

PARENT CONNECTION

RCL Benziger

8

Family Life



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Welcome to RCL Benziger Family Life!

You are a family! Your child is a gift from God—and a great responsibility. During these important growing-up years, you are the most important influence in your child's life.

Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation *On the Family*, challenged families to become what they are—“a community of life and love.” He invited you to wrap your child in the love of Christ, so that your son or daughter will become a follower of the Lord.

You only have to think back as far as your last family argument to know that it isn't always easy to be a community of love. You can use all the help you can get these days to be a Christian family. The Church supports you, and your parish or school chose RCL Benziger *Family Life* to be a part of that support.

In the weeks ahead your child will be learning more about the skills and virtues of Christian family living. This booklet will help your child to make the connection between what was learned in the classroom and living it at home. Your role is to do what you already know how to do best—be a good parent. You will be asked to share your own faith and values with your child in informal and enjoyable ways.

The first five sections in the Parent Connection correspond to the five themes in your child's book. Read through these materials. Throughout this booklet you'll find ideas to help you to better understand and communicate with your child. You will also find simple explanations of the Church's teaching with regards to living a healthy and holy family life. You will also learn new ways to create family experiences that your child will remember for a lifetime!



“Family, become what you are . . . a community of life and love.”

Pope John Paul II,
On the Family 17



In God's Gift of Family, your child is learning the following concepts.

1

Homegrown Happiness

- ▶ Everyone has physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs. These needs are first met in the family.
- ▶ God has placed in the human heart the natural desire for happiness. The more we experience gratitude in life, the more we can come to know happiness.
- ▶ We often feel our best when we do the work of love in reaching out to those in need.

2

Gifts for the Journey

- ▶ Feeling lost on our journey to happiness is a common emotion; but God has given us the gift of conscience as our guide.
- ▶ With an informed conscience and free will, we can choose to follow the right path to happiness.
- ▶ With both the grace of God and the counsel of the Church, family and friends help us navigate our way through life.

God's Gift of Family

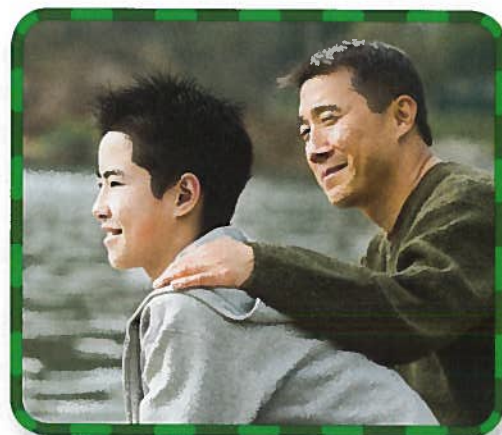
Connecting with Your Child

You may be noticing many changes taking place in your child. Most eighth-graders are well into puberty, and so are experiencing the biological and other changes that occur during this period of significant growth. Children of this age also go through a period of individuation, where they establish their own identity, adding to the one they have within their family. This too is normal. The previously recognized role of parents as nurturers and protectors is gradually changing. Your child now needs you to provide approval and direction to help them establish good values as their own.

During this time your young teen will begin to:

- ▶ See parents and authority figures as more fallible human beings.
- ▶ Show a greater interest in belonging to peer groups.

Both you and your child will probably want and need more time alone to reflect and pray about how life is changing for the whole family. This is a big change for both of you. And remember, *growth is inevitable, but acting mature is optional*. Prayer will help commit yourself to becoming a world-class listener. Also be willing to learn something you did not expect from your child. Remember, teens gravitate to adults who respect them and take them seriously.



Varied Emotions

Although your child may appear to want only independence, they have significant need for guidance and support. Eighth-graders can display a full spectrum of emotions, from the most negative to the most positive. Because of their age, their emotions may be more pronounced.

- ▶ Allow opportunities for your young teen to spend time alone. This will help give them time to wind down at the end of the day and to gain a clearer perspective.
- ▶ Encourage an atmosphere where discussion can take place. Let your child know that they can talk to you at any time about any subject. Allow your child to grow into independence gradually, and to express opinions that may be different from your own. Feel comfortable engaging them in conversation as you would with those expressed by an adult. This will show your child that you take them seriously and with a caring attitude.

Wisdom from the Church

In the plan of life which represents each person's vocation, love is also a precious source for the self-giving which all men and women are called to make for their own self-realization and happiness.

The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality 3

God created human beings for happiness now and forever. But what is happiness and where can it be found? People may search far and wide for happiness, and find that it is also found right at home.

The roots for family solidarity run deep. Family relationships are where people first discover and later test their intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and social skills and ideas.



True Happiness

A person is capable of choosing happiness in one's own life. A guide to Christian happiness can be found in the Beatitudes. The attitudes of happiness, found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3–10), can stand in opposition to the more self-centered approach too common in popular culture. Echoing the attitude and words of Jesus, the Church teaches that happiness is rooted in self-giving and loving relationships. These roots are important as one travels life's journey.

Discovering the Journey

There is no guarantee that the path ahead will be well-lighted, easy to follow, and free of danger. If one acts with an informed conscience and in faith, one walks with God. Among the companions along the way will be the community of faith—the Church as well as its guidance through her moral teachings that have served people so well for centuries. The Commandments, the Beatitudes and the example of Jesus are all invaluable gifts to be received with love and gratitude.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Read paragraphs 2207–2213 for a fuller understanding of Catholic teaching on the family and society.

