

# Catholic Parent Newsletter

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## Bits and Pieces from Here and There

*"No one is without a family in this world: the Church is a home and family for everyone..."*

-Familiaris Consortio 85

*"Humor is in fact an essential element in the mirth of creation. We can see how, in many matters in our lives, God wants to prod us into taking things a bit more lightly."*

Pope Benedict XVI

*"Children's talent to endure stems from their ignorance of alternatives."*

Maya Angelou

*"When your children experience love in the family, you are giving them a taste of God."*

Tom McGrath

*The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is August 15. Pope Pius XII, in 1950, defined that Mary "after the completion of her earthly life...was assumed body and soul into the glory of Heaven."*



## Summer Fun on a budget!



We may be seeing one of the tightest economic downturns our country has seen in decades, but there's no reason to let money woes spoil our summer fun! You can have a fantastic summer and create lasting memories with little or no money. All it takes is a little planning. Here are some inexpensive ways to beat the heat and have some fun this summer.

- ◆ **Homemade slide**— Get a hose, a sprinkler and a tarp. Now you've got a slippery slide. Just flood the tarp with water and add a sprinkler or two for extra fun.
- ◆ **Take a hike**— When was the last time you visited a state park or a hiking trail? Take a nature walk with the family. Be sure to wear sunscreen and bring bug spray.
- ◆ **Rack those little brains**— School may be out, but learning can be fun for your child. Try out your library's summer reading programs for fun and free entertainment with an educational twist. For added incentive, invite your child's friend to go along.
- ◆ **Help others and learn**— Community service is a great way for kids of all ages to get out of the house and learn about others. Donate your time with the local animal shelter or join a community service club. Volunteer activities remind you of what's really important in life and enable everyone involved to make new friends.
- ◆ **Neighborhood campout**— Backyard campouts can be a great adventure for your children. Ask everyone you invite to bring snacks to share. All you need to supply is your yard, a bathroom and beverages. (Have a space available in the house if it starts raining or if the children get scared.)

Adapted from *NBCactionnews.com*

Recommended Reading: ***Keep Talking: Daily Conversation Starters for the Family Meal***  
By Maureen Treacy Lahr, Julie Pfitzinger

Many families today seldom take time to eat together. When they do, they often have difficulty starting a conversation or may even discover that they have little in common to talk about. Here are 288 discussion points for mealtime with your family. Written by mothers of school-age kids, the book stands on your supper table like a flip chart with its own built-in easel. Some of the points are religiously oriented; all are based on important values for modern family living. — A wonderful gift for any family you know who would like to get to know one another better, but just need a little help getting started.



# Seven truths your children should know about God

It is important to introduce our children to the One True God. This can seem a daunting task. You have three great strengths at your disposal: your own living faith, the help of your parish community, and a God who loves your child. Here are some fundamental truths about God to teach your children:

1. **God is love.** Knowing that God is love is a great tool when we feel lost or confused about who we are, why we're here, and what God wants of us.
2. **You can find God through prayer.** Make prayer a habit by praying daily as a family whether at meal times, in the morning before school, or at bedtime. Pray for each other in hard times. Let your children see you praying.
3. **You can encounter God in service to others.** Children have a natural sense of justice that can be used to help them learn compassion. Those who are encouraged to be generous deepen their relationship with God. To counter our society's "me first" attitude, you can follow the example of one young family whose prayer every night at dinner concludes with this question to each one around the table: "Who did you help today?"
4. **You can meet God in scripture.** The Bible is packed with deep truths about God's action in human history that can only be understood with the heart and soul. Have a children's Bible on hand, and rent videos of Bible stories. Make a habit, in a mode fitting your child's age, to engage in a discussion of the scripture readings before or after Mass. You might ask, "What line do you remember from the story?"
5. **You can find God in nature.** Children learn to know God through creation. Jesus himself would often go off to a quiet place in nature to be still and open his heart to an experience of God. Honor your child's fascination with nature—with storms and clouds and forests and streams. It's valuable for our kids to know they can always meet God in the great outdoors.
6. **God is on your side.** It's important for our children to know that they are part of a great and wonderful story of faith through the ages, and that they have a contribution to make and a role to play. God is their greatest ally in both discovering their true path in life and achieving the good they are called to do through their unique gifts. Let your children know they can turn to God for help whenever they need it.
7. **God forgives.** Our kids need to know and hear it said: "God will always welcome you if you stray." Make sure your children understand that there is always a place for them in the church, no matter what they've done. Give them a taste of God's forgiveness by raising them in a home where both accountability and forgiveness flow freely.

