

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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Bits and Pieces from Here and There

“Turn off all your machines. Go outdoors. Go around the block and visit with neighbors. History is not something that happens elsewhere. It happens now, and here.”

Mary Pipher

Let kids be themselves—“The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them.” *Thomas Merton*

“If you don’t stand for something, your kids will fall for anything.” *Anonymous*

Memorial Day, May 29

Pray for peace in our country and in our world, and pray for soldiers currently serving in the Armed Services.



Celebrate Mother’s Day and Father’s Day

Mother’s Day, May 14, 2017

A mother’s love is one of the most powerful forces in this world. Celebrate her love this Mother’s Day... include your children.

- * Create a Memory Jar—Fill a jar with slips of paper, each detailing a special memory you and your mother shared. Present her with the jar, and sit beside her as she reads each memory.
- * Make a Blessing Book—Cover a composition book or hardbound journal with patterned papers and include photos of each of your mother’s children. Record what you are most grateful for in this world.
- * Make a donation to your mom’s favorite charity, in her name.
- * Spend some time looking through scrapbooks and reflecting on the bounty of love that comes to you via family and maternal love.

Father’s Day, June 18, 2017

As your thoughts turn to Father’s Day, think of ideas to express your love and appreciation to the special dads in your life.

- * Have your children record favorite memories with their dad and say how much he means to them. Possibly burn this on a CD and surprise him with “something special to listen to” on his drive to work.
- * Frame a special handwritten note or tribute. Even little ones can give Dad a unique note with printed letters or crayon-colored pictures.
- * Ask your dad to share a story/memory of the places where he received Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation.
- * Pray a special prayer for fathers in your life, asking God to bless them. Tell them how grateful you are for all that they do for you and your family.

Recommended Reading: *Pray with Me: Seven Simple Ways to Pray with Your Children* by Grace Mazza Urbanski (Ave Maria Press)

Grace Mazza Urbanski, director of Children’s Ministry for the Apostleship of Prayer, gives parents practical advice on how to help children find opportunities to pray throughout the day in *Pray with Me: Seven Simple Ways to Pray with Your Children*. Using warmth, humor, and passion, Urbanski draws on personal experience to show how families are brought closer together through deeper contact with God.

There are opportunities for children to pray everywhere—when a friend gets hurt on the playground, before a test in the classroom, and even as they hear ambulance sirens while riding in the car with mom or dad—not just at meals and bedtime. In *Pray with Me*, Urbanski identifies seven ways that parents can help deepen their child’s relationship with God by using everyday life as a trigger for prayer. She shows how spontaneous prayer, traditional prayers you know by heart, scripture, song, silence, and reflection help families draw closer to God and each other.

Urbanski weaves personal stories with a heartfelt devotion to Christ to teach parents how to help their children learn to respond to life in prayer.

Strengthen your Family's Faith this Summer

Summer is a great season to get outside and enjoy great weather and fun family time! Did you know that you can also enrich your family's faith this summer, without sacrificing fun in the process?

Visit the zoo. This doesn't have to be a pricey venture—there are many zoos that will offer special discounts on certain dates. (Check with the Kansas City and Topeka zoos.) On the way, get the kids thinking about the many animals mentioned in the Bible; then see how many of those animals you can find in the zoo that day.

Plant a Mary Garden. It's always fun to plant and tend a garden; this one is themed to honor the Blessed Mother. You can build the garden around an outdoor statue, making Mary the heart of the garden. Choose flowers that are associated with the Blessed Mother in art, or plant a blue-and-white garden or a rose garden. This can become a special place for family members to gather and pray.



Nature Walk and Creation. Begin by reading St. Francis of Assisi's Canticum of the Sun. Then take a walk—or even a long hike, depending on your children's ages and abilities, and collect items to make a wreath, pinecone creation, or suncatcher.

Water Fun. What could be better than cool fun on a hot day? Start by sharing a Scripture story featuring water: for example, the Creation, the Baptism of the Lord, or the Wedding at Cana. Depending on your children's ages, your family might enjoy a water balloon toss, splash contest in the pool, experiments with floating, sinking and evaporation, or a bathtub-duckie race.

You don't have to spend a lot of money to have good family fun and celebrate your faith! Harness your children's natural energy and enthusiasm, and let them see that being Catholic isn't only about being quiet in church. All of these activities are even better when you share them with extended family or friends—after all, faith grows best when it is shared.

Adapted from Catholic Family Fun by Sarah Reinhard

Blessings for a Child

A blessing to be given when you wake your child or at the first morning greeting:

Bless (name), and fill his/her day with your peace. (Make the sign of the cross on the child's forehead.) Help us to meet this day's responsibilities, and let nothing separate us from your love. Amen.

Say the following at bedtime while tracing a cross on your child's forehead:

May the Lord bless you with peace, close your eyes to restful sleep, and wake you with joy in the morning. Amen.

Five Temper Taming Tips

Temper Taming Tip #1

Dawdling— Does dawdling drive you crazy? Start earlier to get your child ready to go. Impossible? Maybe you are crowding YOUR schedule too much. Discipline yourself to do less, to open up some space in your life.

Temper Taming Tip #2

In disciplining a child, take away wants not needs. Thus dessert, TV, toys, driving, video games are wants or privileges. Nutritious food, warm clothes, time for homework, transportation to school, access to loving relatives, a safe environment, and nurturing spirituality are human needs. Taking away a teen's cell phone is not cruel punishment; it is a privilege they earn.

Temper Taming Tip #3

Too much squabbling between siblings – or even friends? Remember the time honored, time-out technique. Calmly, serenely, separate the children. This doesn't have to be punitive. Rule of thumb: one minute of time-out for each year of life.

Temper Taming Tip #4

The kids are just being kids, making mistakes and noise, but it's wearing on you. You can't slip away without risking child neglect. Pray! You can do this in short spurts, silently or softly. My mother used to whisper, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!" when she was upset with us. When we heard that, we knew she meant business and we better pay attention.

Temper Taming Tip #5

Noise can lower your resistance to anger. If whining, TV, play, or crowds are getting too loud and on your nerves, lower the decibel level starting with your own. Call for a "Quiet Time Out." For example, turn off the TV, have everyone go outside (or at least to separate rooms), ask people to whisper for five minutes and call it a "sanity game," etc.

by Susan Vogt, www.SusanVogt.net



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

**Catholic Parent
Newsletter**

Place your parish logo,
and/or contact person
information here!

During the month of May—the month of Mary—we feel a special protection of Our Lady that extends to all the faithful; we feel a special joy that shines and illuminates our hearts expressing the universal certainty of Catholics that the indispensable patronage of our heavenly mother becomes even more tender, more loving and more full of visible mercy during her month of May.

Talk with your children about how Mary is a model of faith for you and your family.

Say the Hail Mary as a family each day during the month of May.



Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of death.
Amen.