



## Thoughtful Moments

### Religious education

During the new school year, treat faith formation and religious education with the same importance as your child's academic education. Be sure to supervise religion homework or assignments. Reading, writing, and religion are important life skills your children will always need.



### Heal together

The most effective way to convince our children of the value of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to seek it ourselves. If you haven't been to Confession in a while, your priest will be happy to remind you of how it is done. Welcoming a penitent sinner back to God's forgiveness is one of a priest's greatest joys.

### Volunteer early

Getting children involved in parish life makes it more likely that they will want to come to Mass regularly. Ask if young children can perform small jobs such as handing out bulletins or acting as greeters. Even minor roles can help children feel a part of the parish, too.



## Make your family top priority

Strong schools, sports teams, and hobbies all make important contributions in our children's lives. Experts agree, however, that the most important lessons come from loving parents who spend time with their children. The best way to make family time a priority is to schedule it and make it happen.

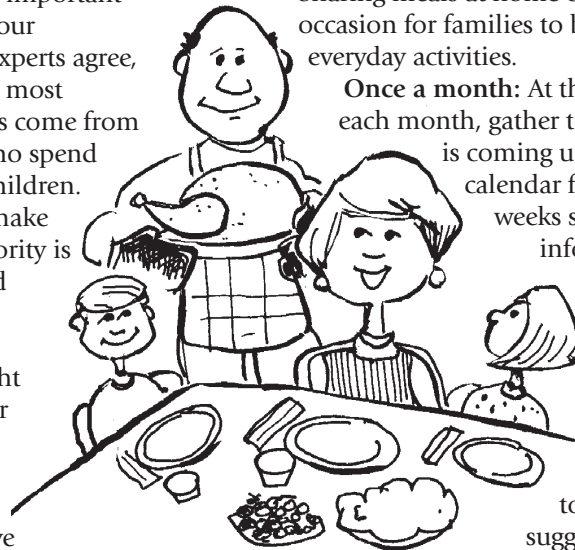
**Once a week:** Dedicate one night each week to your family. Make it something fun like playing board games, have a talent show so children can demonstrate progress in music or dance lessons, make popcorn and watch a movie from the library. Protect it on the calendar and let nothing interfere.

**Several times a week:** Bring your family together at mealtime whether for

microwaved or home-cooked dinners. Sharing meals at home creates an occasion for families to bond over everyday activities.

**Once a month:** At the beginning of each month, gather to review what is coming up on the calendar for the next few weeks so all are informed. Also discuss family issues and problems. Let each person be allowed to bring up topics or give suggestions for solutions.

**Once in a while:** Introduce a learning opportunity. Have a short lesson to teach a virtue or a life skill you want your children to learn. Or, bring home an outsider such as a priest or sister to visit and learn from.

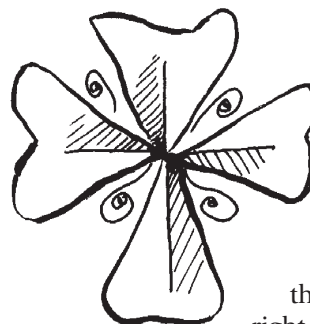


## Why Do Catholics Do That?

To help us live a holy life each day, the Catholic Church has identified four necessary virtues we all need to acquire, called Cardinal Virtues.

They are: *temperance* – the virtue that helps us to control our impulses and desires, *justice* – to help

## What are the Cardinal Virtues?



us respect the rights of others and give God his due, *fortitude* – which gives us the resolve to resist temptation and the courage to do right, and *prudence* – the virtue that helps us to make the right choices.

## Help children find time for prayer

One way to help children remember to pray throughout the day is to combine prayer with regular daily activities. For example:

**On your knees.** To remember to say morning prayers, put shoes under beds the night before. When youngsters bend down to retrieve them in the morning, children can stay on their knees and say a quick prayer offering the day to God.

