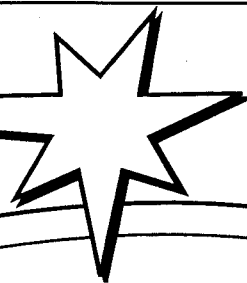


Partners in FAITH



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

September 2003

St. Jerome Croatian Church
FRANCISCAN FATHERS: Fr. Joe/Fr. Tomislav



Thoughtful Moments



Traditions Build Family Unity

Meaningful traditions build a sense of closeness that endures long after children are on their own. A family tradition can be as simple as "Pizza and Movie Night" on Friday or holding hands while saying grace at the dinner table. The traditions themselves aren't as important as the memories they create.

"Bless" your children off to school

Any Christian can perform a blessing that calls forth God's goodness. All that's required is a close relationship with God and the desire to transfer goodness. Why not send your child off to school in the morning with a pat on the head and a "bless you" or "God be with you," and bring grace to him or her all day.

Easy ways to build self-esteem

Make a list of the best things about your child and mention at least one item from that list every day. Compliment your child in front of friends or family. Say it out loud and don't let your child brush it away. Leave a note on his pillow or send it along in her lunchbox. Let him hear you thank God for the gift of your child in prayer whenever you can.



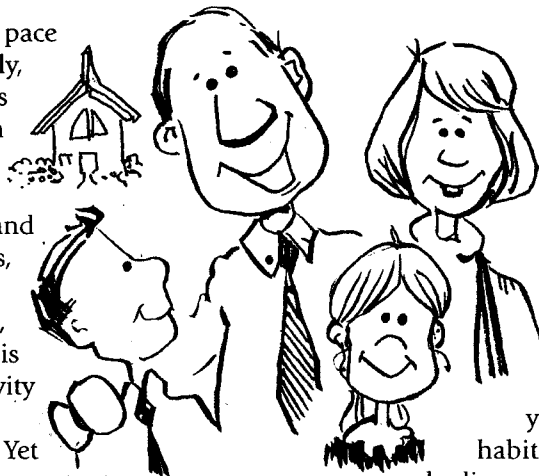
Sunday Mass: A gift you can give your family every week

In the hectic pace of a busy family, getting to Mass on Sunday can be a struggle. Between soccer games and scout meetings, dance lessons and play dates, going to Mass is one more activity competing for precious time. Yet it is the most important thing you can do for your family all week. Why?

Consider some of the ways your children benefit from weekly Mass.

Tradition and security. How many things do you still do today that you've done since you were a small child? No matter what other changes take place in their lives, the Mass is a constant to which your children can cling.

Children learn by repetition,



through consistency and from example. When Sunday Mass is part of their regular routine, children learn how to maintain the habit of weekly attendance. Seeing the importance you place on the habit teaches them obedience and discipline.

Visiting the rest of the family.

When in church, our children are surrounded by the Body of Christ - people who care about and pray for them. Mass becomes an oasis in an increasingly hostile world.

The week starts with a God-centered focus. Attending Mass at the beginning of the week helps children learn that God comes first on Sunday and every day.

Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics bless themselves when they enter and leave church?



Old Testament Jews washed with water before entering the Temple precincts. Building on a ritual familiar to the Jews, John the Baptist used water to represent repentance of sin

and purification.

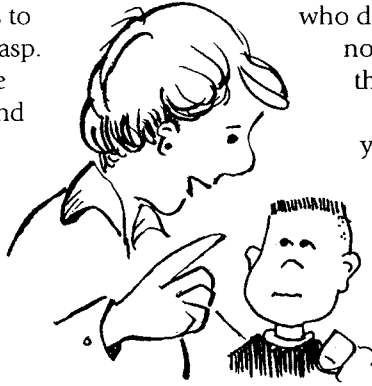
So when we cross ourselves with holy water entering and leaving the church, we recall that history. But we also refer to our Baptism when the priest used water to symbolically wash away our sin and protect us from evil.

Talk to your children about being Catholic

"Why are we Catholic?" It's hard for parents to answer that question in terms children can grasp. Next time you're asked, simply say that we are Catholic because Catholicism is true, good, and beautiful.

