

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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“No matter how many times we stumble on our weakness, Jesus will always be there to give us strength and courage.” *Chris Padgett*

The Easter Season: Love in Action —

Love Welcomes
Love Teaches
Love Heals
Love is Truthful
Love Does What is Right
Love Serves
Love Prays
Love Forgives

“A mom’s hug lasts long after she lets go.”
Anonymous

“I realized thoroughly that joy is not found in the things which surround us, but lives only in the soul.”

St. Therese of Lisieux

“Children take more notice of what their parents do, than what they say. Actions speak louder than words.” *William Tiptaft*

(Who close to your family could benefit from the gift of home-baked treats, or a friendly visit?)

Observe Holy Week as a Family

The week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, Holy Week, is the most sacred time of year. Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, are meant as preparation for the three days of the Triduum. (Triduum is one celebration that lasts for three days.)

Holy Thursday—The evening Mass on Holy Thursday begins the Sacred Triduum. On this night we remember the Last Supper and celebrate the institution of the Eucharist. Talk with your children about how Jesus is really present in holy Communion and how sharing in his body strengthens us to become the Body of Christ and to follow him each day.

Good Friday – The day is a somber remembrance of Jesus’ crucifixion and death on the cross. It is a day of fasting and penance and a time to examine all of the places in our lives where we fail to follow Christ and fall into sin. Pray the Our Father with your children at bedtime on this night

in remembrance of Christ’s gift for all of salvation.

Easter Vigil—This night is the high point in the liturgical year. There is a procession of candlelight that reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world who has conquered all darkness and death. The Paschal candle that is lit at the Easter vigil will remain in the church throughout the year as a sign of Christ’s death and resurrection. During the day on Holy Saturday, spend some time as a family talking about the Paschal Mystery—Jesus’ crucifixion, death and resurrection. Take a walk around the neighborhood looking for signs of new life in springtime.

Easter Sunday—Celebrate the risen Lord at Mass with the singing of the Gloria and alleluias, and the renewal of your baptismal vows.

The time you spend on your Holy Week preparations will make Easter Sunday more meaningful for the whole family!

Adapted from Take Out, Family Faith on the Go

Recommended Reading: *Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting* by Laura Kelly Fanucci

In *Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting*, Laura Kelly Fanucci sees the Catholic sacraments through the smudged and sticky lens of life with little ones. From dinnertime chaos to bath-time giggles to never-ending loads of laundry, Laura stumbles into the surprising truth of what the seven sacraments really mean: that God is present always, even in the messes of parenthood. With heart, honesty and humor, Laura Kelly Fanucci’s offering of a peek into her quest for God in the midst of craziness of parenting will help inspire you along your own path to God. Full of tender moments and truth, this is a book that every Catholic who ever lived in a family will appreciate.



Becoming an Affirming Parent



One of the most important things in a child's life is to be affirmed by his parents. True affirmation comes from the heart and is built up over time by your sheer presence. Affirmation is not just something you give; it's something you are. Affirmations are expressed not only through your words but through your being. Your kids pick up affirmations over time as they experience them day upon day and conversation upon conversation.

Praise Your Children in Unexpected Moments—“I just want you to know I'm proud of you, and here are some reasons why!”

Write a Specific Note to Them—Write out the good qualities and successes you see unfolding in them.

Speak Highly of Them in Front of Others—When they can hear you, speak up to others about some of the ways you see them growing, doing right, or working hard. They will rise to live up to your description!

Try to Understand Their Emotions—Children love having “the way they feel” validated by someone in authority—even if the circumstances can't change. You may not be able to give them their way, but you can let them know you understand how they feel.

Reward Them Occasionally—Pick up and give a gift for no reason other than the fact that you are proud of their good efforts in some area.

Spend Time with Them—They know you're busy, but giving them quantity and quality time will speak loudly as to your love and honor toward them.

Express Affection Toward Them—Randomly pause, wrap them up in your arms and say, “I love you so much! I can't believe how awesome you are!”

Surprise Them—Their favorite meal, a new book, a special event, or a spontaneous family memory... do something that they aren't expecting, and let them know it's because you are proud of them.