Spend Time with Your Child

Here are some tips on how your family can grow in holiness and health:

- ▶ Make it a point to share family meals together as often as possible. Talk about the events of the day. Ask your child how they feel about what is going on in life.
- ▶ Plan a family outing to a public place or an attraction. This could be a park, lunch on a Saturday afternoon, or a trip to a museum or mall. The goal is to just be together and spend time as a family.
- ▶ Plan a family night for one evening a week. Bring in pizza or other family favorite foods, rent some videos or play favorite games. Just enjoy spending time together as a family.



Catholic Parenting 101

This section includes more practical advice for parents, health and nutrition tips, parenting skills, and new research in areas of interest to growing families.

Your Child Is Learning

In *God's Gift of Self*, your child is learning the following concepts.

3

Understanding Yourself

- ▶ Each person is created with a soul, an intellect and free will. Inherited traits and environmental influences contribute to the person you are.
- ▶ Self-knowledge is important in understanding God's plan for your life.
- ▶ Understanding your personality will help you have greater self-confidence and mature in your relationships with others.

4

Emotions

- ▶ Emotions are natural responses to everything that affects a person. How you act on your emotions can be right or wrong.
- ▶ The Theological Virtue of hope opens up a person's heart to desire and expects the happiness God promises.
- ▶ Being able to face challenges in life with valor enables a person to turn problems into possibilities.

God's Gift of Self

Connecting with Your Child

At this age your child is beginning to explore new areas of life. These experiences will help to shape the adult they are becoming. Social acceptance is increasingly important. Your young teen may tend to move further away from the family. This is part of the process of developing their own personal identity. Your child develops who they are through interior reflections and outward appearances.

It is important to:

- ▶ Accept and respect your child's individuality. This will help your child mature and still feel connected to the family.
- ▶ Frequently tell your child what you appreciate about them. Be sure to mention your child's growing talents. But also be truthful in your praise. This will help your child have the confidence to go out and explore their own personality and values.
- ▶ When good things happen, help your teen see how this relates to them as a person and how it contributes to the future (i.e., you got a great grade because you have formed a habit of working hard and using the wonderful brain God has given you).
- ▶ When bad things happen, help your teen see these as temporary and note the transitory nature of the problem (i.e., you got a bad grade because you didn't prepare as much as you needed. Let's talk about how to improve the way you prepare for tests).



Many of the feelings and behaviors during this developmental stage will pass, but they must be experienced in order for your child to grow and explore the next stage that will define their identity.

Changing Feelings

Because your child's world is expanding, they will experience some situations that can create stress and affect self-esteem. With the many changes, both mentally and biologically, that your child is going through during this time, it is not surprising that your child may at times become overwhelmed by their emotions. It may be difficult to know how to respond to your child's strong feelings. Be alert to the emotions associated with what your child tells you. Take them seriously, but try not to be overly anxious about them.

Wisdom from the Church

The Church, while regarding young people as “hope,” also sees them as “a great challenge for the future of the Church.”

General Directory for Catechesis 182

There is no question that a person’s genetic makeup and social environment exert strong influences on their development. People’s personalities are a rich and interesting mix of nature and nurture, of genetics and environment. As one grows and changes, this becomes increasingly evident. Yet, as a person grows, the responsibility for who they are becoming also grows.

Moral Responsibility

As Christians, we need to appreciate the reality that God is never quite done with us. Persons are morally responsible for their actions. We can choose to change and to be the kind of person God calls us to be. God knew us before we were born, yet he created us with the freedom to receive God’s graceful presence or to deny him. Every person has the ability to choose right or wrong, and the freedom to become a person of God.

Responsible Emotions

Controlling oneself means controlling or channeling one’s emotions. Although some emotions are experienced as positive and some as negative, in themselves emotions are morally neutral. Yet emotions can be drawn on and directed, and that is the continuing work of a mature person.

Virtues, or spiritual strengths, can assist us in exercising more control over our emotions. Patience, fortitude, chastity are tools that empower. These virtues enable persons to better discern what response is best when faced with complex emotional situations.



Catechism of the Catholic Church

Read paragraphs 1804–1829 to learn what the Church teaches about the importance of virtues for living a Christian life.

Spend Time with Your Child

Here are some tips on how your family can grow in holiness and health:

- ▶ Encourage your child to practice good grooming habits. Encourage a healthy diet, plenty of sleep and exercise, and proper hygiene. Your child’s self-image will improve if they are confident with how they care for their body.
- ▶ Set a special time each week for a family discussion on school progress. This will keep everyone informed between teacher conferences and can provide opportunities for seeking assistance. This attitude of sharing and openness can help the family remain a place where your young teen feels comfortable discussing any issues.
- ▶ Encourage your child to try new things. Take them to a restaurant to order different foods. Go to a museum or the theater, listen to jazz or classical music.



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In *God's Gift of Life*, your child is learning the following concepts.

5

The Value of Life

- ▶ Human life is a sacred gift from God. Each person has a fundamental dignity because everyone has been created in the image and likeness of God.
- ▶ Treating each other with respect can help break the cycle of violence in society.
- ▶ Sin and moral evil are at the root of many threats against human life.

6

Stay Healthy

- ▶ Showing respect for the dignity of the human person deters and prevents scandal.
- ▶ Abusive use of certain substances causes harm to a person, especially during adolescence.
- ▶ Making good choices about your physical, emotional and spiritual health shows respect for the gift of your life.