It's true. Jesus started the Catholic Church, and since he is God, he always teaches the truth. The Church helps us understand Christ's teachings.

It's good. The Church is about goodness and can turn sinners into saints. Simply put, saints are ordinary human beings



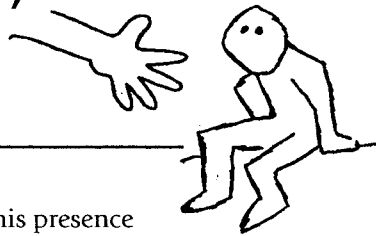
who did extraordinary things for the love of God. Why not make a point of introducing your children to these every-day Catholic heroes?

It's beautiful. The Mass is full of Catholic beauty you can share with your children. Encourage them to sing the hymns and note the words of love and worship the composers wrote. And stay after Mass on Sunday to admire the statues and stained glass windows in the church.

Tell your kids that because you love them, you want the best for them. That's why you are raising them Catholic.

Scripture LESSON

Mark 7:31-37, Jesus cures a deaf man.



People who are deaf are often pretty isolated. Not only can they not hear what is being said, a deaf person often has problems pronouncing words. Communication with the world can be frustrating and difficult.

Jesus cured the deaf man in this Gospel story because he was clearly moved by compassion to help the sick, but this healing was also symbolic. Hearing and speaking are what open us up to the world. Jesus cures the man's hearing, and opens up his heart to God. This is something Jesus does for every Christian. His life, his example,

and his presence in the Sacraments open up our eyes, ears, and hearts to God.

What a parent can do:

Encourage your child to reach out to others who may not be able to communicate well. This includes non-English speaking people, people with disabilities, or even the kid at school who doesn't seem to fit in. Help her remember that hearing and speech are tools we can use in God's service.

Parent TALK

"How I got my children to enjoy family prayer"

Getting my family to pray together was a struggle. The kids complained it was boring and routine.

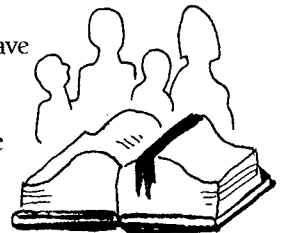
It was time to rethink the way we were praying as a family. Since each person's relationship with God is personal and unique, I realized the children should have a say in how we pray. So I set new guidelines the next day. Here's what we do:

Television, computers, and telephones are turned off for 30 minutes after dinner.

Together we pick a page from the children's Bible and take turns reading it aloud and look for its messages. (*Hint: we read chapter introductions in my Bible for help.*)

Then we pray. We may pray the Rosary, talk from our hearts, or sit together in silent prayer. But we all get to vote on the method.

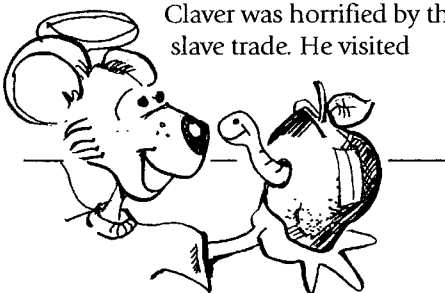
Now I don't have to drag anyone to prayer. My children feel like it's really family prayer time.



Feasts & Celebrations

This month we honor Our Lady of Sorrows and celebrate her birthday (Sept. 8). Despite her own suffering, Mary stood by her son and accepted the will of the Father. She is a model for faith and trust.

Sept. 9 - St. Peter Claver. A young Jesuit in Colombia in 1610, St. Peter Claver was horrified by the slave trade. He visited



arriving slave ships and brought water, medicine, food, and clothing to its inmates. He taught them about God and baptized nearly 300,000 slaves.

Sept. 20 - St. Andre Kim Taegon, St. Paul Chong Hasang and his companions. Known as "The Korean Martyrs," Catholicism exists in Korea due to the courage of these men. They refused to renounce their faith and were martyred between 1839 and 1867.

Sept. 30 - St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael, the Archangels. Members of the third hierarchy of angels around the throne of God, Archangels are entrusted with important missions to mankind such as St. Gabriel's visit to the Blessed Mother to tell her she had been chosen as the Mother of God.

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