

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 6
November/December 2021

“There may be times when you wander away from God. But God will never stop calling you. He will never stop searching for you.” Matthew Kelly

“Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire, it is the time for home.”

Edith Sitwell

Dates to Remember

- Nov 1** All Saints Day
- Nov 2** All Souls Day
- Nov 7** End of Daylight Savings Time
- Nov 11** Veterans Day
- Nov 13** World Kindness Day
- Nov 25** Thanksgiving
- Dec 8** Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- Dec 9** Feast of St. Juan Diego
- Dec 12** Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Dec 25** Christmas
- Dec 26** Feast of the Holy Family
- Dec 28** Feast of the Holy Innocents

November—A Month for Giving Thanks

The month of November is filled with family gatherings and autumn activities. In the Church, this month is dedicated to the holy souls as we remember and give thanks for all believers who have gone before us. Thanksgiving is a special holiday for many families because it is centered on gratitude rather than gift giving. With the holiday rush just around the corner, spend the month of November giving thanks.

The Gift of Service—*Thank you, God, for the people in our community. Help us to love and serve our neighbor in big ways and small. Amen* Go out of your way to say “thank you” to service providers — waitresses, grocery-store clerks, garbage workers, postal service employees, etc. Write a short note of thanks and greet your service providers in person. (While we’re often quick to complain when something goes wrong, we rarely thank people who make our daily lives run smoothly.)

The Gift of Faith—*Thank you, God, for our faith. Help us to listen to your Word and follow Jesus each and every day. Amen* Give thanks to God for some of life’s frustrations. Challenges offer us the chance to grow and become more compassionate toward other people. As Christians, we believe that while life isn’t always easy, God’s promise is to be present with us along the way. Thank God for His presence in your life, whatever your struggles may be.

The Gift of Family—*Thank you, God, for family and friends. We remember our loved ones who have died and pray they are at peace in your loving arms. Amen* Instead of focusing on what we have been given this Thanksgiving, focus on the eternal Giver, God our Father. Go to Mass as a family on Thanksgiving morning. Thank God for giving us every good gift and ask for a strong faith so we might never doubt God’s providence. Adapted from OSV-*Take Out*

Recommended Reading: *7 Traits of Effective Parenting* by Danny Huerta, *Focus on the Family*

In today’s complex world, parenting is a tough job. Daniel P. Huerta, Focus on the Family’s Vice President of Parenting, offers hope and help to become an effective parent. Huerta presents a collection of seven powerful character traits designed to help parents grow and thrive as they take on the task of raising children. The seven traits are...Adaptability, Respect, Intentionality, Love, Boundaries, Grace & Forgiveness, and Gratitude.

Parents will be encouraged to navigate family life with grace and love so their children ultimately see God’s transformative power, love, and influence. The seven traits of effective parenting are well researched, based on the foundations provided through Scripture, and enriched by years of application in family counseling settings.



“Treasures”

“Parent-to-Parent” ...by Marsha Cherington, M.Ed.

While driving to work today, inspired by the fresh snow and sunshine, I found myself thinking about children, and those who love them. I remember how hard the holiday season was for me when I had young children. I wanted to give them some of the things they had learned to want from television and their friends, and at the same time, I wanted them to know the true meaning of the Christmas season. Somehow I always ended up feeling inadequate. I couldn't afford to give them the things they wanted and I wasn't at all sure that they were learning that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

It is a fine line we walk as parents. We have our own childhood memories of holiday regrets and delights, and we want to protect our children and give them shining memories. One of the greatest ways to do this, I think, is through family traditions. My mother gave homemade food, breads, jams and jellies to neighbors and friends. It was what she had to give and I always felt as if I were somehow part of that gift when she asked me to tie a red ribbon on the package.

Singing carols and stringing popcorn and cranberry garlands for your tree, and for the birds, is something the whole family can do. Making cards for the special people you will not see during the holidays is a way to involve children in “giving” and thinking of others. These simple things are long remembered and carried into the next generation.

