

Reflections on Christian Parenting

In the first days of our child's life, we begin to teach what it is to be a Catholic Christian...loving touches, soft voices, playful expressions, holding the baby close when they cry, feeding when hungry...early feelings in a child that speak of loving parents, a loving world, a loving God. Your fears, hopes, dreams, disappointments are felt by the child as he/she grows. You are the FIRST TEACHER and the most influential one your child will ever have. However, God does not call you to be professors or theologians, but simply to be Christian parents...to live in the knowledge of His love for you and to do your best to imitate Him.

Children learn about acceptance and respect for others the first time they come in from a fight or disagreement. The words used will be their first real teaching on love of neighbor, respect for self and others. Fairness and justice can only be taught in a home that believes in equality. Jokes, sarcasm and unkind remarks about those who are different from us make a lasting impression on children and cannot be easily erased...not even by the finest catechist or Catholic school teacher.

Children can learn about reconciliation and forgiveness in the safe confines of their own home. We all feel anger, get irritable, yell, pick at others and can be hard to get along with. In family life, children must learn the ability to say they are sorry, to ask for forgiveness, and in turn, they must be able to forgive others. This calls for parents who are able to display true reconciliation with others.

A child's worth is determined by what is experienced in the family. This is the place where one can feel special and unique in a positive way...belonging in a climate of caring and concern for one another. They learn to like themselves and as a result can begin to openly like others.

As a family, we should celebrate the happy events in our lives...birthdays, anniversaries, raises, holidays. Repeated celebrations become family tradition. By going to Mass on Sunday and participating in parish activities, we celebrate our love of God and our membership in the Christian community.

Asking for Christian membership for our children through Baptism requires that we have a living, active faith in order that we may effectively "enable our children to know God" as required in the Rite of Baptism for Children.

COMMITMENT EVALUATOR FOR PARENTS

	FATHER:			MOTHER:		
	Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. I attend Mass at least once a week.						
2. I receive Communion at Mass.						
3. I participate in the Sacrament of Penance.						
4. I make time to visit the sick.						
5. I explain to my children the signs and symbols in our church.						
6. I discuss religion with my spouse in an open and honest manner.						
7. I read religious books and periodicals.						
8. I pray daily.						
9. I am involved in parish activities and/or various ministries in the parish (liturgical, educational, etc.)						
10. I am informed about parish activities.						
11. I stand up for what is right.						
12. I find ways to share with the poor.						
13. I read the Bible.						
14. I feel like I am "Christian."						
15. I believe in God.						
16. I am not afraid to profess my faith.						
17. I forgive those who have hurt me.						
18. I respect others regardless of color, race or creed.						
19. I tithe to my church.						
20. I am ethical & honest at work.						