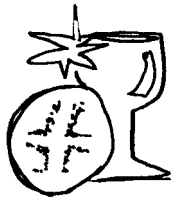




Thoughtful Moments

Special Sacraments

Most Catholic adults remember their First Communion and First Confession with surprising clarity. If your child, or someone close to your family, is receiving these Sacraments for the first time this year, share your memories as testimony to how special these Sacraments are to every Catholic.



Responsibility

Allowing our children to handle some of their own age appropriate problems builds confidence and life skills. For example, if your child forgets to set the table for dinner, sit down to a bare table and let her scramble for plates. Making lessons memorable help them last.

Name of names

In January we celebrate the Holy Name of Jesus. "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Philippians 2:10). In fact, the English letters IHS – representing the first three Greek letters in Jesus' name – used to be written over the doors of Christian homes.



6 ways to have a Happy New Year

A new year is a chance to embrace change and start new. This year, as you make your personal resolutions, why not also set goals for your family that will strengthen and nurture each member.

1. Eat healthier. Medical journals report that nine million children in the United States are obese or overweight. This year, try to avoid serving junk or overly processed foods and sit down together to average sized portions of fresh, healthy foods.

2. Stay calm. Words can heal or hurt. Resolve to avoid yelling and use only kind words.

3. Monitor input. Children absorb what they see and hear. Restrict what

your child watches on TV or plays on the computer.

4. Keep moving. Go on family walks, bike rides, or go roller blading together. Find fun ways to get family exercise and spend more time together.

5. Read together more. Reading together at any age can increase attention span and provide time for closeness. Why not combine two great activities and read together from the Bible?

6. Seek the Sacraments. Our souls need Sacraments the way our bodies need nourishment. Through the Sacraments Jesus instituted, the Holy Spirit dispenses a share of divine life with each encounter. Resolve to receive Confession regularly as a family and let nothing come between you and the Eucharist on Sunday.

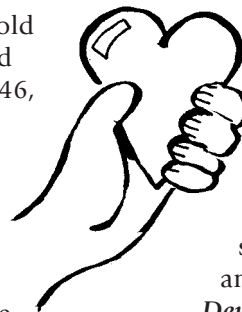


Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics perform works of charity?

While on Earth, Jesus told us to care for the poor and needy. In Matthew 25:31-46, he said there is a great reward for obedience and a terrible punishment for neglect.

As a result, "The exercise of charity became established as one



of (the Church's) essential activities, along with the administration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the Word ... the Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*).

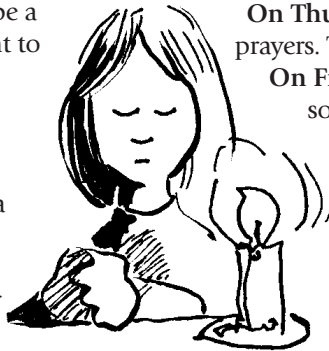
Make family prayer enjoyable

Gathering for family prayer doesn't have to be a chore. Try doing something different each night to keep it fun and fruitful. For example:

On Monday, sing your favorite hymns from Mass together. Let each person pick one.

On Tuesday, ask everyone to offer a prayer request that benefits someone else. Then pray a decade of the Rosary for all of the intentions.

On Wednesday, read together from Scripture. Pick a book, such as a gospel, and read a chapter each week. Then talk about what it means.



On Thursday, take a few minutes to write individual prayers. Then pass them around or read them out loud.

On Friday, light a candle and let each person share something good about the week. After each blessing, respond with praise such as, "For this, we thank our loving God."

On Saturday, review the Mass readings for the next day (find them at www.usccb.org) and talk about their meaning.

On Sunday, attend Mass as a family. It's the very best family prayer.

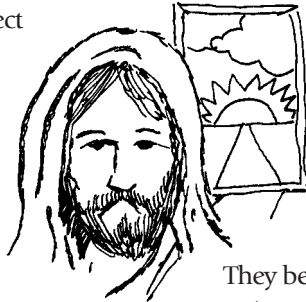
Scripture LESSON

**Luke 4:21-30,
Hear it, live it**

From the time God promised a Messiah, people imagined a marvelous king who would defeat Israel's enemies. They certainly didn't expect someone ordinary or someone they already knew.

Still, when Jesus' friends and neighbors heard what was said about his amazing deeds, they were ready to believe in him. They became excited when he read Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah and announced that it was actually about him.

Then everything changed because Jesus had some hard messages for them. He warned that their expected blessings



wouldn't automatically come to them.

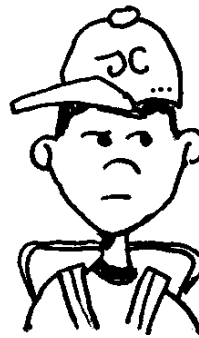
God's people have lost their chosen place in the past because they didn't listen to his prophets and change their ways. His friends became furious when Jesus mentioned God's grace to the Gentiles because the Israelites thought Gentiles were inferior to themselves.

They became angry and threw Jesus out.

What can a parent do? Help children understand that although the truth isn't always easy to hear, there is no substitute for it. If we ignore the truth Jesus brought, the doors of Heaven may close to us forever.

Parent TALK

My family was all smiles as we walked out of the baseball stadium. Having spent the day in the sunshine, eating all the popcorn, peanuts and hotdogs we could, there was little more to want.



That wasn't the case for a man sitting on the curb. He didn't speak, but

held a sign saying that he was jobless and hungry.

My Catholic faith has taught me to feed the hungry, so I told my son, Jacob, to reach into our backpack and give the man our unopened bag of peanuts because my hands were full. Jacob refused. He put his head down, kept walking, and said, "I'm too afraid." He didn't look back.

Jacob must have felt guilty because he mentioned the man in his prayers that night. Then I knew that while he may not have done the right thing this time, the seed I planted was starting to grow.

Feasts & Celebrations

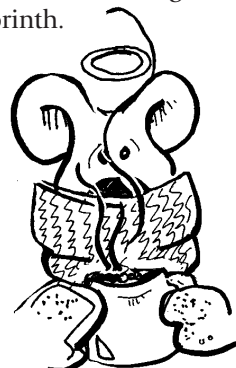
January 3 – Epiphany of Our Lord. We celebrate the visit of the wise men to the infant Jesus. Epiphany is Greek for manifestation. When they honored the infant Jesus, the three wise men bore witness to the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior.

January 6 – St. John Neumann (1860). Born in what is now the Czech Republic, St. John Neumann became a priest at age 25 and traveled to New York. At 41, as bishop of Philadelphia, he reorganized the parochial school system and increased the number of

pupils almost twentyfold within a short time.

January 26 – Sts. Timothy and Titus (1st century). Timothy was a convert of Paul's and later became his trusted friend, joining him in apostolic work. He was with Paul at the founding of the Church in Corinth.

Titus was also a friend of Paul's who served the early Church as a peacemaker and as administrator to a community on Crete.



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