

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

March 2010



Thoughtful Moments

Quiet time

Don't forget to build in time during your day to spend quiet time with God. It can be hard to carve out personal time away from your children and family, but making time for God each day will make you a better parent and spouse.

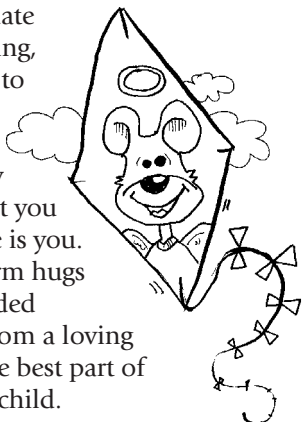


Top priority

In your busy family schedule, protect time for religious education and Sunday Mass above all else in your week. The skills your children acquire during their religious education classes will last throughout their lives. The graces they receive from attending Mass each Sunday will last forever.

Just you, yourself

We work hard so that we can give our children the very best of what we can provide. Certainly children need adequate food, clothing, and shelter to grow properly, but the very best of what you can provide is you. Getting warm hugs and undivided attention from a loving parent is the best part of being your child.



Planting seeds of faith

Helping children to grow in faith is like tending a garden. To become healthy, plants need regular attention, the right ingredients and help from an expert gardener. To become strong, children's faith formation needs regular attention, the right ingredients, and God's continual help.

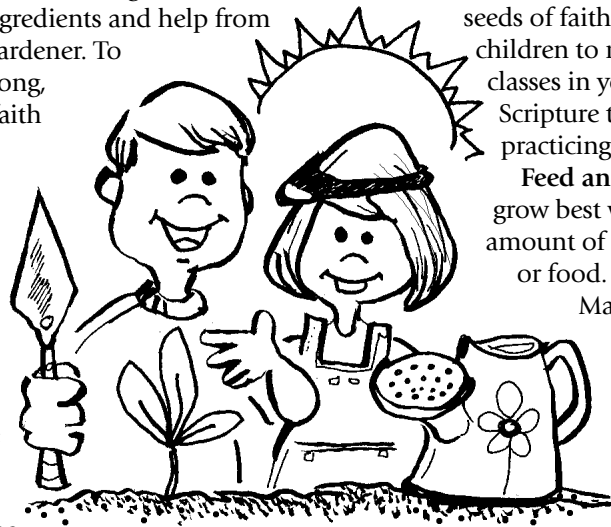
Cultivate the soil. Before planting, the soil must be prepared. It has to be made moist, perhaps have fertilizer mixed in, be positioned to get lots of sunlight, and any weeds must be cleared. Baptism cultivates our children's souls in a similar way. The weeds of original sin are removed, hearts are turned toward

God, and the conditions are made right for God's planting.

Plant the seed. Some ways to plant seeds of faith include taking children to religious education classes in your parish, reading Scripture together, and practicing our faith at home.

Feed and water. Plants grow best with the right amount of water and fertilizer or food. Prayer, weekly Mass, Sacraments, and religious study give our children's souls the food they need to grow a healthy faith.

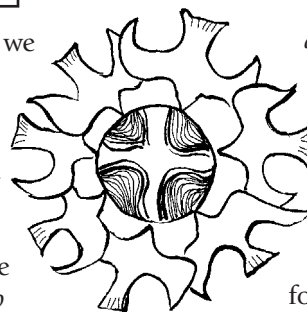
Constant tending. Weeds can steal the food and resources plants need to grow. Sin can also choke our faith so that it becomes thin or weak. Taking our children to the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly is a great way to keep weeds of sin out of their gardens.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

In our imperfect world, we need assistance to lead moral, Christian lives. To help, we receive certain gifts from the Holy Spirit. These make us more disposed to listen and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "For those who

Why do we receive gifts from the Holy Spirit?



are led by the Spirit of God are children of God" (Romans 8:14).

