Partners *in* FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith. January 2021

Father Andrew White, S.J. School

Thoughtful Moments

Pope Emeritus on joy

"The Holy Spirit gives us joy. And he is joy. Joy is the gift in which all the other gifts are included. It is the expression of happiness, of being in harmony with ourselves, that which can only come from being in harmony with God and with his creation." (Pope Benedict XVI)

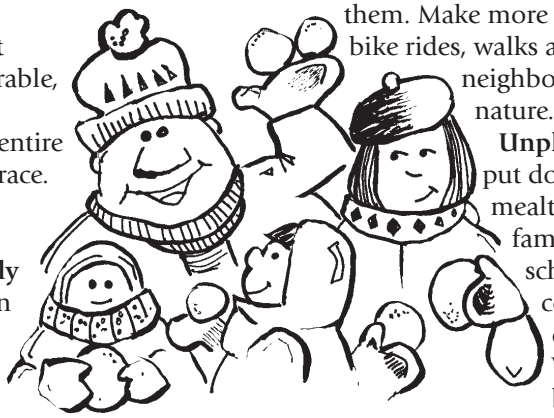
Kindness

In today's world, sharing kindness can make a difference. Remember how good it felt the last time someone showed you an unexpected favor? Look for ways to be kind, even when it's unexpected. It can be something simple, like holding the door for the person behind you or offering prayers for those who need them.

"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Five family New Year resolutions

New Year's resolutions can be useful ways to improve family life. When reflecting on the past year, improvements or goals may suggest themselves. It's important to set realistic, measurable, and reasonable resolutions the entire family can embrace. Consider these ideas:



Increase family time. Even when we work from home, it can be difficult to find regular time to be together. Resolve to add family time to your week. Vary the activities, but not the company. Pick a convenient schedule – Friday, after dinner, for example – write it on the calendar, and don't let anything interfere.

Get more sleep. Getting enough sleep is critical for health, happiness, and peace. Set a mandatory lights-out time for the entire family – parents, too.

Exercise together. The best way to teach healthy habits is to model them. Make more time for family bike rides, walks around your neighborhood, hikes in nature.

Unplug. Resolve to put down all devices at mealtime and during family time. Many schools are using computers to deliver instruction. Workplaces have become virtual. Taking a break from screens to hold in-person conversations during the day can be a refreshing break.

Worry less. Resolve to avoid worrying about what may or may not happen. Add prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, Scripture reading, daily Mass to your family time to teach children to rely on God.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do we praise God?

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, he began with *"hallowed be thy name."* But God doesn't need our praise; he knows he is perfect. We praise God because he loves us and because he is good. In fact, when we realize the gratitude and praise that we owe God, we want to give him what he is due. *"It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to thy name, O Most High"* (Psalm 92:1).

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Support children through difficult times

As the pandemic continues throughout the country, it can be challenging to reassure children that all is well. Try these tips to calm fears and manage stress.

Keep routines in place. Even if you're at home all day, sticking to a regular schedule is key. Try to make sure youngsters have some structure, like getting up, eating and going to bed around the same time every day. Have children dressed, breakfasted, and ready for class at the usual hour. Youngsters benefit from knowing what to expect and when.

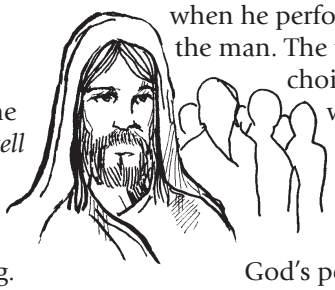
Add variety. In the evenings, play a board game, put together a puzzle, bake desserts, take turns reading a new book aloud.

Share your confidence in God's care. During family prayer, teach children to commit concerns to God. Together, read Bible stories that demonstrate how others have relied on God's care. Joseph's confidence that God would deliver him from evil, Abraham's faith that God would give him and Sarah a son, the Israelites' reliance on God to deliver them from slavery.

Scripture LESSON

Mark 1:21-28, More than just a teacher

In this Gospel reading, we read that Jesus entered the synagogue at Capernaum with his apostles to teach. Most teachers would draw from the writings of other scholars for authority, and would begin, "Thus says the Lord…" but Jesus said, "*I tell you…*" As God, he already knew what the Scriptures meant without leaning on someone else's teaching.



Jesus taught as one who had the authority of God and that astonished his listeners. Even the unclean spirits who were torturing a man at the synagogue recognized Jesus as "the Holy One of Israel." Clearly, this was no ordinary teacher!

Jesus showed his authority again when he performed an exorcism on the man. The unclean spirits had no choice but to obey him when he commanded them to depart, despite their reluctance.

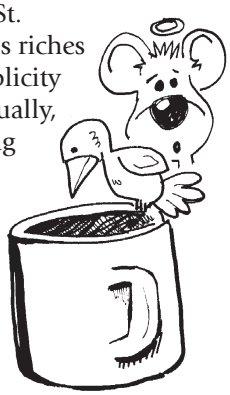
What can a parent do? Jesus shows us that God's power and love are greater than any evil. Teach children that they can talk to Jesus about anything that happens, good or bad. At the same time, stress that Jesus is God and deserves to be worshipped and obeyed.

Feasts & Celebrations

Jan. 3 – Epiphany of Our Lord (1st Century). Epiphany is Greek for manifestation. When they honored the infant Jesus with gold, frankincense and myrrh, the three wise men bore witness to the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior.

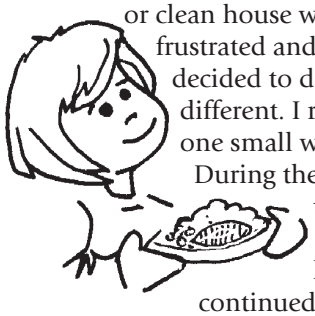
Jan. 10 – Baptism of the Lord (1st Century). Jesus began his public ministry by getting baptized by St. John the Baptist. Jesus was free of sin, but he allowed himself to be baptized in order to "*fulfill all righteousness*" (Matthew 3:15). By his baptism, Jesus declared his willingness to fulfill God's saving plan. It is also at this time when God revealed Jesus as his "*beloved Son*" (Matthew 3:17).

Jan. 17 – St. Anthony of Egypt (356). Born to a rich family around 250 A.D. in Egypt, St. Anthony gave up his riches to live a life of simplicity in the desert. Eventually, other monks seeking the same lifestyle followed him into the desert and he founded a community of hermits. He is the founder of monasticism.



Parent TALK

I stopped making New Year's resolutions a few years ago. I had trouble remembering to exercise daily or clean house weekly. Finally, frustrated and dissatisfied, I decided to do something different. I resolved to find one small way to serve.



During the pandemic, the Knights of Columbus have continued to put notices in the parish bulletin asking for donations for their soup kitchen, and volunteers to cook meals. My husband and I decided to help out, and make it a family affair.

Now, once a month on a Wednesday afternoon, my daughters and I spend a few hours cooking and boxing up meals for our hungry neighbors. My youngest daughter, mask in place, plays "hostess" and welcomes people. Her older sister hands out Styrofoam containers with meals. It is a small contribution, but for the people we serve, it is an act of love. Finally, a resolution I can keep!

Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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(540)662-7844 (540) 662-7847 fax
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