Connecting with Your Child

It is not difficult to figure out as you watch the news or read a newspaper that we live in a society where disregard for life is all too prevalent. Through the Internet and 24-hour news networks, your child is immediately aware of tragedies occurring around the world. Stories of poverty, violence and prejudice may inflame your child's keen sense of justice. However, their outrage on behalf of others may also leave your child feeling overwhelmed and insecure.

Help your child by being aware that they continue to need:

- ▶ A safe and loving home. Violence in the home is both frightening and harmful.
- ▶ Good role models. Show your child how adults can resolve conflicts peacefully and to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.
- ▶ Limits on their own behavior. The child needs to learn the difference between being responsible for younger siblings and bossing them around.



Teach your child to be accepting of others. Help your child understand that criticizing others because they are different is unacceptable. Teach your child to stand up against violence. Teach them how to deal with difficult situations without using harsh words, insults, or threats. It takes more courage to resist violence than to participate in it.

Respecting Yourself

It is important for your child to know that respect for others begins with respect for one's own body. Because adolescents tend to live in the moment, it is probably difficult for your child to connect what they do now with what might happen in the future. The connection between alcohol, smoking and drugs and a future illness can be difficult to imagine.

Help your child learn how to resist peer pressure. Praise your child for making good decisions in the face of those immoral values expressed by the culture and some peers. Help your child resist media manipulation with regard to drugs and alcohol. Being aware of manipulation can help a person resist it. Finally, set a good example for your child by how you make good decisions. Discuss as a family why you chose what you did and how your faith is integral to valuing life and staying healthy.

Wisdom from the Church

Every individual, precisely by reason of the mystery of the Word of God who was made flesh, is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church.

Therefore, every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church's very heart.

The Gospel of Life 3

A safe world needs respect for human life. Many persons have seen and experienced violence in their lives. However, one also sees and experiences signs of respect and caring individuals: giving, sharing, healing and teaching others. The world can never get enough of these positive, lifegiving signs.

Stand Up for Life

Christians are called to see practical ways that they can take to protect life. Destructive attitudes can lead to actions against the sanctity of life. As a Christian, one is urged to take a strong stance for God's gift of life, to defend the defenseless by putting one's principles to work. Respect for life flows from loving attitudes. The rich and life-giving resources of the Church—the Sacraments, prayer and witness—can help one to take loving action.

Responsible Attitudes

Healthy regard for the human body and mind lead away from self-destructive or risky behavior. So does mastering a skill of some complexity, like playing the piano or dancing. There are many life-threatening substances and behaviors. We continually face temptations to engage in unhealthy behaviors and these will continue throughout our lives. It is a person's responsibility to accept God's plan for good health. Each person is called to model good moral behavior for others. Healthy attitudes can lead to holy living.



Catechism of the Catholic Church

Read paragraphs 2273–2274 to learn more about the Church's teaching on society's responsibility to respect life.

Spend Time with Your Child

Here are some tips on how your family can grow in holiness and health:

- ▶ Get involved in your child's life: attend school activities, games and concerts. Be a parent who is present for and supportive of one's child.
- ▶ See if your school provides resources to prevent substance abuse. Learn as much as you can from various reliable resources.
- ▶ With your child, get involved in an organization that works toward improving the quality of life for you and others.
- ▶ Do physical things with your family: take a hike, ride bikes, take a canoeing or rafting trip. Find something that encourages cooperation and collaboration among all family members.



Catholic Parenting 101

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In *God's Gift of Love*, your child is learning the following concepts.

7

Loving Together

- ▶ Developing and deepening friendships can be preparation for the lifelong commitment of marriage and parenting.
- ▶ Human sexuality is primarily concerned with our capacity to love and form relationships based on being male or female.
- ▶ Self-knowledge and self-preservation are two key aspects of modesty that are necessary for healthy friendships.

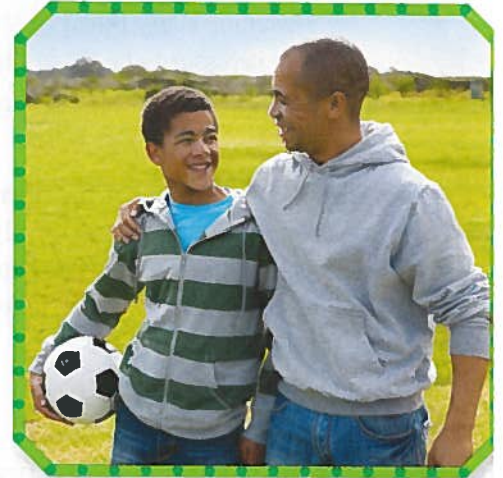
8

Marriage and Family

- ▶ Married love is to be self-giving and life-giving.
- ▶ God provides grace to the married couple through the Sacrament of Matrimony so that they can freely, faithfully, fully and forever love one another.
- ▶ Christian parenting requires living out the Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Connecting with Your Child

As young teens become more socially conscientious and begin to expand their circle of friends, they will naturally begin to interact more with persons of the other sex. This is a sign of healthy development. Speak with your child about their understanding on this subject. By providing your child with age-appropriate, accurate information, you will help them be more comfortable as they develop these relationships.