There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and they are derived from Isaiah 11:1-3: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, piety, fortitude, and fear of the Lord.

Can you answer Catholic questions your children ask?

Not every adult Catholic is an expert on our faith. In fact, formal religious education stopped for many of us after Confirmation. So how can you brush up on your knowledge of Catholicism? Try these ideas:

Talk to other adult Catholics, especially other parents. Learning how they teach and live the faith may give you ideas.

Ask a priest or religious leader. Helping you to present the accurate faith to your children is part of the job of being a priest, deacon, brother or sister.



Go to Mass – and not just on Sundays.

Attend a retreat. If your parish doesn't offer any, check with your diocese.

Read the Bible. Using a Catholic commentary may deepen your understanding of what you've read. Ask your priest for a recommendation.

Volunteer at your parish. It's a great way to learn the rhythm of our faith.

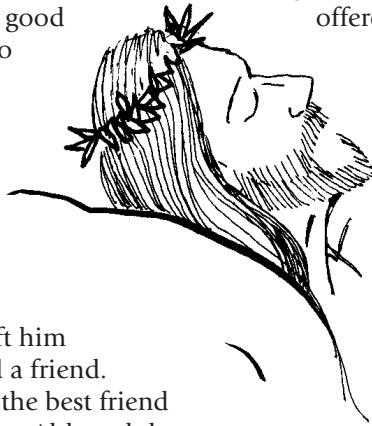
Attend a class. If your parish doesn't offer faith formation classes for adults, check with your diocese or ask if you can sit in RCIA classes to brush up.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 22:14–23:56, the Passion of Christ

Even young children know how to be a good friend. A good friend is someone who stands by us in good times or bad. At the end of his life, it may seem as if Jesus didn't have many good friends. Even though he started with twelve good friends, all but one left him when he most needed a friend.

By contrast, Jesus is the best friend anyone could ever have. Although he had no guilt himself, he took blame for things we did and saved us from having to bear the punishments we have earned. Even when the situation got



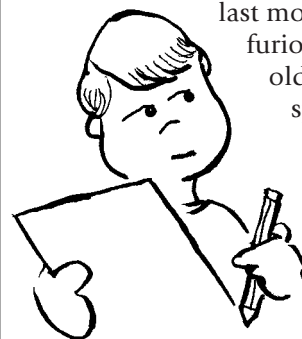
rough, Jesus never backed down or offered up the real guilty people. He suffered and died so that we could live.

What can a parent do? During the week before Easter, pause some time each day to read part of Jesus' Passion as a family. Remind children that these are the moments for which Jesus came to

Earth. Ask them, out of love for Jesus, to practice being a good friend to others around them, just like Jesus is to us.

Parent TALK

When we got in the car after Mass last month, I was furious. My ten-year-old son, Jared, had spent the hour not in prayer but poking his sister and fighting with his brother. He ignored my stern



looks and his father's whispered scolding. "No television for two weeks," I told him, and he'd have to write a 200-word essay on appropriate behavior in church before he got the privilege back.

My husband felt I was too harsh, but I needed to a solid message. Church is the most important place we go. Poor behavior is not only disrespectful to us, but to God, too.

Jared realized that he had stepped over a line. To his credit, he stayed away from the television and worked on his behavior at church. I told him God doesn't expect us to be perfect, but he does expect us to try our best.

Feasts & Celebrations

March 17 – St. Patrick (493). Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. He escaped but later returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established the Church there.

March 19 – St. Joseph (1st century). This solemnity honors Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother. St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.

March 23 – St. Toribio de Mogrovejo (1606). A brilliant scholar, he was serving as professor of law at the

University of Salamanca when he was chosen to lead the archdiocese of Lima in Peru. He was ordained priest and bishop and worked with intense fervor to strengthen his diocese.

March 28 – Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion because it recalls Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem when he was greeted by crowds waving palms and cheering, and it marks the beginning of Holy Week.



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