

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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Words from Pope Francis

*Giving advice to **grandparents**, Pope Francis has said that families and kids need their prayers, wisdom and gifts to give them the encouragement, hope and faith they often lack in today's frenetic world.*

Pope Francis has said that *the **Holy Family** is still the perennial role model for families*. Mothers can mirror the same love and attention Mary had for her son, and fathers can exemplify the patience and understanding of Joseph who did everything to support and protect his family.

Pope Francis said that the real secret is just to **"welcome Jesus**, listen to him, speak to him, take care of him, protect him and grow with him" like Mary and Joseph did, and *"that is how the world will become better."*

Feast of the "Baptism of the Lord" (January 9)

The identity of Jesus is clearly disclosed at his baptism. The prophets foretell his coming. John the Baptist recognizes in him the promised Messiah. At his baptism, Jesus begins his saving mission in an act of solidarity with people in need of redemption. Through our Baptism, we enter into newness of life in Christ; but this is only the beginning of faith. We must seek understanding. Make a commitment to keep learning by joining a Bible study group. With your children show solidarity with those in need through your prayer, donations, and acts of mercy. Teach your children that we are God's family. Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are born into the Church family, and in the waters of baptism we are born into the life and family of Christ. In our baptism we share Christ's life and grace, and therefore continue Christ's work on earth.

* Explain to your children why you chose



their name. What does it mean? Were they named after someone? Who? Why?

* In your Bible, find the Gospel of Matthew and read the account of Jesus' baptism (3:13-17).

* On Monday, January 9, tell your children about their baptism—who was there, what baptismal garment they wore, if they cried or not.

* God says about us, just as He did about Jesus, "This is my beloved child, with whom I am well pleased." Tell your children how much you love them. Allow each person in the family to take a turn saying what he or she especially appreciates or treasures about others in the family.

* Discuss with your children the special gifts and talents you see in them, as well as how we are all called to discipleship by using our personal gifts.

Adapted from Take Out/Family Faith on the Go

Recommended Reading: *The Corporal Works of Mommy (And Daddy Too)* by Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak

How do you turn your home into a place where saints are made? By practicing the "little way" of family life at home, every day.

St. Therese of Lisieux's "little way" shows us that we can achieve holiness by performing even the smallest acts with great love. For the family, every day is made up of many, many small acts – feeding hungry tummies, comforting a feverish child, getting a squirmy toddler dressed for Mass – and in each one we have the opportunity to practice mercy and be a living example of how to love and follow God.

The Corporal Works of Mommy (And Daddy Too) gives parents practical suggestions, tips, and ideas for ways to practice the corporal works of mercy in the home, and reflection questions for delving deeper into the topics. Each chapter also includes a prayer for God's guidance in our pursuit of the "little way" of the family. Let God set your family ablaze with his love when you practice *The Corporal Works of Mommy (And Daddy Too)*.

Pray for your Children's Catholic Faith

Be a channel of grace to them. God communicates His grace through other people. He uses believing Christians as channels of His grace of faith to others. There is no one on earth who is a more important and indispensable channel of divine grace to children than their parents. This is more than giving a good example. This is the mystery of serving as a conduit of God's grace to everyone whose life we touch.



Pray with and for the Children. No words can describe the necessity of a family praying together in order to obtain the blessings of God. At the heart of a Christian family is the supernatural life that requires constant light and strength to be sustained. Things you can do — say the Rosary together often; recite the Angelus together at least once a day; say the grace before and after meals as a family; have a holy water font inside the front door for people to bless themselves as they enter the house; have a crucifix and some sacred pictures on the wall. Pray often for the strength you need to help bring your family to heaven.

Train them to understand what they believe. Besides knowing their prayers and memorizing certain articles of the faith, children must grow in that faith. Parents must explain the meaning of what their children believe. Children ask questions from infancy about, “Who is Jesus? Where is God? Does God know what I am thinking?” As children grow in intelligence, parents must make sure their sons and daughters mature in spirit also.



The Angelus is a devotion commemorating the Incarnation. The devotion was traditionally recited in Roman Catholic churches, convents, and monasteries three times daily: 6:00 am, noon, and 6:00 pm. Many still follow the devotion, including in the home.

THE ANGELUS

**The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.**

(recite) **Hail Mary . . .**

**Behold the handmaid of the Lord:
Be it done unto me according to Thy word.**

Hail Mary . . .

**And the Word was made Flesh:
And dwelt among us.**

Hail Mary . . .

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen

Seven Principles of “Raising Children of Character”

Parenting is arguably the hardest job there is and the one for which we get no training. Following are seven principles of parenting that can guide us in the demanding work of raising children of character.

1. **Make Character Development a High Priority** — We need to view our children as adults-in-the-making. What kind of character do we want them to possess as grown men and women?
2. **Love Your Children** — When kids feel loved, they become attached to us. That attachment makes them receptive to our guidance. We need emotionally intimate time to keep any relationship strong and growing. It’s important to have one-on-one time with our children.
3. **Teach by Example** — Teaching by example goes beyond treating our children with love and respect. It has to do with how we treat each other and how we treat and talk to others outside of our family—relatives, friends, neighbors and teachers.
4. **Manage the Moral Environment** — How should we regulate kids’ use of media—TV, movies, music, video games, and the Internet? The basic rule: The use of media in the home is a privilege, not a right. Exercise of that privilege requires parental permission and presence. Also, we should thoughtfully explain our moral objections to something, rather than simply forbidding it.
5. **Discipline Wisely** — Disciplining wisely means setting expectations, holding kids accountable to them, and responding to their lapses in a way that both teaches what’s right and motivates the child to do what is right. Discipline should be clear and firm, but not harsh.
6. **Provide Opportunities to Practice the Virtues** — Virtues develop through practice. We don’t develop character in children simply by talking about it, they need real responsibilities in family life. Give your children certain chores so that they may contribute to the family.
7. **Foster Spiritual Development** — It has been reported that young people who frequently attend religious services exhibit higher levels of altruism and lower levels of drug and alcohol use and sexual activity. Religion gives a reason for leading a moral life.

Our children will make mistakes growing up, just as we did. It’s our job as parents to make the most of the many opportunities we have to help our children become persons of character.

Adapted from *Catholic Education.org*

“Fun in the Snow”

Dress warmly and go outside. Most children love to play in the snow. Parents worry about children getting too cold or getting chilled and then getting ill. If you dress them warmly and make outings short for the little ones, there is nothing to worry about. Children love to take walks when it is snowing. Pull them on a sled or have them walk. Make a snowman or make snow angels and other shapes in the snow.

Did you know that a falling snowflake may take up to two hours to reach the ground? Even the heaviest snowflake falls at only 1 mile per hour.

Adapted from *Family Information Services*



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PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Lord, we thank you for a new year.
May everyone in our family be willing
to begin anew with a clean slate.
We know that you are always ready to forgive us.
Help us to be willing to forgive ourselves
and to forgive one another.

As we begin a new year,
remind us of our truest values
and our deepest desires. Help us to
live in the goodness that comes
from doing what you want us to do.
Help us to put aside anxiety about the
future and the past, so that we might
live in peace with you now, one day at a time.

Adapted from *Loyola Press*