

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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St. Kateri Tekakwitha is the first Native American to be recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church. She was born in 1656, in the Mohawk village of Ossernenon. St. Kateri was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on Oct. 21, 2012. She is the patroness of ecology and the environment, people in exile and Native Americans. **Her feast day is July 14.**

House Beautiful

Dear God, Fill our home with beautiful things:

Kind words
Warm welcomes
Fond goodbyes
Happy chatter
Easy silence
Togetherness
Space
Love.

Lois Rock

“No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.” *St. Ambrose*

Pray With Your Children

Perhaps you've never prayed with your children. But no matter how old they are, it's never too late to start. It helps to remember that prayer is simply a conversation with God.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1) **Sentence Prayer.** You can help your children pray aloud by giving them a sentence to complete, such as:

- "Jesus, I thank you for ..."
- "Jesus, forgive me for ..."
- "Jesus, help my friend ..."
- "Jesus, help me be more ..."
- "Jesus, help me to let go of ..."
- "Jesus, give me the courage to ..."
- "Jesus, help me with my fear of..."

2) **Highs and Lows.** Ask your children what their "highs" were from the day, and then ask them about their "lows" from the day. Share your highs and lows as well, and then pray for them together as a family.

3) **Prayer Journal.** Share your prayer



requests with the other members of your family and then record them in a prayer journal.

One person can pray

for all the requests you've listed for the day. The next time you pray together, look over the requests you listed previously and update any changes and answers. This is a good way to see how God has been active in your prayer lives.

4) **A.C.T.S. Prayer.** This form of prayer is easy to remember:

A stands for "adoration." Begin the prayer by simply adoring God for who He is.

C stands for "confession." Spend some time confessing your sins.

T stands for "thanksgiving." Take time to thank God for the blessings that He has given to you and to your family.

S stands for "supplication." Lift up specific areas of your family's lives in which you need God to supply for your needs.

Adapted from Focus on the Family

Recommended Reading: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Loyola Press) **"Everyone Belongs"** Illustrated by Kristin Sorra

Inspired by the USCCB's statement "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love, A Pastoral Letter Against Racism," **Everyone Belongs** empowers young readers to reflect on the reality of racism in our society, to see it through the lens of history and faith, and act towards respect, understanding, and friendship. In this fully illustrated book for children ages 5-12, Ray Ikanga is a young boy whose family fled violence in their home country to come to the United States as refugees. The family moves into a new neighborhood and Ray begins making new friends. His excitement is interrupted, however, when someone spray paints a hurtful message on their garage: "Go home!"

Everyone Belongs is a book about recognizing the value of our differences, respecting each other, and forgiveness.



Develop Good Communication Skills

Communication fosters warmth and intimacy within the family. Talking with one another about personal thoughts, feelings, experiences, disappointments, hopes, and dreams is part of developing vital communication skills. By speaking freely and openly, you relay the message that sharing both negative and positive feelings, affirming and encouraging one another, and giving and receiving affection are important elements in your family's life. Another critical part of good communication is learning to listen. Attentive listening means giving our undivided attention to both the verbal and nonverbal messages being delivered.

Listen with your heart. Be open, attentive, and interested in the message your child is communicating both verbally and nonverbally. Be sensitive to tone of voice and facial expressions, and remember the importance of eye contact. Try to understand what your child is feeling.

Affirm and encourage your child by your response. Smiles, nods, and one-word responses indicate attention. Give your children permission to be honest with you. Ask open and friendly questions: "What were you thinking or feeling when this happened?" "What did you like best about this experience?"

Understand exactly what your child is saying. Repeat back to your child what you hear him or her say: "I hear you saying... Is that what you mean?" This helps children learn to articulate their thoughts and feelings, and to express them in an appropriate fashion.

Empathize with your child. Imagine yourself in your child's place. This will help you understand his or her reactions much better. Share a story from your childhood or adult life that relates to your child's experience.

Refrain from providing instant solutions. Instead, listen and acknowledge your child's feelings. Try to understand. Patiently listen and discover how to be a channel of healing and support for your child simply by "being there."

Don't interrupt. Allow your child to complete the message. Constant eye contact and a nod of the head will convince the child that you want to hear everything they have to say.

Express your love for the child. Communicate your love for your child with caring comments and gentle words, so that they feel loved unconditionally. Express your feelings with hugs, kisses, embraces, and lots of affirming messages: "I love you"; "You are wonderful"; "I thank God for you."

Adapted from "Prayers, Activities, Celebrations..." Bridget Mary Meehan

How To Answer Kid's Question: "What Do I Do When I'm Scared?"

Sometimes things happen that disrupt our daily lives. It can be scary when people get sick or parents lose jobs. It's okay to feel scared, but as Catholics we know that we are never alone. God is always with us.

When we are feeling scared, we should tell our loved ones. Praying together with our family and friends can help us feel God's reassuring presence.

It's also important to remember that when you're feeling scared, it won't last forever. It will pass and you will start to feel better. Never give up hope; God is with us!

Adapted from Take Out; Family Faith on the Go

When You Thought I Wasn't Looking...



When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me and I learned that little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I knew there is a God I could always talk to and I learned to trust in God.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing, and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me goodnight and I felt loved and safe.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it, and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good, and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all-right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, *Thanks for all the things I saw.....when you thought I wasn't looking!*

Author Unknown



Did You Know...?

Yellow paper is a great study aid—children see information better on yellow paper. That is why people use yellow highlighters or yellow self-stick notes. The best way to help children to learn words or facts is to print them on yellow paper with black ink.



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Catholic Parent Newsletter

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A Prayer for Families

All-Loving God, we thank you for all of your good gifts,
especially the gift of family.

For parents and grandparents who nurture our faith and lift us up
in difficult times, we thank you, God.

For brothers and sisters who laugh and listen and celebrate with us
in joyful times, we thank you, God.

For holidays and holy days when we join together around the table
and remember the bond that unites us, we thank you, God.

For all those who love us and care for us and welcome us home
again and again, we thank you, God.

For the gift of eternal life and the promise that we will one day
join all of the beloved who have gone before us, we thank you, God.

With guidance of the Holy Family, may we remain a
strong and vibrant family of faith, now and forever.

Amen.

Heidi Busse