**Buckle up.** Each time you buckle up a seatbelt in the car, offer a prayer together



asking that you remain aware of God's presence in your life. Or, perhaps pray the Guardian Angel Prayer asking for protection during the journey.

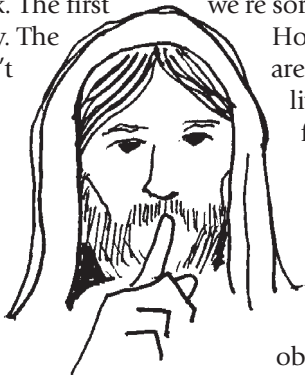
**Special intention jar.** Keep a jar in a central place in your home, such as a kitchen counter or near a main door. Throughout the day, each person can write prayer intentions on slips of paper and put them in the jar. Before going to bed at night, family members can pull a note from the jar and pray for that need with their regular nighttime prayers.

### Scripture LESSON

#### Matthew 16:21-27, How can I gain salvation?

Jesus tells of the man who sent two sons to the vineyard to work. The first said, "No," but went anyway. The second said, "Yes," but didn't go. Jesus asked which son did as the father asked. Obviously the first son did.

If we say, "Yes, God, I believe in you," that's not enough. If we presume that the Lord will take us into heaven just because we say that, we'll be disappointed. Words are not enough. True obedience is shown through actions. When we realize we are in a state of sin, we have two options. We



can say we're sorry, or we can show we're sorry.

How can we show God we are sorry? We can go back to living as Jesus taught us by following the Commandments and the Beatitudes.

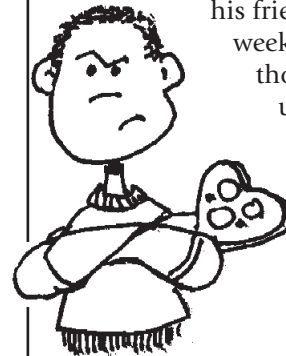
#### *What can a parent do?*

Use this Gospel to show children what obedience is all about, both

obedience to God and obedience to parents. We can teach our children that doing what Jesus asked us to do is the most important way to live our lives.

### Parent TALK

Jamal isn't allowed to play video games during the week so when Friday comes, he quickly disappears to meet his friends online. Last weekend was different, though. He came upstairs after only a few minutes because his friends were playing a new game that my husband and I don't approve and won't buy. We won't even let him use his own money to buy it. It's very violent.



It was hard to see him sad but this wasn't the first time we have forbidden something allowed by other families. In this case, my husband and I feel strongly that violent video games hurt children and we won't accept them just because other parents say they are okay. Our standards are different.

Jamal doesn't like feeling left out. But, as Catholics, we have to do what we think is best even if it isn't always easy or popular. God is watching.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Sept. 12 – Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** Pope Innocent XI extended this feast to the entire Church after the King of Poland, with Mary's protection, defeated an advancing Muslim army in Vienna in 1683.

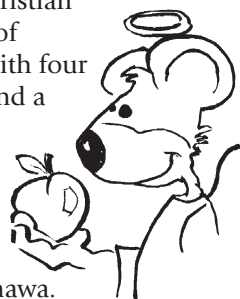
**Sept. 16 – St. Cyprian (258).** A theologian and orator, Cyprian was bishop of Carthage. He helped defend the Church against heretics and set guidelines for readmitting lapsed Christians. Cyprian was arrested for refusing to worship idols, was exiled and martyred.

**Sept. 28 – Saint Wenceslaus (929).** King of Bohemia, Wenceslaus worked

to end the persecution of the Christians in his country. He encouraged German missionaries, built churches, and cared for the needy. Political conflict led to his assassination by his brother. The "Good King" was immediately recognized as a martyr.

**Sept. 28 – St. Lawrence Ruiz (1630).** Lawrence was born in the Philippines to Christian parents. Accused of murder, he fled with four Catholic priests and a leper to Nagasaki, Japan, but came under violent persecution.

They were martyred on Okinawa.



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