



Thoughtful Moments

Good questions

Before you ask your child a question, think about why you are asking. Are you looking for information or does a statement work better?

"Why don't you ever remember to feed the dog?" serves no constructive purpose. Instead, think about saying, "You haven't fed the dog and he looks pretty hungry." A statement of the problem gives your child the chance to come up with his own solution.



Judge not

Help children to remember that criticizing others is a serious business. "Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). Better to worry about our own behavior and let others do the same.

Happy New Year

The first Sunday of Advent (November 29) is also the first day of our new liturgical year. We begin Sunday Cycle C this year. Advent is the first season of the Church year.



Making Sunday special

Attending Mass is the most important thing families do each week, but even the most committed sometimes fall into a Sunday slump. So think outside of the box and consider changing it up a little to make Sunday truly special.

Attend Mass somewhere else.

Sometimes being in a different environment can make it more interesting for children. See what statues, relics or architecture may be different from that in your church. A different church also shows that the Catholic faith is universal. There are people in little towns and big cities all over the world who come together at Mass to praise God.

Turn it into a family day. Take it a step farther and plan a day trip. There are churches that have mosaics, relics, and amazing art. Why not do a little research and find a church that would interest your family.

Start the day off with mass and then find other activities in the town to do.

Attend mass in another language.

For example, some churches have Masses in Latin, others have Spanish Masses, and so on. Show your children there are no cultural barriers

when it comes to the Catholic Church.

Make it a date. Invite another family to join you and enjoy breakfast afterward.

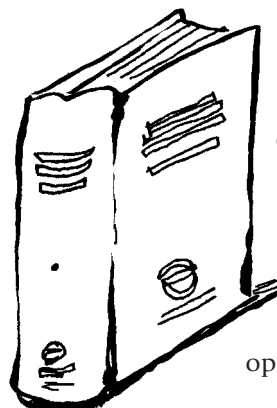
Go on a Saturday night. If Sundays are busy days, Saturday evening is a great alternative.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Canon Law is the official body of laws for the Catholic Church that govern faith, morals, and discipline. These laws assist the Church in carrying out her mission to the world and direct the various relationships between persons, offices,

What is Canon Law?



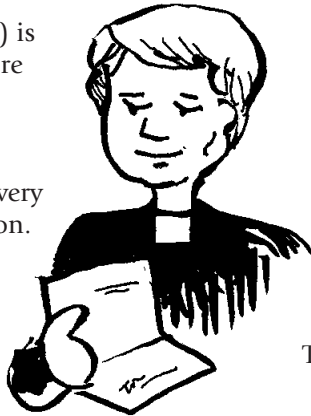
and groups within the Church. Only a pope or an ecumenical council has the authority to create canon law or interpret it for the universal Church. The legal system of the Catholic Church is the oldest such system continually operating in the world.

Your family and The Year for Priests

The Year for Priests (June 2009 to June 2010) is a good opportunity to help children learn more about the priesthood and how we can make a difference to our priests. Try these ideas:

Adopt a priest. Pick a priest to pray for and choose a special prayer that you say for him every day. Send a card to let him know your intention.

Invite a priest to dinner. Although your parish priests are busy, they may appreciate a home-cooked meal. Inviting one to your home is also a good way for children to



meet priests as people.

Follow up. Send a thank-you note to the priests who baptized each member of the family.

Have a movie night. Watch a movie about Catholic priests. There are some fun movies like "The Bells of St. Mary's" or "Boy's Town," or you can find a contemporary one by using the bishops' website (www.usccb.org/movies).

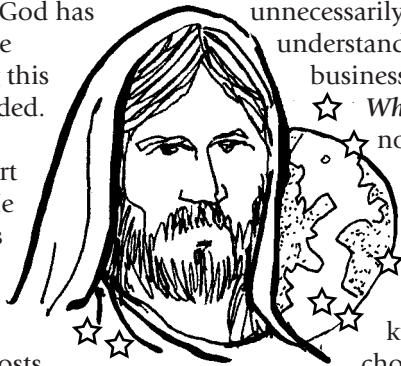
Take your family to Mass every weekend. This is the best thing you can do for your priest.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36, The hope Jesus brings

Advent is the time when we wait for the coming of Christ. God has promised that if we are faithful to him during this wait, we will be rewarded. In this reading, Jesus urges us to remain alert while still on Earth. He said that the pleasures and comforts of this world can tempt us to sin and he wants us to avoid sin at all costs.

When Jesus described the end times, what he said was scary. People will die of fright because "the power of the heavens" will be shaken. It's not that



☆ Jesus wanted to scare us unnecessarily but he wanted us to understand that sin is serious business. Its effects last forever. ☆ *What can a parent do?* It's not always easy to do the right thing but it is always worth it. Remind your children that God sees all that we do and knows each time we choose right over sin.

When we work hard to obey Jesus, we can be calm and without fear when we finally meet him knowing that we will be rewarded.

Parent TALK

When busy, we sometimes tune out the world to focus on the urgent business at hand.

Unfortunately, that can mean tuning out God and his blessings as well.

I was reminded of this by my 7 year-old son, Joshua. I was having a hard day. I had work deadlines to

meet, a house to pack before our move and I was pregnant.

My son came into my office several times to invite me to go with him because he had something to show me. I was stressed, busy, and short with him. Eventually I caved in to his persistence.

He walked me to the driveway and pointed down. "Mommy, I drew your guardian angel," he said. "I thought you might need her today."

Joshua's simple gift of love was just what I needed to remind me that God is around to help. We can't be too busy to recognize his company.



Feasts & Celebrations

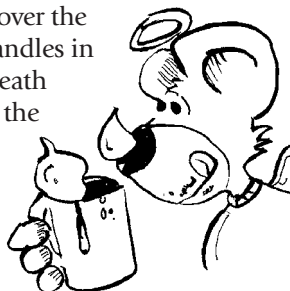
Nov. 1 – All Saints Day. In the early Church, saints and martyrs were celebrated on their own feast days. However, the persecution of Christians was so horrible that there weren't enough days in the calendar for individual commemorations. Eventually Pope Gregory IV designated Nov.1 as All Saints Day.

Nov. 2 – All Souls Day. On this day we pray for the dead, especially our loved ones and souls in Purgatory. Our prayers and sacrifices can help them get to Heaven faster.

Nov. 17 – St. Elizabeth of Hungary

(1231). The daughter of the King of Hungary, Elizabeth joined the Secular Franciscan Order after her beloved husband's death and spent the last years of her life caring for the poor. She is the patron of Catholic charities.

Nov. 29 - First Sunday of Advent. During this four-week season, we anticipate the Messiah's birth. Catholics all over the world light candles in an Advent wreath each night of the season to signal the coming of the true light of Christ.



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