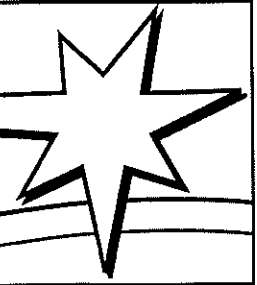


Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

February 2022

St. Matthew Religious Education



Thoughtful Moments

Through the eyes of a child

In teaching our children about the Catholic faith, we have the chance to learn again for ourselves. Let a child's wonder about the mysteries of God's love awaken your own sense of excitement. In connecting with your children, you may find you are reconnecting with the child in yourself.



Telling is not tattling

Sometimes children encounter or witness situations they can't handle. For example, they may see that a friend is overwhelmed and in danger but has no one to help. Youngsters may be afraid that seeking help for the friend is "tattling." Remind children periodically that as a parent, you are on the same team. Telling isn't the same as tattling. Everyone needs help sometimes.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence"
(2 Peter 1:3).



The five Rs of raising Catholic children

There is no one formula for raising devout Catholic children into faithful Catholic adults, but we can utilize a strategy that has helped many parents and families. These five Rs can help you shape your parenting strategy.

Receive the sacraments frequently. Sacraments are direct encounters with Christ and we need them to keep our souls alive. Baptize babies as soon as possible after birth. Make an immovable monthly date for family Confession. Bring children to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation.

Raise children in the Faith. If they don't attend Catholic school, enroll them in your parish religious education program. Support their formation from

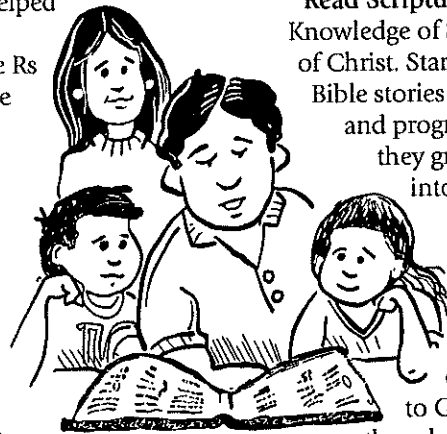
kindergarten all the way through high school graduation. Put sports and clubs second.

Read Scripture as a family. Knowledge of Scripture is knowledge of Christ. Start with simple toddler Bible stories when they are small, and progress to the real Bible as they grow. Incorporate these into evening story time.

Remember to pray - often - together.

Model daily prayer for children and encourage them to talk to God regularly. Teach them basic Catholic prayers and devotions. Pray in the morning, the evening, at meals (even in public), when there's trouble and when there is joy.

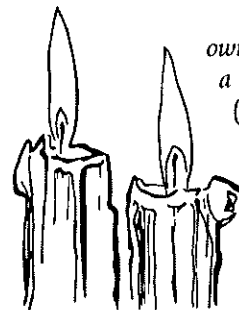
Remain steadfast. Don't let anything or anyone lure your family from God's friendship. Rely on His grace and trust Him.



Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics have candles blessed on February 2?

In the liturgical calendar, February 2 is the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple, when Jesus was dedicated to God. At that time, Simeon greeted Mary, took the infant Savior in his arms and praised God, "Mine



own eyes have seen your salvation... a light to reveal you to the nations"
(Luke 2:30-32). For this reason, priests traditionally bless candles - a liturgical symbol of Christ - and give them to the people. Thus, the feast is called, Candlemas Day.

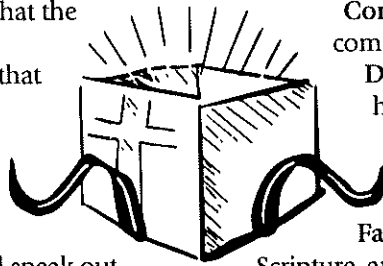
Give your children lots of gifts

If you could give your child any gift in the world, what would it be? The truth is that you know that what the world can offer won't make him or her happy. Instead, pray frequently and fervently for gifts that will. Consider making petitions for these gifts part of your prayers for your children:

Wisdom. Ask that your child be inspired to avoid poor choices and have the wisdom to lead Gospel-centered lives.

