

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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Bits and Pieces from Here and There

Your goodness surrounds us, Lord. Help us to recognize it and celebrate it in all that we do in all those we meet in all places we go and especially in our hearts and homes.

“If you want your children to improve, let them overhear the nice things you say about them to others.”

Haim Ginott

To encourage means to:
STRENGTHEN
FORTIFY
INSPIRE
CHEER
NOURISH
NUDGE
REASSURE

“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.”

St. Pope John Paul II



Keeping the Family Faith this Summer

See God in All Things. We Catholics have a rich history of seeing the ordinary and perceiving the extraordinary. The sacraments allow us to see ordinary things as water, bread, wine and oil as doors to the sacred that reveal God. This summer, we can use our “sacramental imagination” to see God in new places as we travel, as we garden, as we spend time outside and even as we watch Little League games. An expression attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola explains our goal as believers: “To see God in all things.” Summer is a time when we can slow down, find time for reflection and perhaps have peace and calm within to see God in the everyday occurrences of life.



Adjust Your Family’s Summer Schedule. How do we continue our faith journey in the summer without regular schedules and religious classes? Of course, God’s revelation never ends. The Catechism states God’s revelation can be encountered in “the great book of creation, and that of history, the page on which the ‘today’ of God is written.”

Find God As a Family. God is always with us, but we are the ones who get too busy to notice God’s presence. Have you ever lost your sunglasses and found that they were there on your head? It’s the same for finding God. God is always with us, but we may be too frantic, too busy, too preoccupied to notice. Take time this summer to notice God’s presence and continue making family memories and spiritual moments.

Adapted from “Take Out,” Family Faith on the Go

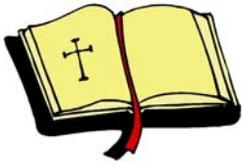
Recommended Reading: *Pope Francis Family Devotional: 365 Reflections to Share With Your Kids* by Rebecca Vitz Chericco

Let us make room in our heart and in our day for the Lord. As Mary and Joseph also did... Pope Francis

Now with the *Pope Francis Family Devotional*, you can take a few short minutes every day to grow in faith together as a family. You’ll be inspired by a quote from the Holy Father, and a simple reflection to spark discussion. Use at dinner time to guide prayer and conversation....Or at breakfast or bedtime as the perfect start or close to each day’s activities.

If you’ve been looking for a simple but structured way to add reflection and prayer into your family’s life, *Pope Francis Family Devotional* is a gift from God.

Parents—*Passing on Faith & Spirituality to the Next Generation*



Parents want to raise children who are responsible and “good.” They want them to have character traits such as honesty, tenacity, flexibility, optimism and compassion—traits that will serve them well in our rapidly-changing world. Laying a spiritual foundation in the lives of children may be one of the most important tasks of parents in helping children to become people of “character.”

- ❑ **Love is a basic ingredient in teaching your children the most important qualities of life.** Love them and let them know you love them by spending time with them, showing affection, and paying attention to what is important to them.
- ❑ **Be a model for them.** Through your life and behaviors show them what it means to live out one’s deepest beliefs. For example, prayer is an important part of your faith and spirituality, let them see you praying.
- ❑ **Teach them.** Explain why you believe the way you do, why you observe the rituals and traditions of your Catholic faith. This is “preaching what you practice.” Helping them to understand the reasons and motives behind behaviors and beliefs helps children develop a foundation for their own beliefs.
- ❑ **Practice the rituals and traditions of your Catholic faith with your children.** Allow them opportunities to participate and learn. Have devotional and quiet times as a family and with children individually.
- ❑ **Take advantage of teachable moments.** Find the miraculous in everyday life.
- ❑ **Create opportunities for conversation that allows the sharing of your deepest values and convictions.** This time can be one of mutual sharing, of children and adults talking about their feelings, doubts, and questions about life.
- ❑ **Help children cultivate a vision for the world.** Like adults, children and young people need something bigger than themselves to invest in. This may be done through your parish, a community of faith, through helping friends and neighbors, or by volunteering for local organizations. Being a part of something bigger than themselves helps children and young people learn to care for others outside the family.

