

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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“It’s easy to praise when things go right, but it is more *important* to praise the person even when things go wrong.”

“If instead of a gem or even a flower, we should cast the gift of a loving thought into the heart of a friend, that would be giving as the angels give.”
Washington Irving

“The busier you are, the more valuable meal time is for your child.” *Dr. Lee Salk*

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

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. Amen.



The Holy Days of January

We celebrate three great feasts in January: the Epiphany, the Baptism of the Lord, and the Conversion of St. Paul. Inherent in all of these is the idea that we first undergo a change in our lives and then live out that change. The feasts of January are intended to lead us into a deeper and richer union with the Lord.

EPIPHANY (Jan 6). This day commemorates the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child. When these Wise Men saw the star, they felt pulled to find this newborn king. They help us understand that we must “seek out the Lord where he may be found.” >> Write the initials of the kings’ names—C+M+B (Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar) in chalk above the main door of your home, asking for a blessing for the year. The initials translate *Christus mansionem benedicat*, “Christ, bless this house,” and is a sign that your family are disciples of the Lord.

BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Jan 10). We recall Jesus’ baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist on this feast. Although Jesus was sinless, he submitted to baptism as an example to us. The Catechism says, “Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus...” >> Decide as a family on one activity that will help you live out those promises this year (daily Scripture reading, praying the Rosary...).

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL (Jan 25). Paul was transformed when he heard God’s voice on the road to Damascus. He changed his name from Saul to Paul. St. Paul is a primary example of what it means to be converted and then how to live out that conversion. >> Conversion of heart means that we examine our own feelings and ask for forgiveness from those whom we have wronged. Say “I’m sorry” to a friend or family member, and remember God’s love and forgiveness never end.”

Recommended Reading: “YOUCAT “
Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church

YOUCAT stands for the faith of the Catholic Church: vividly explained, innovatively presented, officially confirmed. YOUCAT is the Catechism of the Catholic Church for adolescents and young people. The most important elements of the faith are summarized briefly and comprehensibly in a question-and-answer format. The YOUCAT was approved by the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* in Rome and officially published by the Austrian Bishops' Conference. With more than 5 million copies sold, it is one of the best-selling Catholic books in the world. YOUCAT is coherent, innovative, and safe. There are:

- Numerous inspiring illustrations and photos
- Quotes from the Bible, from saints and celebrities
- Background information and links for further study

ASL YOUCAT Videos are available at the following link:
<https://archkck.org/outreach-support/outreach-ministries/special-needs/deaf-ministry/asl-youcat-videos>

Parenting in a Pandemic: Tips to Keep the Calm at Home

Fear, uncertainty, and being holed up at home more to slow the spread of COVID-19 can make it tough for families to keep a sense of calm. But it's important to help children feel safe, keep healthy routines, manage their emotions and behavior and build resilience.

Keep healthy routines.

During the pandemic, it is more important than ever to maintain bedtime and other routines. They create a sense of order to the day that offers reassurance in a very uncertain time. All children, including teens, benefit from routines that are predictable yet flexible enough to meet individual needs.

Structure the day.

With the usual routines thrown off, establish new daily schedules. Break up schoolwork when possible. Older children and teens can help with schedules, but they should follow a general order, such as:

- * wake-up routines, getting dressed, breakfast and some active play in the morning, followed by quiet play and snack to transition into schoolwork.
- * lunch, chores, exercise, some online social time with friends, and then homework in the afternoon.
- * family time & reading before bed.

A word about bedtimes.

Children often have more trouble with bedtime during any stressful period. Try to keep normal nighttime routines such as Book, Brush, Bed for younger children. Put a family picture by their bed for "extra love" until morning. Bedtimes can shift some for older children and teens, but it is a good idea to keep it in a reasonable range so the sleep-wake cycle isn't thrown off. Too little sleep makes it more challenging to learn and to deal with emotions. Remember to turn off cell phones and other mobile devices an hour before bedtime.

Offer extra hugs and say "I love you" more often.

Adapted from American Academy of Pediatrics



Chocolate-covered Pretzel Sticks with Sprinkles

Ingredients

- * 1/2 cup chocolate chips or broken chocolate
 - * 1 teaspoon butter
 - * pretzels (large sticks, small sticks, or regular shaped pretzels)
 - * sprinkles (have a bowl underneath the sprinkles to catch excess)
 - * baking sheet lined with parchment paper
1. Put the chocolate and butter together in microwave safe container. Microwave for 30 second intervals until the butter has melted and the chocolate is soft. Stir.
 2. Dip a pretzel into the chocolate, let excess drip off then wipe one side against the bowl so it's flat.
 3. Hold the pretzel over a bowl and either pour the sprinkles or use a spoon to ladle them on.
 4. Set on the baking sheet and refrigerate for 20 minutes.
(To store, keep in an air-tight container in fridge.)

How to Teach Children about Lenten Sacrifice

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 17. An important lesson of Lent is sacrifice. So often, this lesson is lost in our consumer world. Sacrifice is not easy. It's more than giving up a bad habit. It's about recognizing what distracts you and surrendering that yearning for what you think you want. Sacrifice can be emotionally painful and demands commitment. But doing something difficult helps us understand ourselves in a deeper, more meaningful way.

How do parents find a way back to the lesson of sacrifice? How do we instill the importance of this message when we are bombarded daily with the counter message of consumption and instant gratification?

MODEL SACRIFICE: The first step is recognizing the model we set for our kids. Their eyes are always on us, even when we may not realize it. Take time this Lent to carefully reflect on what you value. What do you believe you can't live without? What have you been coveting that you think you would be miserable not having? Pray about this in the quiet, after the kids are in bed, or during Mass. Ask God to help you shed distractions and yearnings so that you may be more present and connected to what really matters.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES: As a parent, it is also important to provide your children opportunities to make sacrifices themselves. Be upfront with them about what you will be sacrificing this Lent. Choose something that will make your whole family collectively exclaim, "Oo-o-o-o-oh, that'll be hard for you, Dad/Mom." Tell them why you have made this choice, and tell them, "Yes, it will be hard, but I am ready." Then, throw the challenge to them. They will be courageous when you show them how.

SHARE: Throughout this season of Lent and sacrifice, be sure to share your experiences with your family. Ask for help, especially from God. Experience this time with a full heart, always mindful of the model Jesus' death and resurrection first set for us.

Adapted from Take Out, Family Faith on the Go



Each day set aside 15 minutes to give absolute, undivided attention to your child.

Read together, play a board game or just talk (and listen) over a cup of hot chocolate. Fifteen minutes doesn't sound like much, but it's more time than most parents spend completely focused on their children, with other distractions like phone calls, TV, paperwork, or household chores. *And what a difference it makes for a child!*

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

Place your family's crucifix in the center of your table. Ask each family member to write the name of someone they would like to pray for on a slip of paper and place at the foot of Jesus. Talk about the power of prayer and how we pray—not for “things,” but to nourish our relationship with God.



LENTEN FAMILY PRAYER

Loving God,
bless our family
throughout this season of Lent.
Help us to love each other,
forgive each other,
and care for each other
as Jesus taught us.
Amen.