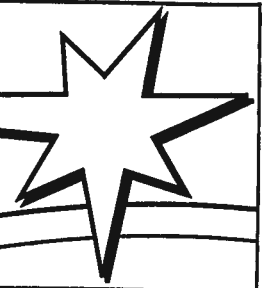


Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

January 2013

Our Lady of Lourdes Church
Theresa S. Bowen, DRE



Thoughtful Moments

Keep it real

Do you try to do too much? The New Year is a good chance to examine your priorities and decide what really matters. How organized does your home really have to be? How available do we have to be to jobs or friends? Handle what you reasonably can, and give the rest to God.

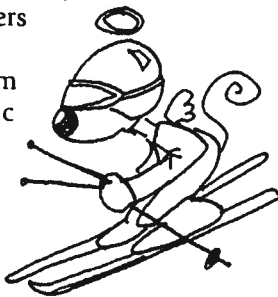
Show and Tell

Demonstrating good Christian values, taking children to Mass, and letting them see you in daily prayer illustrates the importance of your faith. But don't forget to talk to youngsters about your love for God and why you are Catholic. Show AND tell them.



Stock up

Do you get asked questions you can't answer about the faith? Invest in a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It's the definitive reference on the faith, and the index makes it easy to find answers quickly. It is available from most Catholic bookstores and many general ones.



The bright future of our Church

When children participate in the Church from a young age, they grow to be strong and faithful Catholics for life. Encouraging youngsters to take an active part in parish life will give them a sense of belonging. And it makes our children and our Church stronger. Consider these ideas:

Altar server. This is a common way children participate in parish life. Many parishes offer both boys and girls the chance to be altar servers. Youngsters learn the order of the Mass, grow to appreciate sacraments and sacramentals, and establish healthy relationships with clergy.

Christian witness. Young people who know the traditions, creed, teachings, and history of the Church can share their Catholic faith with

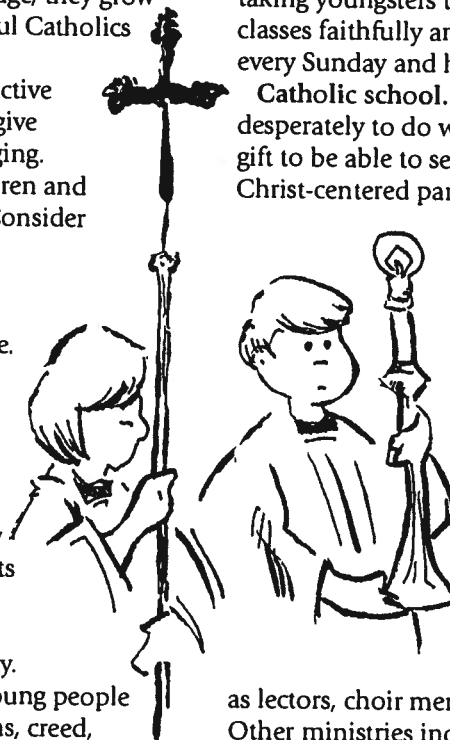
others. Parents can encourage this by taking youngsters to religious education classes faithfully and attending Mass every Sunday and holy day.

Catholic school. In a world trying desperately to do without God, it is a gift to be able to send children to a Christ-centered parish school. In

Catholic school, students are encouraged to care for one another. Cruelty and bullying are met head-on to help prevent the type of isolation that can erupt into deadly violence.

Parish support. Many parishes have opportunities for youths to serve

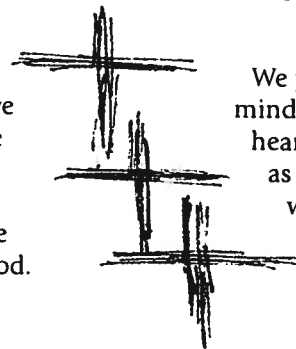
as lectors, choir members, or ushers. Other ministries include soup kitchens, work camps, homeless shelters, or visiting homebound parishioners.



Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics cross themselves three times before the Gospel?

God created us to know him, to love him, and to serve him. In Mass, when we make the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads, lips, and hearts before the Gospel reading, we are dedicating ourselves to God.