Courage. Fortify him to stand for justice and speak out against bigotry, unfairness, and cruelty.

Strength. Pray that as she grows she will withstand



negative peer pressure.

Compassion. Help him follow Jesus' commandment to love one another.

Discernment. Give children the skills to select healthy friendships.

Independence. Ask that children care less about what other people think of them and be more interested in pleasing God.

Faith. Faith in God, the teachings of Christ, Scripture, and the teachings of the Church are the foundation for a healthy life and eternal salvation.

These gifts will make children happy forever.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 6:39-45, What's in your heart?

In this Gospel passage, Jesus compared our deeds to the fruits on the trees. If the tree is good, it will produce good fruit, just as if a person is good, his words and actions are likely to be good. It would be less likely for a bad person to regularly do many virtuous deeds.



Jesus extends the "good trees, good fruit" parable to our speech. Just as you can measure the health of a tree by its fruit, you can check the condition of your heart by the quality of your words. This is because our "heart" -

our deepest center - is the origin of our actions, including our words. Whether we are at peace or angry affects what we do.

What can a parent do? Teach children that words do matter and that how they talk can affect others for good or bad.

Words are the easiest way we can imitate Jesus. If our words are uplifting, kind, truthful and try to bring peace to others, then that is a good sign we are heading in the right direction.

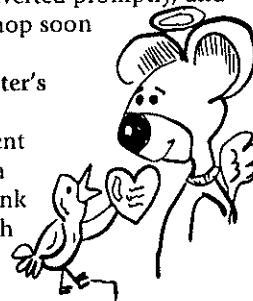
Feasts & Celebrations

Feb. 2 - St. Catherine of Ricci (1590). St. Catherine was born to a prominent banker. Against her father's wishes, she joined the Dominicans when she was twelve. She is known for her visions of the Lord's Passion, which she experienced every Friday.

Feb. 11 - Our Lady of Lourdes (1858). A heavenly lady appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous, a poor, sickly girl from a French village. A miraculous spring with healing waters emerged from a nearby cave. The beautiful lady revealed herself as the "Immaculate Conception"

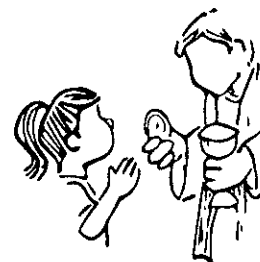
- the Blessed Virgin Mary.
Feb. 19 - St. Barbatus (c. 682). From Benevento, Italy, St. Barbatus tried to convert his town from paganism. In a last-ditch effort, he described what they would suffer when Emperor Constans II besieged the city. The whole city converted promptly, and he was elected bishop soon after.

Feb. 22 - St. Peter's Chair. Marking St. Peter's establishment of the Holy See, on this festival we thank God for His Church and pray for its holy preservation.



Parent TALK

As children, we never missed Mass. That's why I was shocked when my brother recently declared that he doesn't take his children to Mass. "It's enough that I bring them to religious education class every week," he said. "We're too busy for Mass, too."



Why would anyone teach children a religion but prevent them from practicing it? In class children learn about a Catholic's serious obligation to attend Mass and the wonderful graces we get from the Eucharist. At home, they learn that soccer practice or birthday parties come before Mass. Sports before Jesus? How confusing!

I gave my brother a copy of *Follow the Way of Love*, a message to families from the U.S. bishops. It's about how God's love is experienced in a family and how it is supported by the whole Church. Hopefully it will help him see being Catholic as a gift and not a burden.

Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
Success Publishing & Media, LLC
Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™
(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax
<http://www.partnersinfaith.com>
(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)