

HONORING PARENTS AND ELDERS

Faith Themes

God has given our parents to us, and we are called to honor and obey them. Jesus obeyed his parents.

Natural Teachable Moments

- On the birthday of your child's grandparent
- After your child has questioned your authority as a parent or why he should have to follow your orders
- When your child sees another child misbehaving in public

IT IS TEMPTING TO INTERPRET THE COMMANDMENT that tells children to honor their parents as a call for instant obedience. In biblical times, honoring one's parents meant respecting them as sources of wisdom and making a commitment to care for them in their old age. We, as sons and daughters ourselves, are the most influential example of what it means to respect parents. Especially now, while our children are in their formative years, we teach them the fundamental attitudes they will act out in their behavior toward us as they get older.

Starting the Conversation

Share with your child your favorite memories of your parents, your child's grandparents. Discuss ways your family can make life easier and more enjoyable for older relatives.

To Help You Connect

This is probably a good time to remind your child that you were once a child, too, and that you had to respect and obey your parents—or if they are living, that you still honor them. You might tell your child that you know it's not easy to obey parents, but we must remember that parents have rules for us because they love us. They want us to grow into healthy, happy people. They have lived longer than children have and have grown to see the harmful effects of certain decisions and actions. Even still, it can be very difficult at times for young people to respect and be obedient to parents and elders. Let your child know that he can always ask for God's grace to help him obey and grow up happy and healthy.

TO SUPPORT YOU

SUGGESTED BIBLE READING

Mary and Joseph search for and find Jesus, who grows up obedient to his parents: Luke 2:41–51

WHAT THE CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THIS TOPIC

The Catholic theology of the family teaches that the family is good for a couple because it provides a stable setting within which the couple can enjoy and develop their love. The family is good for children because it provides a safe, secure environment for their development and education. The family is good for society because it is on the foundation of the family that all other social communities are built. The family is good for the Church because it is within the family as domestic church that people have their

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most meaningful experiences of God's love, and it is out of the domestic church that believers come together to form parishes, dioceses, and the universal Church.

Parents have the right to all means necessary to maintain a family, and they have the right to be respected for all that they do within the family. Children have the right to all means necessary to grow up and mature. They have the right to be respected as full human beings.

Parents have the responsibility to be faithful to each other and to care for the well-being of the family. Children have the responsibility to respect and obey their parents, to cooperate with those who help them mature, and to contribute to the well-being of everyone else in the family.

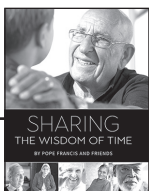
A Prayer Moment with Your Child

Let's thank Jesus for giving us his example to follow of how we show our love for parents and for God:

*Jesus, Son of God, thank you for teaching me to obey
and to care for my parents and grandparents.*

Amen.

This material was excerpted from *52 Simple Ways to Talk with Your Kids about Faith* by Jim Campbell, father of two children and grandfather of six. Learn more about this book at www.loyolapress.com/campbell.



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