Checklist for Parents of Young Children/Ages 6-24 Months

HOW PARENTS NURTURE FAITH

[Use the scale on the left to indicate how well you are contributing to your child’s faith formation.]

Helping Children Experience Faith

Yes .......... No

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1. Establish a family atmosphere that is warm, safe, loving and peaceful.

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2. Provide for the child’s basic physical needs like food, sleep, clean diapers, baths and exercise.

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3. Develop and maintain a dependable schedule for daily routines, especially at waking, eating, transitions and bedtime.

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4. Take time to touch, hold, cuddle, talk and play with your child.

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5. Avoid loud noises, music or behavior which can be disturbing to your child.

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6. Avoid circumstances in which your child sees or hears your frustration, anger, fear or disappointment get out of control.

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7. Encourage your child’s initiative and curiosity; reward effort more than success.

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8. Model an attitude of wonder and gratitude about human life and nature.

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9. Limit your child’s exposure to electronic media, including television and DVDs.

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10. Invite extended family members like grandparents, aunts and uncles, godparents and good friends to participate in the care of your child.

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11. Choose child care options that are consistent with your personal and spiritual values.

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12. Take positive steps to resolve conflicts between you and your spouse which can have a negative impact on your child.

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13. Take immediate steps to remove your child from circumstances in which they are in danger of being emotionally or physically abused.

Helping Children Learn Faith

Yes .......... No

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1. Talk to your child; name and explain what your child is observing or doing to the extent that he or she is able to understand.

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2. Tell or read your child stories that help your child learn about themselves, people and the world around them.

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3. Display and explain signs and symbols of faith such as statues, pictures, the church and religious practices to the extend that your child is able to understand.

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4. Tell or read bible stories adapted for very young children and other simple children's stories with faith themes, bible heroes, saints, and examples of Christian values.

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5. Model a routine for your personal prayer, study and spiritual growth as an individual and as a couple.

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6. Participate in formation, education and spiritual enrichment programs for adults.

Continue on the back side
Helping Children Express Faith

Yes .......... No

1. Encourage your child to express himself or herself with music, song, arts, crafts and play.
2. Provide a good balance between structured and free play.
3. Use simple prayers at meals and bedtime; invite your child to participate to the extent that they are able.
4. Use religious symbols and objects (candles, pictures, statues, etc.) in family prayer and celebrations; explain these to your child to the extent that they are able to understand.
5. Use simple blessings or prayers for special family occasions like birthdays and anniversaries; explain these to your child to the extent that they are able to understand; invite them to participate to the extent that they are able.
6. Establish family rituals to celebrate religious seasons and events like Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, feast days and holy days; explain these to your child to the extent that they are able to understand.
7. Adapt or develop family customs and traditions which express religious faith and values; explain these to your child to the extent that they are able to understand; invite them to participate to the extent that they are able.
8. Establish a routine for your personal prayer, study and spiritual growth as an individual and/or as a couple.
9. Make an effort to resolve any conscious or unconscious conflicts you have as an adult with the Church.
10. Model an example of church attendance and participation.

Helping Children Act with Faith

Yes .......... No

1. Teach children to share, to be fair, and to be honest with friends and playmates.
2. Give your child an opportunity to make simple choices which are appropriate for his or her age and development.
3. Teach children to appreciate and respect nature as part of God's creation.
4. Teach your child the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior toward themselves and others.
5. Accept your child’s natural curiosity about human bodies, but teach them the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior and touch.
6. Limit children's exposure to conflicting values and lifestyles depicted on TV, other media, advertising.
7. Model appreciation and respect for social, cultural and economic differences among people.
8. Model an example of concern, respect and service to others, especially the less fortunate.
9. Be patient with your child’s behavior. Correct misbehavior by re-directing it toward more appropriate behavior.
10. Encourage and praise your child’s efforts to learn and grow; do not set unrealistic expectations by comparing your child to siblings or other children.

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