

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

April 2010



Thoughtful Moments

Giggly prayer

Formula prayers help children learn to pray but trying spontaneous prayer is important, too. Don't worry if they get a little silly the first few times. Suggest a few deep breaths and start again.

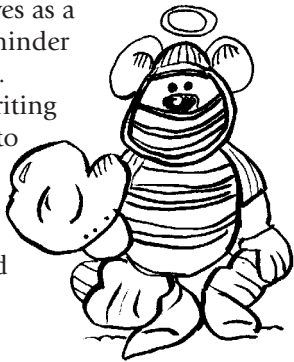


God's personal love

Each of us was made by a loving creator who knows and calls us by name. He knows how many hairs are on our heads and the concerns we hold deep in our hearts. No matter your child's IQ, athletic abilities, popularity, or the condition of his room, he has great value in God's eyes. Remind your child that God made him, knows him, and loves him for exactly who he is - even more than you do.

Love notes

It's one thing to talk with your child, but writing down your feelings serves as a tangible reminder of your love. Consider writing a love note to your child. It's something she will read again and again.



Show children how faith is done

Sharing our Catholic faith with our children in even simple ways can have an amazing impact on their lives. Not only do we serve as spiritual role models, we demonstrate how they can incorporate their own faith into daily life.

Blessings - Tracing a cross on a child's forehead while saying a blessing is a great way to reassure them that God will watch over them even if you are not there. Consider giving a blessing before bedtime or before they leave for school.

Prayer - Pray together before meals, at bedtime and for special intentions like a big test or a sick friend.

Symbols - Hang up at least one

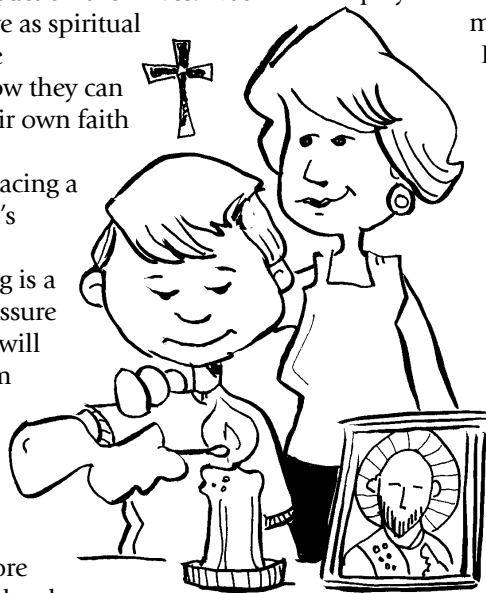
crucifix in your home. During Advent, put an Advent wreath on the table.

Display a nativity scene to show the real meaning of Christmas. For Lent, place purple in your home as a reminder to repent, a bowl to collect change for almsgiving, and a candle to symbolize baptism and rebirth.

Pictures - Remember the Holy Family is part of ours, as are the saints. Find a place to have images of them in your home.

Actions - Let your children "catch" you living your faith. Attend mass each week and holy day,

and go to Confession. When others are in need, reach out to them and find opportunities for your children to help as well.

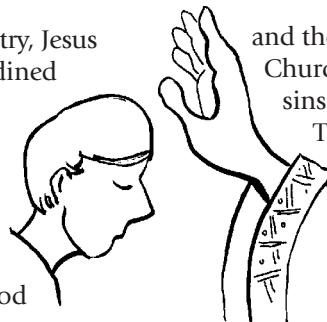


Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics believe in absolution?

During his public ministry, Jesus not only forgave sins, he dined and consorted with the forgiven, thus drawing them back into the community from which their sins alienated them.

When we sin, we alienate ourselves from God



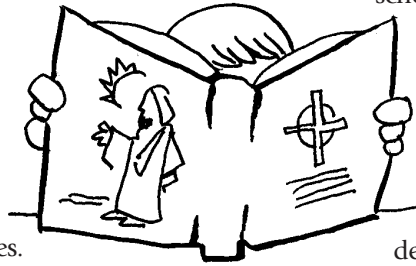
and the Church. Jesus gave the Church the power to pardon the sins of those who were penitent. Through the priest during the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, God grants us "pardon and peace," absolves us of our sins, and welcomes us back.