*Adapted from Seven Truths Your Children Should Know About God by Tom McGrath*

## ***PAINTED "PET" ROCKS***



*Kids can let their imaginations run wild when creating creatures out of rocks. They can think about how to use the different shapes to make their own creation.*

**Materials** (rocks, acrylic paint, glue, brushes)

- Collect a lot of rocks. Be sure there are different sizes and shapes.
- Start by choosing the rocks that will make up the pet (head, ears, maybe a nose, and legs).

- Paint the entire rock, top and bottom in one color.
- When the first coat of paint dries, paint on the details (eyes, whiskers, fur).
- When everything is dry, glue the pieces together.

*Almost any type of acrylic paint will work. Try to find some thick paints so that the rock won't show through. If the kids get tired of the pet, it can become a door stop, bookend, garden ornament, paper weight. They make a great gift for grandparents.*

## Home is the “domestic Church”



Every family is a small *Church at home*, a “domestic Church.” This belief has been deeply ingrained in Church tradition. But what does this expression to be “a *domestic Church*” mean for today’s parents? It means that Jesus, who is at the center of the Church, is also at the center of the family. We are united with Jesus and with one another through him. In this way a family is a domestic Church.

How do you help this small “Church at home” to appear and grow? By following Jesus’ own example! In the story of Jesus and the children from the Gospel of Mark, we see Jesus playing a very active role. He does not teach or explain, nor does he question. Instead, he interacts with the children; he shows his love by touching them. This model is perfect for parents: he puts his arms around the children, lays his hands on them and blesses them. Parents need only follow his example to show children how Jesus is present in their lives.

“*Jesus took them up in his arms*” The children welcomed with joy Jesus, who reached out to them. The confidence of children is so innate and simple. They open up to Jesus, knowing that he loves them. He was the friend of children. To know that they are welcomed and appreciated, and to let themselves be loved tenderly: this is God’s desire for all his children, big and small. As parents, you have the delicate task of helping them to know this God of Love.

Some families regularly bless their children and ask God to protect them. This is an act full of meaning. A blessing from one’s parents is a small gesture that carries with it extraordinary richness and meaning. Through this action, the parent entrusts the child to God and asks for all that the child needs, for the child to feel God’s presence, and for his or her peace of body, spirit and heart.

Your child can easily take part in this little ritual, which can be done at bedtime when you have some quiet time together. Make the sign of the cross on your child’s forehead as you say how much you and God love him or her: “I bless you, my little child of God! I entrust you to Jesus; sleep well until the morning.” The blessing could also be part of the daily comings and goings. Over time your child may want to bless you as well.

*Adapted from Come, let us pray!* (Catholic Organization for Life and Family)

## Helping Children Deal With Anger

Anger is a fact of life. Everyone gets angry. Parents do and so do their children. What do you as a parent do with an angry child? Letting your anger or your child’s anger get out of hand is dangerous. Hiding it is also dangerous because it only makes it smolder until it explodes later “for no good reason.”

The first thing you can do is get control over your own feelings. It will help if you think of your job at that moment as a teaching job. Recognize your child probably — doesn’t understand the strong feelings building up inside — doesn’t know what to do with his feelings — may be frightened at the sense of feeling out of control.

If you, as a parent, can help your child discover what feeling lies under the anger and talk about it with your child, the anger is likely to lessen or even disappear. Anger is a natural, human feeling. Your child has a right to feel and express anger. So do you, just as everyone has a right to feel hunger, happiness or sadness.

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## Catholic Parent Newsletter

Place your parish logo,  
and/or contact person  
information here!

### Appreciating My Most Important Job

Lord, I spend my days rushing busily from my job  
to chores at home  
to obligations in my community.

always anxiously struggling to do all the  
things I feel I ought to be doing.

And when it's time to be with my children  
I'm often totally drained  
and exhausted.

Sometimes I feel as if I'm giving them  
only leftover time and energy.

Don't let me ever forget, Lord,  
that out of all the jobs I have to do,  
right now, at this time in my life,  
parenting is the most important.

How blessed I am to have you think  
that I am worthy of this responsibility.

Don't let me make a mess of it, Lord.

Help me to do a good job  
with these fragile souls  
whom you have entrusted to my care.  
Amen.