Remember that your young teen:

- ▶ Needs to socialize with friends. Encourage them to get together with groups of friends for activities and events. Set basic ground rules for arranging these “get-togethers” (i.e., your permission is needed before a group event is set up; you need to know and have “veto power” over the who, what, when and where of the event; a list of mutually agreed to “No’s”—no pairing off as couples; no alcohol, no drugs, no tobacco; no going elsewhere without permission—and a mutually agreed to time to be home or call for a ride home.)
- ▶ May develop an interest in extracurricular activities. As your teen begins to establish their identity, they will discover new interests. Encourage them to build strong bonds of friendship with new people.
- ▶ Is establishing a new identity. Have extra patience with your child during this time. Do not be too surprised by any announcement: it is likely to change by the next day.

Attraction to and curiosity about the other sex can stir up strong feelings in your child that they need to understand and learn to control. As they search for acceptance and belonging, young people are very vulnerable to being hurt or exploited. You can best help them by setting boundaries and giving them appropriate freedom within those boundaries.

Vocation of Marriage

As your child’s circle of friends begins to grow, and they learn how to mature in their relationships with the other sex, they will begin to learn about the complementarity that God intended between a man and a woman. Help your child realize that it takes work to prepare for the vocation of marriage. In marriage, the closer a man and a woman come to living in God’s spirit of love, the deeper their commitment, respect and sense of equality will be.

Wisdom from the Church

As the image of God, man is created for love. . . . Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. The whole meaning of true freedom, and self-control which follows from it, is thus directed towards self-giving in communion and friendship with God and with others.

Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality 8

A good and solid friendship with someone of the other sex is a treasure. The gift of friendship serves as the foundation for a healthy and lasting relationship.

Reflecting on love and its spiritual dimensions can help in relationships with people of the other sex. In addition, those who practice the virtues of honesty, charity, justice, chastity and humility in such relationships will discover that learning to love can be a happy and most worthwhile experience.

Commitment

The word *forever* can be both scary and awe-inspiring. Nonetheless, marriage vows are forever. The promise human beings make to one another can be kept with an ordinary human effort that is supported by the gift of God's grace. Still, this does not alter the reality that there is a high incidence of divorce in our society. Christians must be reminded that promises made and kept have value because God's plan for our relationships is based on God's promise to love us. Those who set out on their marital journey of faith, hope and love are assured of the understanding and support from their community of faith.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Read paragraphs 1638–1642 to learn more about the Church's teaching on the sacramental bond of marriage.



Spend Time with Your Child

Here are some tips on how your family can grow in holiness and health:

- ▶ Work with your child to establish guidelines for: getting together with friends, home responsibilities, homework, and curfews. Be willing to negotiate, but make sure your child gives something in return. This will show your concern, respect and care for your child.
- ▶ Make your home a place where your child and their friends like to gather. Get to know your child's friends, provide food and beverages for them, and provide effective but unobtrusive oversight. This will allow you to gain a greater understanding of the friends, and will encourage your child to bring future friends home.
- ▶ Be aware of what your child sees and hears. Listen to music and watch videos with your child. Discuss the values you hear and see.



Catholic Parenting 101

This section includes more practical advice for parents, health and nutrition tips, parenting skills, and new research in areas of interest to growing families.

Your Child Is Learning

In *God's Gift of Community*, your child is learning the following concepts.

9

The Social Scene

- ▶ Peer pressure is a powerful influence upon our behavior that can work positively or negatively on the ways we make choices.
- ▶ God created us as social beings, or to live in community. Therefore, we need to experience a healthy sense of belonging within groups and community.
- ▶ Choosing those with whom we associate requires clear thinking and vigilance.

10

Growing in Christ

- ▶ Life has meaning and your life has a God-given purpose.
- ▶ In areas of your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual life, you have specific responsibilities to mature in healthy and holy ways.
- ▶ Christian values guide you in attaining your dreams and finding happiness.

God's Gift of Community

Connecting with Your Child

Your child will begin to explore many aspects of life in order to become the kind of person that God calls them to be. Your child will begin thinking about the future including possible professions and vocation. Some of the decisions your child makes now will affect what happens in the future.



Remember that your young teen:

- ▶ Is influenced in their decision making by family, friends and popular culture.
- ▶ Is looking for role models. Discuss the qualities they look for in a role model.
- ▶ Is choosing a group of friends. Know your child's friends. Peer pressure is a powerful influence at this age.

Some of your adolescent's social engagement will be through online social networking sites, with little or no adult monitoring. You have the opportunity to creatively embrace this seismic cultural shift. Be clear that you will be monitoring their electronic communications. Set rules together about communicating with people who are not personally known. Perhaps private conversations in person or on the phone might remain unmonitored, but anything posted online, emailed or texted may be monitored. Discuss the benefits and dangers of sharing information freely. Give your child freedom to make decisions, but let them know that you will be watching—because you care.

Do not be left out of your child's communication network. Become "a friend" on all of your child's social networking sites. Invite others who you believe can be good role models for your child to also join their sites.

Community Support

Talk with your child about the benefits of being an active member of the Catholic Church. The support and guidance of your parish community can be a positive influence for the whole family. Although adolescence can be a very difficult time, with patience and the support of others, you can enjoy seeing your child grow up to be a happy and healthy adult Christian.

Wisdom from the Church

In a global culture driven by excessive individualism, our tradition proclaims that the person is not only sacred but also social.