Is your child called to religious life?

When a child shows an inclination toward the priesthood or religious life, parents can be unsure what to do next. Try these ideas to help your child discern God's will for him or her:

Serve at Mass – Children can learn about Church service by serving during Mass. They can become altar servers or lectors, for example. Your pastor may have ideas about other appropriate opportunities.

Get active in the Church community – Catholic schools do a great job of building community while



children are in the formative years. If your parish doesn't have a school, make religious education classes and church-based youth activities a priority.

Pray about it – God speaks to us in prayer. Pray together at home or in the real presence of Christ at church.

Be informed – Explore books about saints, priests and other religious. That's a great way to see that religious life can be both demanding and rewarding.

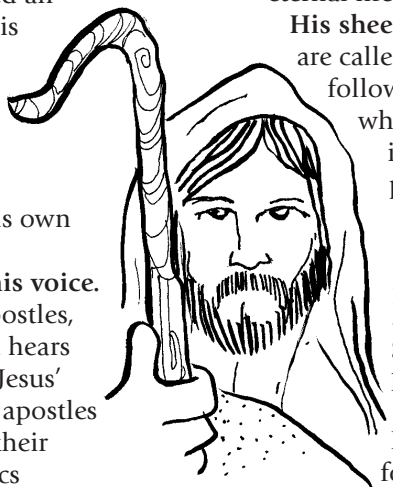
Leave it in God's hands. He ultimately chooses. Our job is to encourage, educate, and cooperate with his will.

Scripture LESSON

John 10:27-30, Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

In the story of the sheep and the shepherd, Jesus used an image familiar to his listeners. Many depended upon sheep for their livelihood. Jesus described three characteristics of his own sheep.

His sheep hear his voice. Jesus said to his Apostles, "He who hears you hears me" (Luke 10:16). Jesus' voice passed to his apostles and from them to their successors. Catholics recognize Christ's voice in those of their pope and bishops. It will guide



them safely to the pastures of eternal life.

His sheep follow him. Catholics are called to follow Jesus. We follow out of love and we do what he asked us to do, including caring for the poor and vulnerable.

His sheep will have eternal life. Listening to his voice and following Jesus' commands will guide us safely to the pastures of eternal life.

What can a parent do? Help your children listen for Jesus' voice and follow him in the Church so they can enjoy eternal life with him.

Parent TALK

Easter is our favorite holiday. I love it because it reminds me God is always willing to give me a second chance. My children love it because we make it fun.



New clothes signify our new life in Christ. Easter candy reminds us of the sweetness of God's love. And an Easter candle burns

all day to help us remember the light of truth that Jesus lived. It's a great day but all good things must come to an end.

Last year I realized that doesn't apply to Easter. Not only are the promises Easter brings always alive, "little Easter" comes every Sunday to remind us.

This year, our Easter candle will burn every Sunday. After Sunday Mass, we'll share a special Easter meal. I may even try to find Easter candy.

When it comes to the love of God, there's no such thing as too much of a good thing.

Feasts & Celebrations

April 4 – Easter Sunday. The greatest feast in the Church calendar, Easter celebrates Jesus' resurrection from the dead. We prepare for it during Lent and Holy Week, and catechumens usually receive the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil.

April 7 - St. John Baptist de la Salle (1719). At a time when only the rich were educated, St. John devoted his life and fortune to educating the poor. He formed the Brothers of the Christian School, a successful community of

educators. Pope Pius XII named him the patron of school teachers.

April 29 – St. Catherine of Siena (1380). A mystic from a young age, St. Catherine had regular conversations with Jesus. At sixteen years old, she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic and served the poor. Although uneducated, she dictated many books on the Catholic faith. She is credited with coaxing Pope Gregory XI back to Rome from an easy life in France.



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