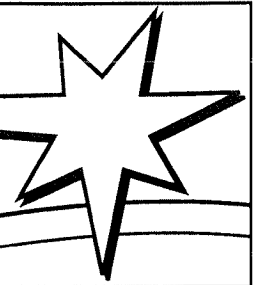


Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

January 2022

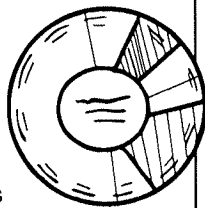
Saint Matthew Catholic Church
Durham, NC



Thoughtful Moments

The rhythm of our faith

To help us learn about God and his family, the Church crafted the liturgical year. By observing the seasons of our faith, we follow the rhythm that God has created for us. *"A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance"* (Ecclesiastes 3:4).



As God forgives

When we pray the "Our Father," we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." True forgiveness is hard but God wants us to forgive the way He forgives us. We can't obtain true forgiveness unless we give it.

Celebrate parenthood

Parents deserve lots of praise but don't often get it. Someday your children may look back and appreciate you. While they are young, remember that every kiss, hug and smile you get is a celebration of how important you are every day, all year long.



Share what you love about our Catholic Faith

As parents, we want our children to be Catholic because we know the Church provides the surest way to a strong and loving relationship with God. To help children find Catholic joy, share what you love about our Catholic Faith.

"My grandmother prayed the Rosary every day of her life," said Lisa.

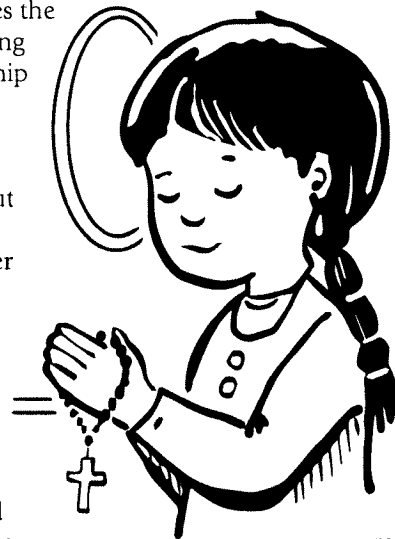
"When I was old enough, she gave me one and taught me how to pray it. The prayers remind me of everything we believe as Catholics. The Rosary has helped me through many tough times in my life and I pray it often with my own children."

"We moved a lot when I was young,"

said Art. "Moving was hard but no matter where we lived, the Mass felt like home. Jesus was always there waiting for me. Now I love taking my children to Mass because I want it to be their home, too."

"I don't know what I would do without Confession," said Brooke. "It's not easy admitting the things I do wrong. I'm embarrassed that I commit the same sins repeatedly. Still, no matter

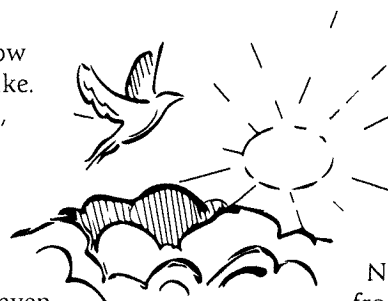
how often I go, it is such a thrill to hear the words of absolution and know that Jesus really does forgive me. Now, we take our children and celebrate God's mercy together."



Why Do Catholics Do That?

We don't really know what Heaven looks like. *"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him,"* (1 Corinthians 2:9). Heaven is the fulfillment of our

What do we believe about Heaven?

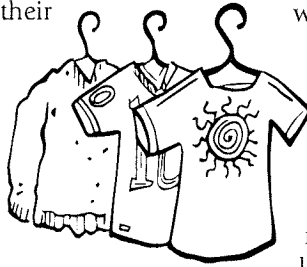


deepest desire of union with God. We know that God has prepared a place for us in His home. All who enter must be in His friendship. Nothing should keep us from our place in the house of our Lord.