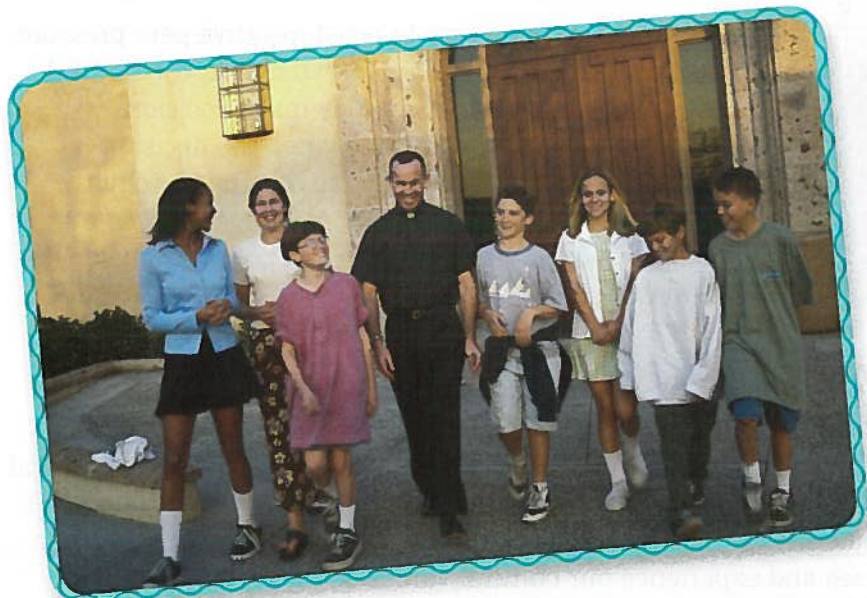
How we organize our society . . . directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community.

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions, Major Themes

The need to belong is a powerful human drive. Usually this need is expressed in healthy ways—through belonging to family, school, church, civic community, and the work place. Working in community gives its members a sense of solidarity when working toward a common mission. The members of a community serve to provide intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical support and encouragement to one another.

Choices

It is particularly important that adult members of the Church serve as role models in leading young people to choose to participate in the life of the parish community. Living out the Catholic faith is a call to live in community. The teaching of the Gospel, the mission of Jesus, the goal of sacramental celebration, and the very nature of the Church, all point to shared lives and shared goals—in short, community. Christians are called to recognize and celebrate the meaning and purpose of life: to know, love and serve God and one another, for love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable.



Catechism of the Catholic Church

Read paragraphs 836–838 to learn more about how Christians are called to unity.

Spend Time with Your Child

Here are some tips on how your family can grow in holiness and health:

- ▶ As a family, get involved in your parish community. Get to know parish members, participate in parish projects, and actively engage in the celebration of the Eucharist each week.
- ▶ Take your child on a cultural safari. Visit museums, libraries, street fairs, and other events that showcase the art, food, and dance of various cultures. Help your child realize that the world is shaped by the gifts of all people.
- ▶ Speak to your child about their future. What courses are most interesting? What career choices are being considered? What is your child willing to do to accomplish their goals?
- ▶ As a family, help someone in need. You can help with chores, take the person on an outing, or prepare them food for the week. There are many ways to contribute.

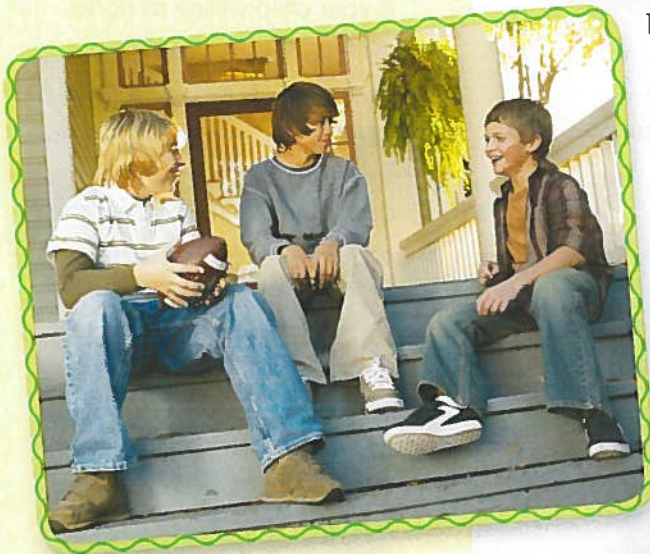
Family
Web Time
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Catholic Parenting 101

This section includes more practical advice for parents, health and nutrition tips, parenting skills, and new research in areas of interest to growing families.

Between Parent and Child

You are continually challenged to find the words that will answer their questions simply yet wisely.



To paraphrase an old TV show, “Kids ask the darnedest things!” Today, as never before, children bring home questions about themselves, their friends, and about events they have observed in the world around them and in the media. You are continually challenged to find the words that will answer their questions simply yet wisely. The best advice for answering them is this:

- ▶ **Be simple.** Don’t answer more than they are asking.
- ▶ **Be direct.** Don’t hesitate. Be as forthright as possible.
- ▶ **Be ready.** Be sure your information is accurate and up-to-date.

Now and then your child will ask a question that surprises you, no matter how well-prepared you try to be. In areas such as human sexuality, it’s often difficult to know what to say. The following questions are typical of those asked by eighth-graders. Maybe the responses provided here will be a help to you when similar questions come from your child.

“What do I do when my friends want me to do one thing and I know I should do another?”