My thoughts are with you as you try and make sense out of the advertising frenzy, the size of your pocketbook and the spirit of the season. It is good to take time and think about each child and what that child treasures. Maybe it is a walk in the woods with dad, checking out animal tracks. Or a lunch at a restaurant with mom and nobody else; or a reading marathon with you on a quilt on a living room rug. These are gifts too, and can be made into gift certificates and placed under the tree.

TIME SPENT TOGETHER says, “You are important to me...I am important to you.”

A LIST FOR THE HOLIDAYS — Remember what you value. Get lots of rest. Laugh with your children every day. Make a gift for someone. Read with your children at bedtime. Remember...you are not what you give...you are enough. Remember, there is life after the holidays. Remember, Christmas is a wonderful time to encourage children to become focused on the birth of Jesus. Breath, rest, enjoy the children in your lives...they are lucky to have you.

Adapted from “Family Information Services”



WORLD KINDNESS DAY, NOVEMBER 13

“Wherever there is human need, there is an opportunity for kindness and to make a difference.” Kevin Heath

Sometimes, it can be hard to stay positive in today's world. Having an attitude of gratitude can be helpful, and leads to being optimistic. So can being kind to others. Kindness is the quality of being friendly and considerate. Showing kindness goes a long way. Kindness helps others feel valued and also has benefits for the person being kind.

Speak with your children about this day. Decide on ways to show kindness such as:

- Writing notes of kindness and appreciation to family members, teachers, classmates, and friends
- Hand out notes of encouragement wherever you go, including the grocery store, coffee shop, etc.
- Offer to do an errand for someone like walking their dog or helping them with groceries
- As a family, make a meal and deliver it to an elderly neighbor, a relative, or a friend
- Children— invite someone to play on the playground
- Encourage others to be kind

Kindness is a gift everyone can afford to give.” Unknown

Parents—Seize the Moment



Family life can be hectic. Yet, no matter how chaotic your life is, each day presents opportunities to talk about your Catholic faith and pass on your family's values. God is with us always and in all ways, and some of the most sacred conversations start in the smallest moments.

Faith in the Car—Driving provides a unique opportunity for family conversation—you're enclosed in a small space with the kids!

Talk Time: Questions are the gateway to talking with your kids about their lives, their faith, their hopes and dreams. Asking open-ended questions encourages conversation, but it doesn't guarantee your kids will open up right away. Often asking simple questions will lead to deeper conversations. Some quick travel conversation starters:

- What is one new thing you learned today?
- Who is one of your closest friends right now? Why?
- What are you most excited about today?
- Who should we pray for today?

Tune Time: Liven up drive time by playing your favorite tunes and singing together. Music offers "teachable moments" through the lyrics of songs. You may ask older kids if the song lyrics fit with your family's faith and values. Talk with your kids about the lessons we learn from songs—God's teachings are all around us!

Adapted from OSV: Take Out: Family Faith on the Go

Feast of the Holy Innocents



December 28 is the feast of the Holy Innocents. It remembers the biblical story of King Herod's orders to execute male babies in Bethlehem in order to kill baby Jesus.

As we celebrate this feast, we should recall that the slaughter of innocents goes on today. It is a good time to re-double our efforts to pray for an end to abortion. Lift up these babies in prayer, and pray for all expectant parents and their unborn children.

Offer prayers also for children who are victims of violence, war, or abuse, and light a special candle for them throughout the Christmas season.

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Catholic Parent Newsletter

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A Family Blessing

May the blessing of Mary be upon us, that
we might grow in obedience to God and
faithfulness to God's work in the world.



May the blessing of Joseph be upon us, that we
might listen for God at all times and care
for the children of God in every place.

May the blessing of Jesus be upon us, and may
we grow in wisdom before God until
love of God and others rules our hearts.

May the blessing of the Holy Family be upon us,
that we might journey together to God.

Amen