

Thoughtful Moments

Don't be too busy

At the end of your life, you are not going to think, "Boy, I wish I had worked more." You are going to long for more time with your spouse, your child, or your family. A child needs the undivided attention of his or her parent for some time each day. Don't be so busy that you miss even one special moment with yours.

St. Francis

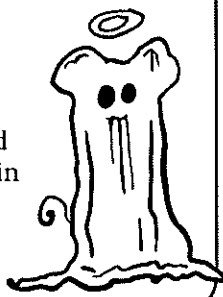
One of the most cherished of all saints is St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Friars Minor. On his feast day, October 4,



many parishes offer a blessing of the animals during which you can bring your pet for a special blessing in his honor. St. Francis rejoiced in all of God's creation.

Parent love

When we give love to our children, they learn to give love to others. When we give them unconditional love, we give them the courage to overcome their natural self-absorption and become sacrificial in their love – just as Jesus intends.



A good friend attracts good friends

A child's friends can make the difference between reinforcing the good habits we teach in the home or introducing bad habits we have to fight. Rather than policing our youngsters' group of friends, parents will do better to equip children to choose healthy, wholesome friendships. Encourage children to look for:



Common interests: Youngsters bond over shared interests. Help yours develop healthy pursuits: music, sports, art, dance, etc. Working together to develop their God-given talents gives them a common focus and identity.

Common values: "He who [honors] God behaves accordingly, and his friend will be like himself" (Sirach 6:17). We tend to become like the company we

keep. Involve children in church youth group or community outreach where they will meet others who share the values you taught them.

Considerate:

Authentic love is willing the good of the other (John 15:13). Encourage children to look for others who are kind, considerate, and dependable.

Virtuous:

The best friendships bring out the best in us.

St. Gregory

Nazianzen credited his sanctity to his friendship with St. Basil

the Great: "[We] spurred each other on to virtue." Good friends make it easier to do the right thing.

Mutually returned: Part of having good friends is being a good friend. If someone is consistently good and kind, they'll attract the same kind of people.

Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics believe we have Guardian Angels?

There's a tradition that each person is assigned an angel to protect him or her and guide them to everlasting life, even if they aren't Christian (Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), 336).



"See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10). The protection of the angels is one way that God exercises care for us.

Being "fair" in an unfair world

Children have an innate sense of fairness and may struggle to understand why the world isn't always fair. Try these ideas for explaining justice in an unjust world.

Fairness according to "me." Jonah, the prophet, accused God of being unfair (Jonah 4:1-2). He thought God should punish the Ninevites for their sins yet God rewarded them for their conversion. Teach youngsters that God's way is different than the world's. His motivation is love.

The big picture. In the story of the prodigal son,



the father tried to persuade the older son to set aside his resentment to celebrate his brother's return (Luke 15:32). Sometimes what seems grossly unfair loses its power in the context of the larger picture. Model patience and be quick to forgive.

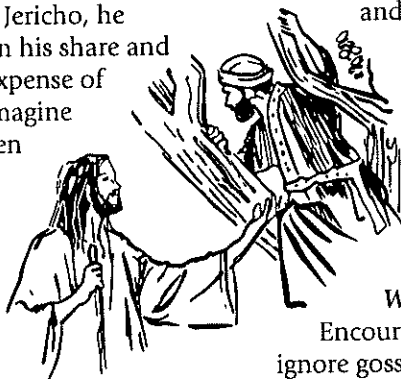
Accept God's care. As Catholics, we trust God to care for us in His way (Isaiah 55:8). That is often different than the way of the world. Each morning, bless children and entrust them to God's care. They will be safe in His hands.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 19:1-10, Don't judge by stereotypes

Zacchaeus was not a popular man. As the chief tax collector in Jericho, he probably took more than his share and became wealthy at the expense of other people's misery. Imagine the crowd's reaction when Jesus spotted Zacchaeus in a tree, called him down, and invited Himself to dinner at Zacchaeus' home. It was scandalous for a rabbi to dine with someone widely considered to be a public sinner.

People were stunned that Jesus would choose to associate with a tax collector, but then Jesus often befriended the most unlikely people. For his part,



Zacchaeus shot down from the tree and fell all over himself to make Jesus welcome. He was so eager for Jesus' friendship that he changed his life as a result and pledged generous amends for past sins.

What can a parent do?

Encourage your children to ignore gossip and nasty comments made about peers. If they have questions about the suitability of a friend, tell them to come to you instead. Friend or not, they should treat everyone with respect and be quick to forgive, as Jesus did.

Parent TALK

When Tessa turned twelve, she stopped talking much about school, expressing her feelings or engaging in any real communication unless I



bugged her. Frustrated, one Saturday I told her we had a special project. I decided she was old enough to learn the family recipe for

homemade pasta. We broke out bags of flour, cracked eggs and dusted off the pasta machine. Soon we were up to our elbows in dough.

We both laughed more that day than we had in months. And we talked for hours as we slowly cranked out tables full of spaghetti. Without even asking, I heard all about school, her friends, and her life. Now we make pasta once every six weeks or so and we both look forward to that special time.

My grandmother always said that pasta has a way of bringing people together. Now I realize the true wisdom in her words.

Feasts & Celebrations

Oct. 7 – Our Lady of the Rosary (1571). Pope Gregory XIII named this feast because it was believed that Christians won a critical victory at the Battle of Lepanto after praying the Rosary.

Oct. 13 – St. Edward the Confessor (1066). Son of King Ethelred II, St. Edward was born at Islip, England, but lived under Danish rule until he was crowned in 1042. Though politically weak, he was loved by the people and known for his holiness.

Oct. 24 – St. Anthony Mary Claret (1870). St. Anthony was born in Spain in

1807. After his ordination, he founded the Claretian order in 1849, and became the archbishop of Cuba. He established the Religious Publishing House, producing over 200 works.

Oct. 28 – St. Simon and Jude, Apostles (1st century). St. Simon was a Zealot – Jews who believed that the Messiah would free them from political oppression. St. Jude was a fisherman. After the Council of Jerusalem, they traveled to Persia where they preached and were eventually martyred.



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