

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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“Life is about choosing priorities and putting them at the center of our lives. We do this by passionately placing what matters most at the center of each day.”

Matthew Kelly

June 21 is the Summer Solstice. As a family, have a late night dessert under the stars on the longest day of the year.

June 28 is the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Say this prayer—
Sacred Heart of Jesus, let me love You and make you loved. Amen

“Our children are watching us live, and what we ARE shouts louder than anything we can say.”

Wilfred A. Peterson

“You are the unique, irreplaceable, unrepeatable presentation of the face of God for the people of your lifetime.”

Saint John Paul II

“Parents have “home field advantage” when it comes to teaching their kids about the faith.”

Annemarie Scobey



Break from Screen Time this Summer

Children look forward to summer. It’s a time to relax and be lighthearted, and they need a break from their studies. Take a break from some of their screen time—computers, iPads, and TV time should not be a large part of their summer schedule. These days the school year is filled with electronic usage that is necessary for schoolwork, especially as children get older. Too much screen time has been linked to shortened attention spans and emotional overstimulation. Helping children detach from electronics as their form of entertainment during their summer break is important for their emotional well-being. Away from electronics, children can learn to interact with other people as their primary means of enjoyment. The benefits of personal interaction far outweigh the benefits of electronic interaction, for both children and their parents.



Making the most out of the summer includes getting your children to be creative and social, both inside the house and out. Summer is the perfect opportunity to share quality time with your children, one-on-one and as a family.

Help your children to be psychologically healthy by allowing them to remain children while they can, and providing them with the opportunity and means to be creative and play. *Have fun this summer!*

Adapted from Catholic Digest

Recommended Reading: “Don’t Forget To Say Thank You (And Other Parenting Lessons That Brought Me Closer to God)” by Lindsay Schlegel

Do you hear yourself saying the same things over and over to your kids? “Do you need help?” “Say thank you.” “Wait a minute.” In *Don’t Forget to Say Thank You: And Other Parenting Lessons That Brought Me Closer to God*, Lindsay Schlegel reimagines the common phrases we repeat as parents and applies them to our relationship with God. What if we took the statements we repeat to our children and apply them to ourselves? When we start to hear the things we’re telling our kids as wisdom from God, it’s clear that the lessons we are trying to teach our kids are ones we also need to learn as children of the Most High. Asking her daughter, “Do you need help?” caused Schlegel to reflect on the importance of the Communion of Saints and reaching out for the assistance she needs. Telling her children, “Say you’re sorry” reminded her of the necessity of Confession and seeking forgiveness. And pleading that a toddler “wait a minute” while she looked for her crackers forced Schlegel to consider how she needed to have both more patience and more trust that God would take care of her. Schlegel invites us to apply the same lessons she learned to our own lives as parents and as children of God through reflection questions and a prayer at the end of each chapter.

90-Second Ideas for Taking Notice of Your Child

Here's a great idea for sharing words of love, praise and encouragement with your children (this works with teens, too). Make a door hanger (example to the right) by cutting out a pattern on a bright-colored piece of card stock paper. Cut a circle in the top to go over the door knob, and write the words: ***I noticed you for...*** or ***Thank you for...*** one on each side of the card (you may laminate it if you wish). Put a sticky note on this sign with a specific observation of good behavior. Hang it on your child's door after they've gone to bed.



Here are some other ideas:

- * Emphasize positive things
- * Give daily verbal and non-verbal affirmations
- * Give each child one-on-one time
- * Take feelings and thoughts seriously
- * Be available
- * Assign meaningful tasks so your child feels capable and accomplished
- * Verbalize reasonable expectations
- * Spend time having fun together
- * Share words of love, praise and encouragement frequently with your child

Adapted from *Family Information Services*

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Be aware of spontaneous faith experiences. For example, when you and your child share an experience of the beauty of nature, say a spontaneous prayer of praise to God for the beauty of His creation. When your child experiences loss or frustration, talk about how to carry that feeling to God. When your child is successful at something, use the experience to help him or her reflect on the gifts that God has given them.



Treat Mass as an important family event. Sit near the front. Before liturgy, talk with your family about who you want to pray for during the Prayer of the Faithful, and what you want to thank God for during the Eucharistic Prayer. Talk about the homily on the way home.

Pray as a family. Focus first on the natural times of family life: mealtimes, bedtimes, happy times, times of worry, after an argument, and when someone is having trouble. Encourage family members to offer their own prayers.

Have faith conversations. Tell stories about your own experiences of God. Use Scripture stories in your child's text and talk together about what they mean. Refer to the "People of Faith" in each of your child's lessons. Look up more information about the saints and expand on the story. Talk about the saint your child is named after.

Adapted from *Catholic Parent*

Four Ways to Keep Your Summer Faith-filled

Perhaps it is because Jesus is the “Light of the World,” but there is no doubt that we love light, especially in the summertime. And, we love everything LIGHT about the summer. Lists of summer favorites are bonfires, fireflies, fireworks, sunsets and days in the sun. Light encourages us and can make us feel lighthearted.

Summer is a great time to consider what Jesus told us about living in the light of God’s love. He tells us to open our hearts, love others and do what is right. Sunny days can be faith-filled as well as fun-filled. Try some of these ideas:

Enjoy the WORD: As a family, memorize Ephesians 5:8-9: “*For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of the light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.*” Talk about being “children of light” and what that means as you go about summer activities. Make goodness and truth concrete daily goals.



Enjoy the TIME: Summer gives us more light and, usually more outdoor time together.

Plan a once-a-week outdoor meal without technology and spend time talking about life, faith and family. Begin with a family prayer—one you’ve written together—and remember that God is also a member of your family! Use a few hours of summer’s extra time to bring light and love to others by helping someone in your neighborhood who is lonely or ill and needs yard work, gardening or a grocery pickup.

Enjoy the EVENTS: Summer is a time of special events like reunions, parades, fairs, ballgames and concerts. Each time you attend an event, make a list of the blessings you received. Say a short prayer for the success of the event before you go.

Enjoy the TRAVEL: As you take day trips or vacations, plan to stop at one or more faith-filled locations. Find a church of interest, a local shrine, or a museum with religious art. Or, take a “Light of God” walk and look for all the things that remind you of God’s love and creation. Take pictures for a memory album or other displays to remind your children that your faith is part of the fun.

Adapted from “Family Faith on the Go”

Celebrate the Gift of Mothers (Mother's Day, May 12)

- Spend some time looking through your scrapbooks and reflecting on the bounty of love that comes to you through family and maternal love.
- Have everyone in the family write a thank-you note to Mom and Grandma—say a prayer of blessing for all they do.

GRATEFUL

Celebrate the Gift of Fathers (Father's Day, June 16)

- Gather as a family and pray a prayer to St. Joseph for dad and his intentions.
- Remember to thank dad for all he has done for the family, and especially for giving you the gift of faith. Write a thank-you note to Dad and Grandpa.

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and/or contact person
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Summer Blessing—For Our Family

*May we make our homes places of relaxation,
joy, love, peace and safety.*

*May we be generous and considerate,
not thinking only about ourselves,
but helping others enjoy the blessings of the summertime.*

*Lord God, Creator of all things,
guide our steps and strengthen our hearts
during these months of summer and vacation days.*

Grant us refreshment of mind and body.

*May we constantly strive to make a meaningful difference
in the lives of our loved ones and in the world around us
as we enjoy the warm days of summertime.*

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.