We pray, "Lord, be on my mind, be on my lips, be in my heart." We ask God to be in us as we hear the Gospel, so that we can truly "love and serve the Lord" by our lives.

Be joyfully Catholic

Catholic families aren't like other families. While we may have the same worldly problems, our solutions are always spiritual. The challenge for us is to remember that we aren't meant to be like non-religious families and to give ourselves permission to be different.

Be joyfully Catholic. Consider shaping your family's identity around Catholic seasons and traditions. Make Friday a day of penance. Change eating patterns during Lent. Reserve Sunday for God and family and attend Sunday Mass faithfully. Work for the poor.



Hold children accountable. Be unapologetic about providing consistent boundaries and enforcing family rules. Help youngsters develop good manners and respectful behavior.

Raise modest children. Catholic parents have to make tough choices about how children dress and act. We are called to control our passions and reflect our faith in Jesus by avoiding sin privately and publicly. **Model self-sacrifice.** Parents are great models when we set aside our own desires for the good of our families, parish, and community. Children watch us even more carefully than they watch their friends.

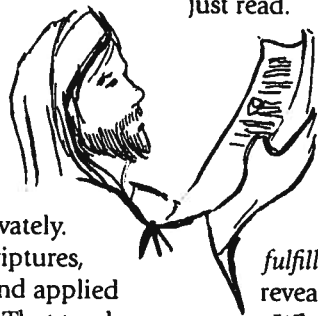
Scripture LESSON

Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21; a blueprint for faith

In this Gospel story, Jesus gave us a plan for how we are to practice our faith.

First, Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath according to his custom. He regularly took time to worship, demonstrating the importance of communal worship. It's not enough to just pray privately.

Second, Jesus read the scriptures, explained their meaning, and applied the scripture to a situation. That teaches us how to approach the Bible. Some Bible passages can be confusing. Explanation is important when we prayerfully read scripture. Applying the



Gospel message to our lives is equally important. It is meant to be lived, not just read.

Third, Jesus asked his listeners to have faith in him. The passage he read from Isaiah was a prophecy of the Messiah. When Jesus said, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing," he was revealing that he is the Messiah.

What can a parent do? Use this Gospel story to determine how your family will live your faith. Explain to children that, as followers of Jesus, we try to do just what he did.

Parent TALK

When Kara was little, she had one of those toddler cars she could pedal around in and pretend to drive. She would bump into a wall, get out, slam the door, and curse. I soon realized she was imitating me and resolved to clean up my language.



Fast forward to second grade when Kara was preparing for her First Communion. The teacher sent home an examination of conscience. As we went through the list of questions, Kara stopped at the one about bad language and said, "Mom, aren't some of the words you say bad language even if they aren't curses? Mrs. McNeill says if Jesus wouldn't say them, we shouldn't either."

I didn't realize I was giving a bad Christian witness with my language, especially since it had improved so much. But to be honest, I still used language I shouldn't. I guess my daughter and I are learning together.

Feasts & Celebrations

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).

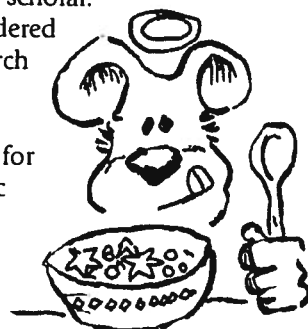
January 4 - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1821). An American, St. Elizabeth became Catholic after her husband died. She founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, a teaching order that established affordable schools.

January 17 - St. Anthony the Abbot (355). Born around 250 A.D. in Egypt, St. Anthony gave up wealth to live with simplicity in the desert. He is the father of monasticism.

January 24 - St. Francis de Sales (1622). As bishop of Geneva, St. Francis strengthened the faith of others by his writings. For the laity, he wrote Introduction to the Devout Life, which remains applicable today.

January 28 - St. Thomas Aquinas (1274). St. Thomas was a Dominican teacher and scholar.

He is considered by the Church as the preminent spokesman for the Catholic tradition of reason and divine revelation.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children

Success Publishing & Media, I.C.

Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™

(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax

<http://www.growinginfaith.com>

(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)

© Copyright 2013 Success Publishing & Media, LLC