

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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"Children are a gift in a myriad of ways. They bring joy even in the midst of heartaches; they give added direction to the lives of their parents. Children, who are the fruit of love and meaningful commitment, are a cause of love and meaning."—*Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 2009

"Go to Joseph with extreme confidence, because I do not remember having asked anything from St. Joseph, without having obtained it readily."

St. Padre Pio

"When the future is uncertain and all you see is darkness, you have something you don't have during times of tranquility: the opportunity to trust in Jesus."

Gary Zimak

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, May 30

Celebrates one of the greatest truths of our faith: God is three persons in one. (Think of the Trinity when you pray the Sign of the Cross...*do it slowly.*)

Enjoy a Slowed-down Summer Experience



It's summer! It's a break from e-learning, homeschooling or whatever type of schooling your kids have been working on this year. Try some of these suggestions to make your summer a little more Catholic.

Works of Mercy—Start a discussion on the seven corporal works of Mercy. Assign one way for your kids to practice one of the works. For example, have an older child commit to helping a younger sibling get drinks and snacks. (*Feed the Hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, Clothe the naked, Shelter the homeless, Visit the sick, Visit the imprisoned, Bury the dead.*)

Get Moving—Plan a kid's Olympics—have the kids practice all morning, then hold the games after lunch. Take a minute

to talk about how our bodies, no matter how they look or function, are gifts from God.

Explore Nature—Take a hike or a walk. Look for birds, insects, and different kinds of foliage. Enjoy being outside in God's creation. Remind your kids that it's important to be good stewards of the Earth and the creatures who live here.

Write Letters—Let your children help you put a personal spin on communication with a letter or a care package to a family member you haven't seen for a while.

Check Out Churches Online—Spend a rainy day looking at the different styles of Catholic churches. Compare the ones in this country with others around the world.

Pray for the Sick—Dedicate some of your prayer time for the sick and suffering.

Work Your Way through a Prayer Book—Say a new prayer every night. Add your favorites to your nightly routine.

Adapted from Take Out, Family Faith on the Go

Recommended Reading: "Our Not-Quite-Holy Family: A Practical Guide for Catholic Parents" by Mark & Melanie Hart

In *Our Not-Quite-Holy Family*, the Harts offer candid, sincere, and down-to-earth wisdom from their time in the trenches of parenting. Chock-full of amusing anecdotes about their journey raising four children, the Hart's book reminds Catholics that being a good parent means taking time to get to know—and actually enjoy—your children. You'll find thoughtful insights on a range of parenting topics:

- becoming a proactive, emotionally-present parent,
- healing personal wounds before they emerge in your parenting,
- parenting with your spouse as a team while maintaining intimacy in marriage,
- praying as a family without coercing your children,
- managing screen time, social media, and demanding schedules, and picking your battles and being a good listener.

Each chapter presents typical shortfalls and obstacles faced by Catholic parents, suggestions and ideas to think and pray about as a couple, and resources or activities to try as a couple or family.

Monitoring Kids' Technology Use

There is a lot of information out there about software that can monitor kids' technology use. Some involve using a specific program, while others may be offered through your internet provider. These programs can assist in monitoring technology and also in limiting access and hours of time spent online.

While these tools can be an essential part of making sure your kids' online activities are healthy and safe, they can't provide the same guidance that you can as a caring adult, a parent or a caregiver.



Here are just a few tactics to consider for creating an environment that protects your kids and teaches them how to use the internet safely—especially for the home.

- Create a docking station in the kitchen or other public place for all phones, computers, tablets, etc., when not in use.
- Establish a rule that technology can only be used in a public place that can be observed or—if quiet is needed for school assignments—in a bedroom with a door open (keep in mind that cell phones can be taken anywhere, so this may not be as suitable of a rule).
- For younger kids, only allow access to pre-approved sites under your supervision.
- For older kids, regularly discuss what sites they are accessing and let them know that you may view their device activity from time to time.
- Institute and initiate regular conversations about the positive aspects of technology and the aspects that could be dangerous (such as arranging to meet an online acquaintance in person).
- Foster open communication and let the kids in your care know they can always come to you if something online makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- If you allow your kids to have social media accounts, "friend" or "follow" them as a reminder that everything on social media is public!
- Limit technology use to encourage offline pursuits and have a conversation about why this is so important.
- Consider your own technology habits and what behavior you want to model for your kids. Decide as a family to do things like put phones away at dinner, ending technology access at a certain time of night, or even have a "tech free" day each week (that could perhaps be replaced with "game" night with board games or activities).

Technology is everywhere in our society. Many of us want the next generation to understand it and use it well. At the same time, we know that technology can pose risks to safety as well as keep kids from wanting to engage in other activities. By coming up with technology practices that work for your environment, you can teach the kids in your care how to navigate the digital world in a safe and responsible manner.

*With Permission...By Caitlin Bootsma
Consultant to the VIRTUS® Programs*

Mother's Day, May 9 — Father's Day, June 20



As Mother's Day and Father's Day draw near, take a few moments to think about what it means for you, as a parent, to love your children. With the added worry of the pandemic, many parents get caught up in the whirlwind of after-school activities, working hard to save for their future, and buying things that bring smiles to their faces. While these actions spring from a heart filled with love, there are three very simple ways to love your kids that make a difference everyday:

Tell them you love them—Tell your kids you love them by actually saying the words—*all the time*. One of the ways kids learn best is through repetition. Saying “I love you” to them several times a day will help them know and trust that you really do love them.

Love your kids by listening to them—Turn off the TV, and the computer, and spend time each day listening closely to your son or daughter. Find out what made him or her feel happy or sad during the day, and what he or she is thinking about right now. Give your children the gifts of your time and your ear. It's important for children to know that you belong just to them for at least a little bit each day.

Remind your kids that there is someone who loves them even more than you do—Tell them how much Jesus loves them—and keep on telling them. It's essential that kids be reminded of this amazing love on a daily basis. Knowing that they are beloved children of God will assure them that they not only have a special place in your family, they have an even more special place in God's family.

May God bless all mothers, grandmothers, and stepmothers that they continue to be generous in their love, strong in their guidance, and persevering in their care for their children.

May God bless and strengthen all fathers, grandfathers, and stepfathers in their roles as providers, teachers, mentors, fixers of broken toys and broken hearts.

Pope Francis' Devotion to St. Joseph

“Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the church! Yes! We know that he can do that. So when I have a problem, a difficulty, I write a little note and I put it underneath St. Joseph, so that he can dream about it! In other words I tell him: Pray for this problem!” Pope Francis said. “Do not forget St. Joseph who sleeps! Jesus slept with the protection of Joseph.”

Pope Francis



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and/or contact person
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Prayer for Summer Activities

Take time to claim your strength; they are gifts of God.
Take time to have fun; it's God's way of teaching you your strengths.
Take time to grow yourself; only you can grow you.
Take time to trust yourself; God trusts you.
Take time to be self-reliant; it is better than being dependent.
Take time to share with others; they will bless you, and you will bless them.
Take time to have hope, you are a child of God.

Let's put ourselves into the hands of the Lord, and pray that God will bless us and our families during the wonderful months of summer. May we all help make our home a place of relaxation, joy, love, peace and safety. May we be generous and considerate, not thinking only about ourselves, but helping others enjoy the blessings of summertime. Lord God, Creator of all things, guide our steps and strengthen our hearts, during these months of summer and vacation days. Grant us refreshment of mind and body. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.