



Thoughtful Moments

Never say "never"

When discouraged, children can get stuck thinking negatively. "I'll never learn to do this." "I'll never be good at that." "Never" may be part of our vocabulary, but it isn't part of God's. The next time you hear "never" from your child, remind her that we can do anything with God's help. "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).



Start talking now

Don't hesitate to talk to youngsters about topics that may be over their heads. While the Holy Trinity or the Real Presence might be too complicated for them now, they will understand more as they grow.

Pray the moment

Catholic parents faithfully teach formula prayers such as the Our Father or the Hail Mary but we can neglect to teach spontaneous prayer, too. Don't forget to let children hear you praise God for the sunset, thank him for a safe trip to school, or apologize for your misdeed.



Lenten renewal for the family

Lent isn't just about sacrifice. This is also a time to make changes that will either bring us closer to God or give him a central place in our family life. Consider these ideas:

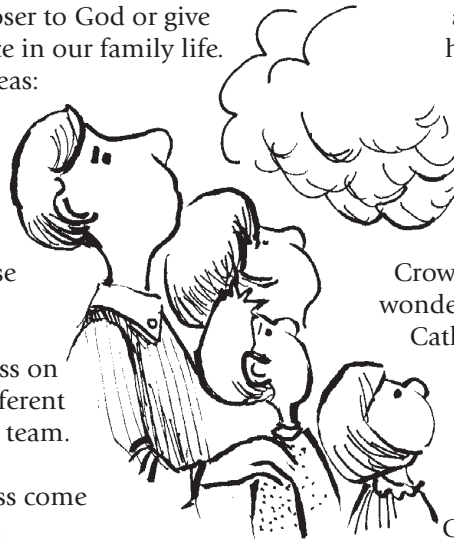
Ban sports teams or activities that interfere with attending Mass. If you have to choose between travel soccer or baseball and attending Mass on Sunday, find a different soccer or baseball team. For Catholics, the Eucharist and Mass come before everything.

Make Sunday about you and God. Fix dinner on Saturday so that you only have to warm it up on Sunday. Use disposable plates so there are no dishes to wash. Postpone errands or chores to another day. Spend the extra

time relaxing, reading from Scripture, praying a family Rosary, or learning about a saint you haven't met.

Participate in your parish. Make a point of taking your children to First Friday observances, feast days, and May Crowning. These are wonderful expressions of our Catholic spirituality.

Pay God first. It takes money to do God's work in the world and the top funding source for the Catholic Church's ministries is her generous people. Teach children to regularly put into the collection basket a portion of their allowance or monetary gifts they receive. This conveys the idea that all we have really belongs to God.

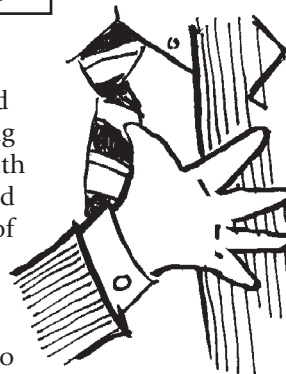


Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics strike their chests during some prayers?

When we use our voices, our minds, and even our bodies during prayer, we can pray with greater enthusiasm and attention. That's one of the reasons we stand, kneel, and sit during Mass.

We are also invited to

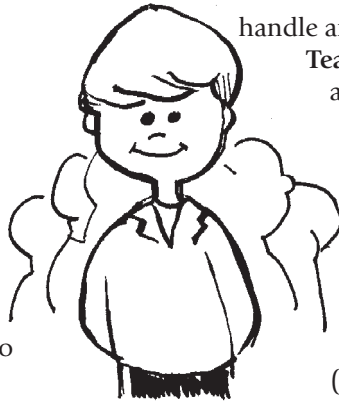


use gestures. Striking one's chest is an ancient symbol of sorrow and repentance. During the Confiteor, for example, we strike our chests at the words, "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault" to demonstrate sorrow for our sins.

Raising respectful children

Have you ever noticed that well-mannered children really stand out? In fact, studies show that teachers, coaches, and others in authority are inclined to be kinder and better disposed toward children who have good manners and who behave respectfully. Teaching children to use respectful behavior will help to let their light shine before men.

Create rules for behavior. Children benefit from specific guidelines for how to behave, starting with “treat others as you would want to be treated.” Guidelines can include how to



handle arguments or how to speak to adults.

Teach by example. Saying “please,” “thank you,” and “excuse me” is a good start. Model attentiveness by not interrupting when someone else is speaking, not raising your voice unnecessarily, or by avoiding bad words or violent language.

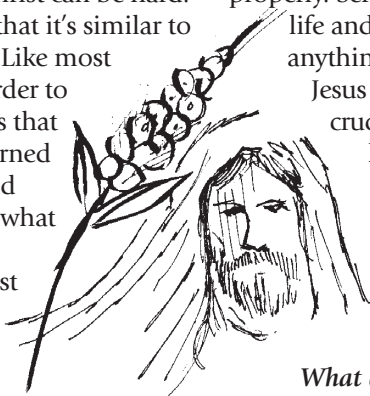
Use Scripture. There are many examples of both respectful and disrespectful behavior in the Bible. For example, when Jesus was on trial, he was slapped in the face. He politely protested (John 18:23). Jesus is always a great model for us.

Scripture LESSON

John 12:20-33, obedient like Jesus

Being a follower of Christ can be hard. Jesus told his disciples that it's similar to being a grain of wheat. Like most seeds, it has to die in order to produce new life. For us that means being less concerned about what we want and more concerned about what God wants.

Jesus said that we must “hate” our lives and be willing to lose them so that we can live. He meant that we have to push aside our attachment to possessions, concern for our own pleasure, and worry about how others see us so that we can serve God



properly. Serving God brings eternal life and that's better than anything the world can offer us.

Jesus knew he would be crucified and, being human, he dreaded it. He also knew that God sent him here to pay the price for our sins, so Jesus said “no” to what he wanted and obeyed his Father.

What can a parent do? Help children understand that obeying God is more important than anything the world can give us – and the reward lasts forever.

Parent TALK

Our middle-school daughter, Terry, has been best friends with Vicki since they were in first grade at St. Teresa's together. Without any explanation, Vicki suddenly stopped talking to her. Worse, she got other girls to isolate Terry as well. Terry was crushed.

When Terry asked me for help, I showed her the steps Jesus suggested for resolving disputes in Mathew 18:15-17. She followed each one, and even got a mediator and talked to our priest.

Fr. Michael told her that it sounds like Vicki wanted to take a break from being friends but didn't know how to tell Terry properly. He said it happens a lot with girls Vicki's age. Still, no matter what Vicki does, Terry needs to be kind. But Father urged Terry to find other girls who were more worthy of her friendship. And he told her he was sure Jesus was proud that she behaved as he asked.

Feasts & Celebrations

March 7 – Sts. Perpetua and Felicity (203). Perpetua was a noble young mother who refused to renounce her faith. Felicity was a slave and expectant mother who also refused to deny her Christianity. Felicity gave birth and both women were martyred three days later.

March 9 – St. Frances of Rome (1440). Although she preferred a life of service, Frances' wealthy parents required that she marry. With a sister-in-law, Frances formed a group of women dedicated to serving the poor. Frances honored her husband and cared for her children until their

deaths, and heroically served the poor and sick.

March 17 – St. Patrick (493). Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. He escaped but later returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established the Church there.

March 19 – St. Joseph (1st century). Jesus' earthly father and husband to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph is a model of fatherhood and a protector of families.



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