There are constant pressures placed on adolescents. They experience pressure from popular culture, family and friends, and the growing responsibility being expected of them at school. Your child is beginning to form strong relationships with others of the same age. Acceptance from this group is very important. Combined with a natural curiosity about many issues, peer pressure can have a negative effect, if your child does not know how to recognize or respond to it.

Teach your child early on how to resist negative peer pressure. Encourage your child to stand up for what is true, beautiful and good. Praise your child when they make decisions based upon what is right, especially when the decision goes against the pressure of the group. Teach your child socially acceptable ways to say “no.” Assure your child that you are always available to help when it comes to making important decisions.

“Why is it so bad for me to want to hang out with friends who are just like me?”

People are naturally attracted to people who look or act like them and who have similar values. We feel safer in groups that are made up of people who are more familiar to us. We feel more comfortable when we see and experience our cultural values being lived out among our friends.

However, because such groups are, by their very nature, not very inclusive, they may have a tendency to exclude others who are not like them. Such exclusion can lead to attitudes of superiority. Such attitudes may lead to problems of prejudice.

Encourage your child to make friends with people from as many diverse cultures and countries as possible. Your child should also have friends of different ethnic and religious groups, and also friends of both sexes. These friendships can introduce your child to a richer and fuller understanding of the world in which we live.

“Why do I have to go to Mass?”

Although the Mass is the “source and summit” of the life of a Catholic, many young people feel disconnected within it. And since they don’t understand it, they are “bored” by it.

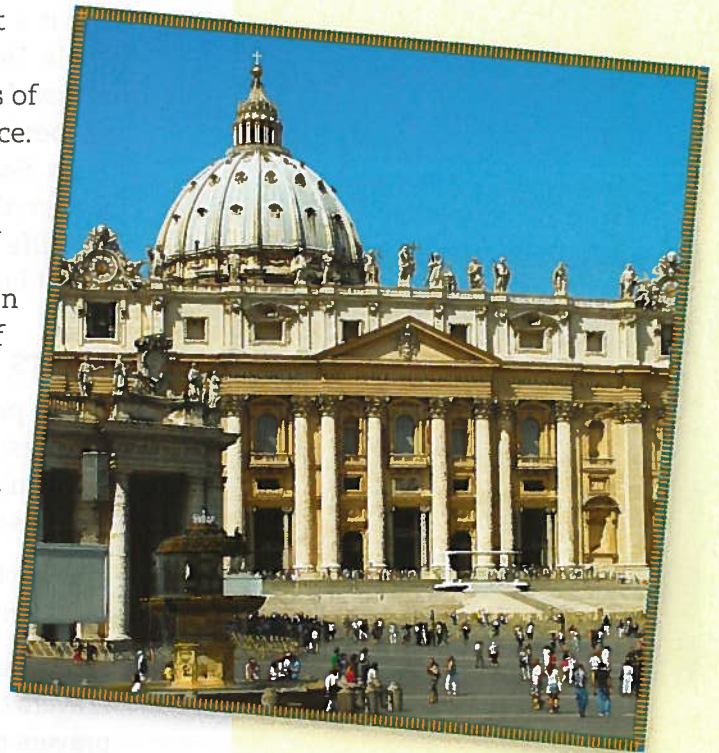
Studies show that young people who are actively engaged in the life of the parish community are more likely to actively participate in the Mass. They do not find it boring because they see themselves as a part of the community that is gathered around the Lord’s Table. So encourage your young teen to actively participate in the activities of your local parish and school that welcome youth participation.

While you can always try to reason with your child on this matter the best response is your good example. Studies of adolescent behavior also show that children often model the behavior of their parents. If you do not go to Mass or if you go, but act as if Mass is a burden, then that’s the attitude your child will likely develop. Participate joyfully, and your child will develop an attitude that the Mass is essential to their life.

“What does AIDS have to do with me?”

Some people may think that HIV/AIDS is something that other people need to worry about. The fact is that all young people need to take the threat of AIDS seriously. AIDS can be fatal, and adolescents of both sexes face the serious risk of HIV infection if they engage in risky behaviors (eg. sexual contact, intravenous drug use). Know the facts about AIDS. Encourage your young teen to talk and ask questions about HIV and AIDS. Listen to your child’s questions, acknowledge fears, and sort out any confusion they may have.

Teach your child that as a member of the community of faith, they are to share in some way the experience of others. From this community of faith, learn a compassionate response for all who suffer or are faced with difficulties.



Studies show that children often model the behavior of their parents.

Christian Living



Your example of Christian behavior will always be the best teacher.

There is a section at the front of your child's book entitled, "The Catholic Home." It includes prayers, moral principles and actions that flow from Christian living. Your child's teacher will offer some classroom exercises that reinforce these moral principles and actions. Some of these prayers will also be used in the classroom. However, these prayers and principles cannot become a part of your child's life without your support. Here are some ideas for using these pages at home.

Prayers

Formula prayers are an important part of our Catholic tradition. They are guides for personal as well as communal prayer, and contribute to our sense of belonging to the Catholic Church. Help your child to learn these prayers by heart and to pray often.

- ▶ Pray each day for a month at family mealtimes. Let your child refer to a printed copy of the prayer until they know it by heart.
- ▶ Help your child to see that not all prayers ask for something. Prayers of praise and thanksgiving are of special value, as well as prayers of sorrow that we express to God for our failure to love as we should.
- ▶ Spend time as a family in prayer by going to daily Mass, spend time in Eucharistic Adoration, or use acts of charity as expressions of prayer.