Modest dress for today's Catholic kids

Current fashions – even if immodest – often feel right to young people because they see them accepted by their friends and favorite celebrities. Current styles can be too tight or too revealing to be appropriate for followers of Jesus. When children wear such styles, people may be distracted from their personalities, their accomplishments, and their faith. Instead, try these tips to help children dress modestly and fashionably, too.

Layers can make it work. Does your child love low-cut styles or bottoms that show underwear? Try pairing



a tank top under one with a plunging neckline or a wear a pair of running shorts under sagging bottoms.

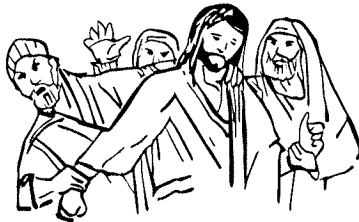
Color me funky. One way to make modesty fun is to take note of what the season's hottest colors are, and then find modest clothing in those colors.

Test the light. Transparent fabric is designed to reveal rather than conceal the body. If you place a layer of fabric over a newspaper and can see the lines of letters through it, the fabric is too sheer.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 4:21-30, God's surprising ways

In this Gospel, Jesus returned to Nazareth, His hometown, soon after starting His public ministry. Everyone had heard about the miracles and signs He had worked. They even invited Him to teach in their



synagogue. Imagine how delighted they were when Jesus announced that He was the Messiah of Isaiah's prophecy.

Still, some were doubtful. How could this carpenter's son possibly be the Messiah, the long-awaited Savior promised in the Old Testament? Jesus' listeners thought they had Him figured out. They had gotten so used to

thinking of Him as being "one of them," they couldn't believe there was more to Him.

What can a parent do?

Remind children that we can completely trust in God's loving care for us, but we'll never completely figure Him

out. For example, some doubted that Jesus was the Messiah because His life had looked so ordinary to them. Everyone expected the Messiah to conquer Israel's enemies, but Jesus conquered the more powerful enemies of sin, evil and death by His Resurrection. In fact, God's ways are not our ways, and He knows best.

Parent TALK

My husband and I grew up eating dinner with our families around the table each night. It's how we had raised our own family. When the pandemic hit, however, everything changed.



We were all spending way too much time on our devices – the children receiving

online instruction and my husband and I busy with Zoom conferences. Meals were sandwiches in front of screens. It got to be too much. To keep us all from spending day and night on our devices, we decided to make family dinners a requirement. Dinner started at 6:00pm, and began with a prayer. It was expected that everyone would help with clean-up.

At first, it took some adjusting, but regular dinners became a great way to reconnect. We realized this habit has helped us grow closer as a family. Even though schedules have returned to normal, we still try to make family dinners a priority.

Feasts & Celebrations

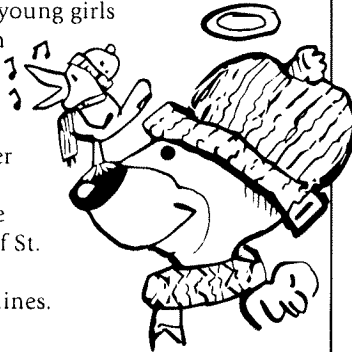
Jan. 2 – Epiphany of Our Lord. Epiphany is Greek for "manifestation." When they honored the infant Jesus, the three wise men bore witness to the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior.

Jan. 3 – The Holy Name of Jesus. 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).

Jan. 24 – St. Francis de Sales (1622). As bishop of Geneva, St. Francis bolstered the faith of others by his writings and works. For the laity, St.

Francis wrote *Introduction to the Devout Life*, which is as applicable today as it was in his day.

Jan. 27 – St. Angela Merici (1540). Orphaned at ten-years-old, St. Angela turned to God for strength. At twenty, she became a Franciscan tertiary and taught young girls the Faith. In 1535 at Brescia, Italy, she and 12 other women founded the Company of St. Ursula, or the Ursulines.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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