Adapted from *Family Information Services*



TAKE YOUR CHILDREN OUTSIDE
Hundreds of studies have been released showing the correlation between nature and our well-being. So it is no surprise that seeking a connection with nature can help us recharge our relationship with God.

Four Things to Do with Kids Outdoors

- ◆ Take a walk.
- ◆ Dig in the dirt.
- ◆ Watch the clouds move across the sky.
- ◆ Say your evening prayers with the children under the stars.

Loving and Nurturing Our Children: An Essential Part of Parenting

All children need love. They need to be cared for, touched, held and given positive, loving attention. They need to feel significant to others, loved, connected and attached. Children must know that their parents are crazy about them, that they would die for them. Nurture fills us up and allows us to give to others. It also provides the basis for self-love. Children who grow up with lots of good discipline but with not enough nurturing appear to function well, but they experience an emptiness, a hollowness, a lack of joy, and often these people have trouble getting close and loving in an intimate way. Love leads to attachment, and attachment is the basic foundation of the personality. When children are attached to their parents, they learn to trust and can establish healthy relationships throughout life. They also develop hope and an optimistic view of the world and the people in it as good.

So what is good nurturing parenting? It consists of many things, including *loving eye contact, intimate conversation in a warm, loving voice, smiles, sharing feelings, touch, holding, comforting, praise, encouragement, and unconditional acceptance.*

Nurturing parents provide protection for their children and give them the gifts of time and attention. Without love, children fail to thrive. With proper nurturing children thrive and develop hope, joy and self-confidence. Children need to hear and feel affirmations such as the following to feel our unconditional love:

“I love and care for you willingly.”

“Nothing can ever make me stop loving you.”

“I love you because you are you.”

“I love you more than words can express.”

“I’d go to the ends of the earth for you.”

“My love goes with you wherever you go.”

Our unconditional love for our children is reflected in our actions and in our time—watching and observing, playing, caring for them, talking, and sharing of love. If parents say, “I love being with you,” but are gone a lot or are preoccupied when they are with their children, then the children learn to disregard the parents’ verbal message. Nurturing parents share their children’s interests, attend their child’s special activities, and even tolerate games like Chutes and Ladders!

Adapted from Family Information Services

Praise your children often

Praising your children is an important part of being a good parent. You want your kids to feel proud of their accomplishments and good about themselves. If you don't give them the confidence they need to be out in the world on their own, then they won't feel empowered to be independent or adventurous. When they do something good, let them know that you've noticed and that you're very proud of them. Make a habit of praising your children at least three times as much as you give them negative feedback. Though it's important to tell your children when they're doing something wrong, it's also important to help them build a positive sense of self. Tell them often how much God loves them.

Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
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

Catholic Parent Newsletter

Place your parish logo,
and/or contact person
information here!

We Are Family

Lord, God, we thank you for the gift of family. We acknowledge that our image and name as family come from you. We believe that within our family lies a homemade holiness. We affirm that it is in this household of faith that we experience your presence, your forgiveness, and your love.

We are Family. We give thanks to you for the many joys and blessings that have come to us through family.

As a family, we sometimes feel pain. And so we offer you our disappointments, frustrations, and hurts. Help us to forgive those members of our family, including ourselves, who have caused pain.

We pray for the strength to be a light within our family. May we open our hearts, our eyes, and our ears and carry our light to those in need.

God, Creator of the earth and all its people, help us to be mindful that, as members of one global family, we are equal in your eyes. Help us to continue to appreciate the diversity of persons in our homes and in our world. As members equal in human dignity, may we build a better world and proclaim our willingness to be the holy people you call us to be. Amen

NACFLM National Association