Family Living

You will find a list of moral formulas in this section. Such lists as the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the Works of Mercy guide Christian moral living. These formulas have been taught in your child's regular religion curriculum as well. Use this opportunity to review and reinforce this teaching. Every child should be able to memorize and recall these precepts of the Catholic tradition.

- ▶ As part of a family discussion, ask your child to offer examples of a particular commandment or work of mercy being lived.
- ▶ You can create a version of charades in which family members take turns acting out an item from one of these lists of moral formulas.

Above all, model Christian behavior for your child. Your example will always be the best teacher.

Glossary

This glossary lists and defines the important terms as used in the context of the *Family Life* Grade 8 program.

abortion: the direct and intentional killing of the human person before birth; direct abortion

adolescence: a stage of life between childhood and adulthood; derived from the Latin, *adolescens*, meaning "growing toward"

affirmation: the skill of acknowledging the importance of someone through honest praise, which encourages them to do their best

anorexia: an eating disorder of habitually fasting and rigorous exercise based on an obsessive fear of being fat

body: the physical, mortal part of the person that together with the soul forms one unique human nature

bulimia: an eating disorder in which the person goes through cycles of bingeing and purging

capital punishment: the right of the government to execute convicted criminals

character strength: a good habit that becomes a personal trait enabling one to live virtuously

charity: the theological virtue of the love a person shows another because of one's love for God, who is the source of such love

chastity: the appropriate and successful integration of the gift of sexuality within the whole person in accord with their vocational state of life

cliques: social groups formed to exclude others, often resulting in the harassment of those excluded

community: a group of living things that work together for a common purpose

complementary sex: man and woman are not opposites, but complement each other because God created them to be one; also complementary gender

confidence: the strong feeling of certitude in oneself through accomplishment or a "can-do" attitude when faced with making a decision

conjugal love: the unique expression of sexual love between a husband and a wife who freely give their whole self to each other

conscience: the "inner voice" of a human being from God, within whose heart God's law is inscribed to discern or judge right from wrong, good from evil; a sense of obligation to do what is good and to avoid what is evil

consistent ethic of life: living always with respect for the dignity of the human person

contraception: the mentality and practice of separating the conjugal act from its two purposes of self-giving and life-giving

counsel: a gift of the Holy Spirit in the ability to make right judgments, to choose what is right and good

culture: a way of life passed on through generations shaping people's beliefs, ideas, arts, customs, languages, diet and laws

cyber-bullying: the misuse of the Internet for the purposes of degrading or demeaning others

dignity: inherent value of a human person instilled by God, who created people in his own image and likeness

discernment: prayerfully seeking to know God's will individually and personally so that the person's will can align with God's will

divorce: a legal procedure declaring the end of a civil marriage; different from an annulment in the Catholic Church

DNA: the basic ingredient of genes, containing the chemical code that enables genes to guide human growth; also called *deoxyribonucleic acid*

emotion: a state of feeling or subjective experience of a person or event that results in physiological changes or inclines one to act or not act in regard to something felt or imagined to be good or evil

eugenics: the manipulation of human mating and reproduction in order to "enhance" the human race by eliminating certain "undesirable" attributes

euthanasia: the deliberate killing of a person who is elderly, severely disabled or suffering from a serious or terminal illness

fidelity: being totally loyal to a person, also known as faithfulness

fortitude: the cardinal virtue of courage or strength of mind and will to do what is good in the face of adversity or difficulty

free will: the ability to recognize God as part of our lives and the power to choose between good and evil

gangs: social groups formed around criminal activity, often dealing with vandalism, drugs, robbery or murder

gender: the unique traits associated with being created male or female

generosity: the capacity, quality or activity of giving or sharing of oneself or what we have abundantly, beyond basic needs

genetic: qualities of living things arising from a common origin and passed from generation to generation through reproduction

gifts of the Holy Spirit: God-given powers and strengths that enable us to work toward the establishment of the Kingdom of God

grace: the free and undeserved gift that God gives us to respond to our vocation to become his adopted children; the very life and love of God within us

gratitude: the capacity and ability to choose to be appreciative of all that one receives

habit: something a person does over and over again, almost without having to think about it

If you convey the truth, beauty and goodness of how God created each of us, your child will feel more secure during adolescence.



Glossary

Be open to
all questions,
even if you are
uncomfortable
with the topic.

happiness: a state of contentment or gladness that we must choose to live found ultimately in the love of God

health: the working order of the person as God created and intended them to be; physical health relates to the body while spiritual health relates to the soul, but both are essential to the overall health of the person

hope: the theological virtue by which a person desires and expects from God both happiness and the grace necessary to attain happiness

imagination: the ability to form a mental image of something that is not present or that does not exist; a gift from God that is a truly human power

justice: the cardinal virtue of giving to another what is due to them, what is theirs by right, or ensuring that they have what they need

love: to will the good of another

marriage: a covenantal relationship between a man and a woman in which their spousal love is to be unitive and procreative; Sacrament in which a baptized man and a baptized woman promise love and faithfulness until death

maturity: the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth of the person through which one realizes their full potential appropriate to the person's intellectual or emotional level or age

modesty: the virtue, or practice, of valuing, holding onto and guarding the sacredness of the human body through proper speech, attire and conduct

mood: a state of mind at a particular time that moves a person to some kind of action

