

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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"Let your eyes light up when your children are around. Laugh more. Tell them how empty and quiet it is when they're not there. Enjoy the things they bring to your life. Attend their activities, not as if they were compulsory for parents, but throw yourself into their lives." Valerie Bell

"A truly rich man is one whose children run into his arms when his hands are empty."

Author Unknown

"Give your hands to serve and your hearts to love."

St. Teresa of Calcutta

"Love your children. In them you can see Baby Jesus. Pray for them a lot and every-day put them under Holy Mary's protection." St. Gianna Molla

**Grandparents Day
September 13!**



HELP YOUR CHILD COPE WITH COVID-19 CHANGES

Families across the country are adapting to the evolving changes in daily life caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most schools, places of public gathering, and nonessential businesses are different, and parents and other caregivers are faced with helping their families adjust to the new normal. This includes trying to keep children occupied, feeling safe, and attempting to keep up with schoolwork as best as possible. None of this is easy, but it helps to stay focused on what is possible in order to reinforce a sense of control and to reassure children that they are okay, and that the situation will get better.

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking the necessary actions that reduce the risk of illness.

- **Be a role model.** Children will react to and follow your reactions. Offer lots of love and affection.
- **Be aware of how you talk about COVID-19.** Your discussion about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child's fear.
- **Explain social distancing.** Children probably don't fully understand why parents/guardians aren't allowing them to be with friends.
- **Demonstrate deep breathing.** Deep breathing is a valuable tool for calming the nervous system. Do breathing exercises with your children.
- **Focus on the positive.** Celebrate having more time to spend as a family. Make it as fun as possible. Do family projects. Sing, laugh, and go outside.
- **Establish and maintain a daily routine.** Keeping a regular schedule provides a sense of control, predictability, calm, and well-being.
- **Identify projects that might help others.** This could include writing letters to the neighbors or others who might be stuck at home alone.

Adapted from NASP

Recommended Reading: *How To Catholic Family: Nurturing Faith in the Messiness of Everyday Life* by Tommy and Karen Tighe

This book is a practical, encouraging guide for Catholic parents that want to impart the faith to their children but aren't quite sure where to start. Topics include leading by example, having conversations about faith, reading the Bible as a family, learning about the saints, praying together, learning what the Mass means, celebrating special/feast days and liturgical seasons (Advent, Lent), and finding community with other Catholic families. The book's emphasis is on making this a doable task and, with humor, the authors let the reader know that there will be plenty of fails along the way but not to give up trying to develop a faith-filled family life.



JOYFUL FAMILIES AREN'T PERFECT...THEY'RE INTENTIONAL.



Life has been so stressful the last few months, and it doesn't look like the uncertainty will end any time soon. More than ever, this is a time to step back and be **intentional** about our family life. It's helpful to start by unpacking our pandemic experience so far.

As a family, discuss:

- What have we missed during the pandemic?
- What have we been relieved to not have to go to?
- What have we enjoyed about our time home?
- If you could only have one outside activity this year, what would it be and why?
- What is your favorite thing that we do as a family?
- What was one thing that we have stopped doing that you do NOT miss?

Pick one practice this month!

- Put "family night" and "family dinner" on your calendar and schedule around them.
- Be intentional about spending time with family members by assigning chores in pairs, or taking one child at a time out for errands or a walk.
- Add one small practice to help your family take the next step in faith:
 - Weekly Mass and/or Monthly Confession
 - Regular family prayer (rosary, scripture)
 - Bless kids before school and bed
 - Add this scripture to meal prayer - Galatians 5:1 *It is for freedom that Christ set us free.* How will your family use your freedom?

WANT MORE IDEAS AND ENCOURAGEMENT? www.joyfulmarriageproject.com

Meals Strengthen Families

Family meals can help save the human family! The one thing that determines family-unit connection is the regular and intentional family meal. For many parents, it would be much easier and simpler to forget about family dinners. Jobs, children, after-school activities all contribute to families being constantly on the go, thus feeling the need to eat on the run. But more and more parents are realizing the importance of shared family time at the dinner table. Eating together can help children feel more confident in themselves. By encouraging your children to talk about their day (and genuinely listening to their responses), you're communicating that you value and respect who they are. Encourage children to assist with chores associated with dinnertime, whether setting the table, serving the food, or cleaning up.



Many families are reviving the family meal during the Coronavirus Pandemic. Families are increasingly staying home in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19...so this is an opportune time to reset our routines. Family meals are a powerful habit for health. Studies have shown that the positive relationship between the number of family meals per week, was associated with better family functioning. Regular family meals are linked to higher grades, getting along with others, and reduced risky behaviors in adolescents.

Following are a few basic strategies for family meals:

Begin with prayer. You can practice thirty seconds of silence before your prayer which will transition kids from pre-meal chaos and distractions.

Put away the screens. That includes televisions (watching TV short-circuits many of the benefits of eating together) as well as phones.

Don't make manners dominate the meal. Manners are important, but work on one at a time so you can put most of your energy into connecting.

Pray at the end of the meal using a short after-meal grace to "bookend" your time together.

Family meals don't have to be overwhelming. With planning and time-saving strategies, families can gather together frequently, eat better and connect more at any meal. Attempt to have a meal together three times per week, and use this time together to get into a habit of gathering regularly around the table.

WATCH AND PRAY



Prayer is the foundation and heart of ministry in our homes. Pray daily with and for your spouse and your children. As you pray, thank God for all of your daily blessings. Ask for guidance and strength during tough times and doubt. Talk to God as you would a close friend about your day. Share your good things and your concerns. Remember that God loves and cares about you and your family...*and in the stillness, don't forget to listen.*

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and/or contact person
information here!

WE ARE FAMILY

Family Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for the gift of family. We acknowledge that our image and name as family come from you.

We believe that within our family lies a home-made holiness. We affirm that it is in this household of faith that we experience Your presence, Your forgiveness, and Your love.

We are family. We give thanks to You, for the many joys and blessings that have come to us through our family.

As family, we sometimes feel pain. And so we offer to You our disappointments, frustrations, and hurts. Help us to forgive those members of our family, including ourselves, who have caused pain.

We pray for the strength to be a light within our family. May we open our hearts, our eyes and ears and carry our light to those in need.

God, Creator of the earth and all its people, help us to be mindful that, as members of one global family, we are equal in Your eyes. Help us to continue to appreciate the diversity of persons in our homes and in our world. As members equal in human dignity, may we build a better world and proclaim our willingness to be the holy people you call us to be.
Amen.