

Talking to Kids about COVID-19

For most of us, the events of this past week and the situation in which we now find ourselves are totally unprecedented. As we seek to sift through our own worries and frustrations, here are some ideas for navigating this challenging time with kids.



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Some basic principles

- **Be honest.** Even the smallest children know something is not right with the world. Use simple language to describe the problem, such as, “There’s a bad sickness going around. For most people, it’s not dangerous, but we are all staying home to protect older people and people whose bodies have a hard time fighting it off.”
- **Acknowledge feelings.** Feelings are sensations that come over us without involving our will. When we allow them to be openly stated and accepted, our family becomes a safe place to be in tough times. Don’t be afraid to simply share your feelings with your kids, (“I’m really sad we can’t go to Mass.”) and try to help them put words on their own feelings (“Are you disappointed that our trip was canceled?”).
- **Apologize. Forgive. Repeat.** Even homeschooling families are going to have more “togetherness” than normal, as all outside activities are canceled. Let’s not tire of offering and accepting forgiveness!
- **Be Patient.** This new “normal,” however long it lasts, will be difficult for kids and parents alike. There may be tears over homework, conference calls interrupted by noise, bickering and piles of laundry that don’t get folded despite having “lots of time.” It’s okay. Our kids need to know we are there for them. They do not need perfection.

Keeping things positive

- **Romans 8:28.** *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* Even in trial, God has good things in store.
- **Serve others.** Encourage small works of kindness within the family. Check on elderly neighbors. Make videos to send to grandparents. Write letters. Utilize Amazon, gift cards or grocery delivery to help supply a family who is hurting financially.
- **Have fun.** There is work and school to be done. But set aside some time to eat together, play a game, do a puzzle, go for a walk or watch a movie.
- **Pray.** Let’s allow the closure of our parishes drive us more deeply into our domestic churches. There are lots of great resources here: archkck.org/faithathome.
- **Don’t waste it.** While we can’t expect this time to be perfect, we also don’t want to have life return to normal and look back to see that we did not take advantage of the time we had stuck together at home. What are one or two things you want to be able to look back and say that you are glad you did? Make a plan to put those small things into your new “routine,” and be okay if that means other things don’t get done.

If we can help in any way, please contact us: famlife@archkck.org
Office of Marriage and Family Life