morality: the goodness or evil of human acts

murder: the direct and intentional killing of an innocent person

nicotine: an addictive substance that is inhaled in cigarette smoke

non-marital sex: any sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage

Original Sin: the first rejection of God's love, which had effects on all human beings

patience: waiting for something that one needs or wants when one is ready to receive it

peer pressure: influence of others upon a person, especially those close to the person, like one's friends

personality: the sum total of all the traits and characteristics that express a person distinct from others

poverty: a state of seriously lacking in resources or ability to obtain the basic necessities of life usually associated with monetary poverty

pray: the act of listening to and talking with God

prejudice: a preconceived adverse opinion or judgment of another

premarital sex: all sexual activity before marriage thereby violating the dignity of marriage

prudence: the cardinal virtue of knowing what is right and consistently making good judgments so to choose the correct means to accomplish it

puberty: the period of rapid growth associated with the development of the reproductive system:

respect: positive regard or esteem; a sign and attitude that values the person as important; honoring the inherent dignity of a person because of their sacredness

responsibility: the quality of being dependable or accountable for one's attitude, decisions and actions by putting the care for self, others and the world around us into action

sacrament: an efficacious sign of grace, given to the Church by Christ, by which God shares his life and love with us

sacred: identified as holy and close to God

scandal: behavior that leads another to do evil

self-giving love: being unselfish with our time, talent and treasure through the giving of ourselves for another's benefit

sexual attraction: attraction to another person based on their gender; part of God's plan to help a man and a woman become husband and wife

sexual intercourse: the physical act of love showing a full commitment proper between spouses as gifts to one another

sexuality: that aspect of human nature concerned with the capacity to love and form relationships based on the person being created either male or female

sin: a deliberate thought, word, deed or omission contrary to God's law

social networking: in the context of online practice, a phenomenon where people are increasingly forming social groups or friends via online forums

solidarity: a sense of unity and belonging with another or within a group of people

soul: the spiritual immortal part of the human person, immediately created by God, which is separated from the body at death and with which it will be reunited in the final resurrection

temperance: the cardinal virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasure or a person's actions so that the person does what is right

terrorism: violent acts for the sole purpose of causing intense violent fear upon a person or group of people

valor: the virtuous ability to face challenges in life with the strength of mind, will and spirit

vigilance: an attitude and skill of being alert and watchful of a person's surroundings and interaction with others

virtue: a habit of acting according to what is moral and good

vocation: a call from God to a particular way of life in service to others, which in turn honors God: single, married, ordained or consecrated; the universal call to holiness

Review This Year

We have learned about family life this year.

God's Gift of Family

- ▶ God has placed in the human heart the natural desire for happiness. The more we experience gratitude in life, the more we can come to know happiness.
- ▶ Feeling lost on our journey to happiness is a common emotion; but God has given us the gift of conscience to follow the right path to happiness.
- ▶ With an informed conscience and free will, we can choose to follow the right path to happiness.

God's Gift of Self

- ▶ Understanding your personality will help you have greater self-confidence and mature in your relationships with others.
- ▶ The Theological Virtue of hope opens up a person's heart to desire and expect the happiness God promises.
- ▶ Being able to face challenges in life with valor enables a person to turn problems into possibilities.

God's Gift of Life

- ▶ Sin and moral evil are at the root of the many threats against human life.
- ▶ Scandal is behavior that leads another to sin. Showing respect for the dignity of the human person deters and prevents scandal.
- ▶ Abusive use of certain substances causes harm to a person, especially during adolescence.

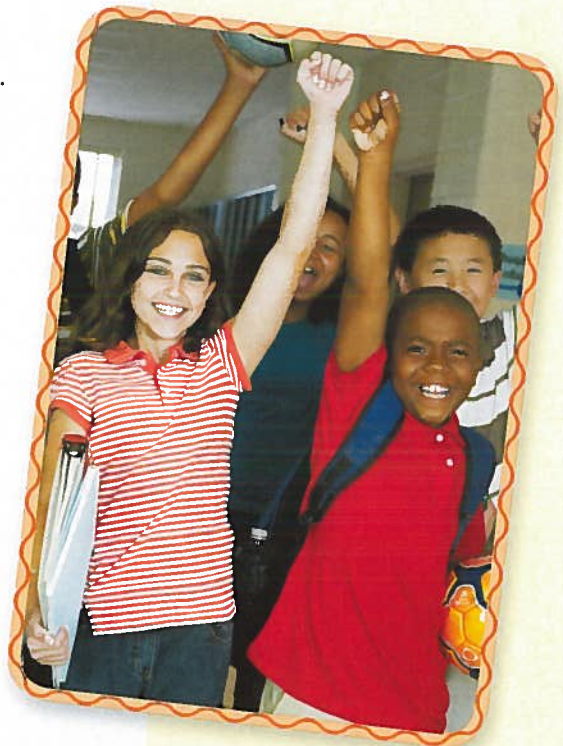
God's Gift of Love

- ▶ Developing and deepening friendships can be preparation for the lifelong commitment of marriage and parenting.
- ▶ Human sexuality is primarily concerned with our capacity to love and form relationships based on being male or female.
- ▶ Married love is to be self-giving and life-giving.

God's Gift of Community

- ▶ Choosing those with whom we associate requires clear thinking and vigilance.
- ▶ Life has meaning and a God-given purpose.
- ▶ Christian values guide us in attaining our dreams and finding happiness in life.

Valor enables
a person to turn
problems into
possibilities.





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