



Thoughtful Moments

A special candle

One way to show children that God is with us every day is to light a candle during the family meal.

Leave it burning while everyone is eating and remind

youngsters that the flame is a symbol of God's presence at the table with you.



Religion, front and center

Treat your children's religious education classes as the most important education they receive. Make attendance and homework as much a priority as "regular" school. Mastering the material they learn may not get them into a good college, but it will guarantee their entrance into someplace even more important.

"Mama's boy"

Jesus' first public miracle was for his mother. In John 2:1-10, Jesus was at a wedding hosted by his mother's friends and the wine ran out. Jesus hesitated to help for fear of revealing his identity too soon. Yet one look from his mother and the Messiah did exactly as she asked.



What do our children get out of going to Sunday Mass?

If a friend invited your family to dinner and said Jesus would be there, too, would you go? Of course you would!

You would do whatever was necessary in order to be there. You know that your family would be greatly blessed just by being in Jesus' presence.

In fact, each time Mass is celebrated, Jesus is there in person, but some Catholic families don't go every weekend. Here is what our children get by going to Mass *every* week:

1. Good food. Parents take great care to feed children well so they will grow strong and healthy. At Sunday Mass, Jesus gives us a regular diet of the food we need for our souls to stay strong and healthy.



2. Good practice. God personally told us to keep holy the Sabbath Day and Catholics do that by attending Sunday Mass.

Teaching children to obey God's rules is great practice for teaching them to obey ours.

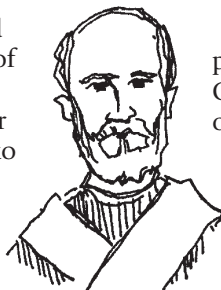
3. Good listening. When we go to Mass, we hear God's Word in the readings. We want our children to listen more closely to what God has to say than to what anyone else says to them.

4. Good company. Each of us – old and young – is needed by our Catholic community. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Children help others worship God just by being there.

Why Do Catholics Do That ?

What is a deacon?

A deacon is ordained through the Sacrament of Holy Orders but is different from a priest or bishop. He is ordained to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine ministries.



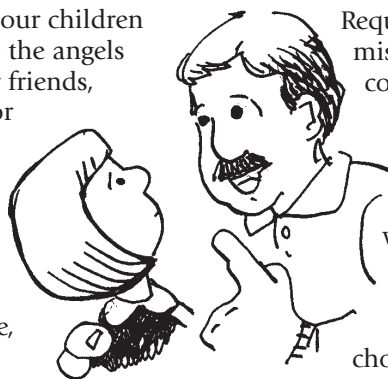
Deacons can proclaim the Gospel, preach, and distribute Holy Communion. They can also preside over funerals and bless marriages.

A **transitional** deacon is ordained prior to ordination as a priest. A **permanent** deacon doesn't become a priest and may be married prior to his ordination.

Don't play the Blame Game

Sometimes the great love we have for our children makes it hard to admit they aren't always the angels we want them to be. We may blame their friends, teachers, or schools for their bad habits or misdeeds. Unfortunately, when we allow them to escape responsibility for their failures, we are robbing them of the chance to change and grow.

Return power. Blaming others turns our children into victims. Instead of learning to become capable and in charge, they give others power over their choices.



Requiring even young ones to fix or rectify their own mistakes will reinforce their competence and control.

Return accountability. When God confronted Adam about his bite of the forbidden fruit, he blamed Eve for his sin and she blamed the serpent. While God acknowledged that they were led to their sin, he still held them personally accountable and banished them from the Garden. Be sure children understand that they will bear the punishment for bad choices no matter who tempted them to sin.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 24:35-48, Full understanding.

After the Resurrection, the disciples were stunned to see Jesus. They assumed he was a figment of their longings for him, or that he was a ghost.

When he appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem, he wanted them to know

he was real. He let them see him, touch him, and watch him eat. Then he opened their minds so that they understood that he was the Old Testament promise



fulfilled. With his help, they finally understood all that he had told them and shown them.

What can a parent do? To understand all that Jesus said and did and what he wants of us, we have to read Scripture. Read the Bible as a family as often as you can, and help your children understand its messages. If you need help yourself, try reading the surrounding passages and footnotes, consult your priest or other religious, or find an authoritative Catholic Bible commentary. Above all, ask the Holy Spirit to open your mind to the needed insight to put God's Word into action.

Feasts & Celebrations

April 4 – St. Isidore of Seville (636). St. Isidore was born to a family that included three saints and succeeded his brother as bishop of Seville. He was a peacemaker and is known as "The Schoolmaster of the Middle Ages" because the encyclopedia he wrote was used for 900 years.

April 19 – Divine Mercy Sunday. In 1931, Jesus appeared to St. Faustina and asked that the Sunday after Easter become the "Feast of Mercy." Jesus promised that anyone who honors

him as the King of Mercy and prays The Chaplet of Divine Mercy – the prayer he gave to St. Faustina – will receive special graces and great mercy.

April 24 – St. Fidelis (1622). In his native Prussia, St. Fidelis became a lawyer and championed the poor and oppressed. Later, he joined the Franciscans and gave away his wealth. During a revolt against the Church, St. Fidelis worked to bring people back. He was murdered by an angry mob.



Parent TALK

When we moved into a new neighborhood, I became concerned about some of the boys Aaron started playing with. They seemed a little wild and some of the neighbors accused them of vandalism and stealing.

I told Aaron of my concerns but said I wouldn't forbid him from playing with them. However, if the boys committed any misdeeds – whether he participated or not – I would hold Aaron solely responsible.

That very next week Aaron ran home in a panic. Even though he "told them not to," the boys threw a rock through Mr. Grayson's front window and smashed it. I walked Aaron back to Mr. Grayson's house where he apologized for his and his friends' behavior and made arrangements to pay to replace the window.

He had to mow a lot of lawns and rake a lot of leaves to pay for the window but he quickly lost interest in those friends – much to my relief.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children.
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(Unless noted, Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)