wants you to be by becoming a servant leader in your home.

The Catholic author, speaker, counselor, and radio host will show that when you practice meekness, you will connect with your family by asking them questions and listening closely to their responses. By practicing mercy, you come to know your own sins, the difficulties that lie on the path to sainthood, and how your family needs to hear about God’s grace in their lives.

In *BeDADitudes*, you discover the profound love of God found in the Beatitudes and understand how that love can transform you into being an awesome dad.

Make Summer Memories

Summer is a glorious season to make memories with your family.

Take a “staycation” You don’t have to leave your home to take time off, and maybe you don’t have the funds this year to go anywhere other than here.

- Have a campfire meal. Build a small campfire and cook everything the old-fashioned way. Some easy meals to make include hot dogs and s’mores.
- Watch a movie. You can create a theater-like atmosphere in your home, complete with snacks and a darkened room.
- Make something. Some families like crafts and some like cooking and baking. Use your creativity and work together.

Beat the boredom Here are some ideas for getting past the summer boredom.

- Turn off the screens...all of them. Go outdoors...even if it’s hot.
- Visit a nursing home. So often, the people there are suffering the worst kind of loneliness, that of longing for love. You don’t have to spend a lot of time, but you will find your life changed and improved, especially if you make this an ongoing project.
- Reorganize a room, which includes cleaning underneath everything, decluttering and making sure everything has a purpose.

Get off the couch It’s hot and you are probably tired, but your family will benefit.

- Turn on the hose. Or, if you’re so inclined, get a bunch of water balloons.
- Pray a Rosary or a Divine Mercy Chaplet. But first, find a shade tree so you can pray with God’s nature around you.
- Go to the library. You’re bound to find something you didn’t know you wanted, and it won’t cost you a cent.

Adapted from Family Faith on the Go

Blessed are the parents who...

...model helpfulness, for their children will be kind.

...are thankful, for their children will learn gratefulness.

...teach empathy, for their children will respond in understanding.

...teach conflict resolution, for their children will learn to be peacemakers.



ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement helps give people a feeling of belonging. Encouragement is different from praise. Praise is evaluation and judgment of a person, “Good boy,” while encouragement asks for self-evaluation, “How do you think you did on the test?” or focuses on the deed, “Thank you for helping.” Encouragement can be given at any time, not just for the “best” performance or “1st” place.



Dreikeus says in *Children: The Challenge* that “encouragement is more important than any other aspect of child raising.” He believes that in fact, it is so important that the lack of it can be considered the basic cause for misbehaving children.

As a family, run through the checklist below to see how you are doing in the area of encouragement. A positive attitude comes from a positive feeling about yourself and others. Encouragement is key to its development. As you go through the checklist, discuss ways to improve as individuals or as family members.

1. Do we use words that show confidence in each other?
 - * “I have confidence in you.”
 - * “Knowing you, no problem.”
2. Do we use words that focus on others’ contributions?
 - * “Thanks for the help.”
 - * “How thoughtful of you to help her with her yard work.”
3. Do we use words that point out effort and improvement?
 - * “You really put a lot of thought into that poem—good work!”
 - * “You worked hard on that project—good effort!”
4. Do we know that mistakes are opportunities to learn and that it’s okay to make them?
5. Do we avoid discouragement by bad words, bad voices, etc.?
6. Do we use words that tell each other what to do (thinking that our way to do something is the only “right way”)?
7. Do we use words, which invite or encourage each other?
8. Do we say positive things and then add the killer conjunction “but”?
9. Do we share “appreciations” with each other at family meetings?
10. Do we have faith in each other’s ability to make meaningful contributions?
11. Do we see each other’s strengths and celebrate each other’s successes?

Adapted from *Family Information Services*



Patriotic Strawberries—Ingredients: 1 pound strawberries, 6-8 oz. white chocolate baking squares almond bark, blue sanding sugar or sprinkles

1. Wash and dry strawberries. In a small microwave-safe bowl microwave white chocolate in 30 second intervals until melted. Stir until smooth.
2. Dip one strawberry at a time in the white chocolate shaking off excess chocolate. Dip in the sanding sugar then place on wax or parchment paper to dry. Repeat with remaining strawberries and refrigerate until serving.
Makes around 16 dipped strawberries.

Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
Marriage & Family Life Office

Catholic Parent Newsletter
12615 Parallel Parkway
Kansas City, Kansas 66109

Phone: 913-721-1570 ext. 149
Fax: 913-721-1577
Email: famlife@archkck.org

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Prayer for Beginning a New School Year



Father,
We thank you for the opportunity to begin the 2018-2019 school year, and we ask that you bless the faculty, the students, and student families. We pray that you will guide us in all ways, and that we will seek your will in everything that we do. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.