Do a Random Act of Kindness for Them—Help them clean out their closet, fill their car with gas, send a quick text message, pick them up at school and go to lunch.

Defer to Their Decision (When Possible) - Don't fight over things worth losing. Deferring to one another is a wonderful expression of love. For instance, let them choose where or what to eat for dinner. When possible, let them make a key decision and praise them for “getting it right.”

Tell them How Much You Love Them—Tell them often how much you love them and how much God loves them. Ask God to help you, and to give you an affirming spirit.

Adapted from “Parenting, the Early Years”

7 Ways to Live Easter Joy Each Day

- Begin each day by thanking God for all the good things in your life.
- Do something nice for someone.
- Be a forgiving person. Let go of anger and resentments that drag down your spirit.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Learn to laugh at yourself.
- Find ways to show family members and friends how much you appreciate them.
- Try to live more simply. Clear out material possessions that are not essential to your happiness.
- End each day by thanking God for all the good things in your life. *Adapted from Family Faith on the Go*

Spring—Experiencing God’s Splendor with your Children

Spring is a miraculous time of year during which we experience new life all around us. We understand in the depths of our souls what the Jesuit priest and poet Gerard Manley Hopkins meant when he wrote, “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.” Spring offers the perfect opportunity to teach our children about many extraordinary ways God reveals himself to us. We see the presence of God in the blossoming flowers. We feel the presence of God in the singing of a bird and the babbling of a brook. Following are some ideas for how you can help your children embrace God’s grandeur in the world around you.



Look for New Life. Be on the lookout for baby birds, baby bunnies, baby ducks, baby squirrels, puppies, kittens, and new mothers walking babies in strollers. Explain to your children that all new life comes from God, and that God cares for each one of us in the same way that mothers care for their babies.

Feel the Wind. Taking a walk on a windy day offers a great opportunity to explain to your children that we experience God in the same way that we feel the wind. We can’t see the wind, and we can’t see God, but we can feel the wind, and we can feel God’s presence in our lives.

Plant Seeds. It doesn’t matter whether you plant a garden with flowers or vegetables. You can teach children that we may be the ones to put seeds in the ground, water the seeds, and pull out any weeds that sprout up, but God is the one who makes the seeds grow into plants that produce beautiful flowers or tasty vegetables.

Walk in the Rain. What a great time to talk to your kids about God’s gift of rain! The puddles you splash through today will eventually dry up, but the water doesn’t disappear. It goes in the air in the form of vapor. The vapor forms clouds, and when the clouds get too full, it rains. The rain creates puddles, and you’re back to the miracle of the water cycle.

Run and Play. Don’t miss the opportunity to have fun with your children on a glorious spring day. Whether you go to a park or play in your own backyard, the chance to frolic will leave all of you with a sense of joy that reflects the way God delights in us.

Springtime is God’s special gift to each of us. It is a gift that is filled with God’s grandeur!

Adapted from “Family Faith on the Go”

Blessed are the parents who...

...model helpfulness, for their children will be kind.

...are thankful, for their children will learn gratefulness.

...teach empathy, for their children will respond in understanding.

...teach conflict resolution, for their children will learn to be peacemakers.

Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
Marriage & Family Life Office

Catholic Parent Newsletter
12615 Parallel Parkway
Kansas City, Kansas 66109

Phone: 913-721-1570 ext. 149
Fax: 913-721-1577
Email: famlife@archkck.org

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Newsletter**

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and/or contact person
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(Easter Prayer) "Let Us Rejoice and Be Glad"

O God who works wonders,
we marvel in the Resurrection of Jesus, your Son.
In Christ, you have redeemed us and brought us to life.

May our "alleluia" proclaim the Resurrection
and profess our willingness to join
ourselves to the Paschal Mystery.

Grant us, we pray, O Lord,
eyes to see you and ears to hear your voice
so that we might grow stronger in faith
like the disciples on that first Easter.

Help us to bear witness to your Son's Resurrection
and give us a desire to seek and serve you among the living.

May your Holy Spirit fill us with joy,
rousing our hearts to proclaim Christ,
the victor King.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.