

Practicing Your Catholic Faith as a Family

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Each of us is on this earth for two very important purposes. First, we are here to get to Heaven. Second, we are here to lead as many people as we can to Heaven. Nothing else we do is as important as this. Everything that we do each day becomes the means through which we can reach holiness and get to Heaven. Every situation becomes an opportunity to serve God and others.

The most important gift that we can give to our children is the gift of our Catholic Faith. A devout Catholic Faith will guarantee your children entrance into Heaven. But we can't simply send our children to a religion class, and hope that by doing this, we have done enough. It is the job of the family to teach the children how to **live** the faith that they are learning in class, on a daily basis. This book will help you to take advantage of family practices that will help your family live the Catholic Faith at home. It will help you move from a learned faith, to a lived faith.

When we brought our children to the Church to be baptized, we vowed to bring them up in the Catholic Faith. This vow was a promise to God. The problem today is that many parents did not grow up "living" their Catholic Faith in the home and therefore are unable to teach their children how to live the Catholic Faith. We cannot teach what we do not know ourselves. But we are

only Catholic when we actually live the Catholic Faith and practice Catholicism in our homes.

Simply sending our children to religion class on Sunday or to a Catholic School is not enough. The religion class and Catholic School teach the children the facts of our faith, but it falls short of teaching them how to practice this faith at home and in the world. That is the job of the family. Our Catholic Faith sets us apart and instills in us a deep relationship with Jesus. Please use this book to help you develop Catholic family practices.

May God bless you in your efforts and encourage you along the way.

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Make Jesus the Center of Your Life

We all know a lot *about* Jesus, but the question is: Do we know Jesus? Do we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the person? It is not enough just to know the facts of our faith; the point of it all is to help us to have a deep and close relationship with Him. The truth is that a deep and close relationship is not possible, unless Jesus is the center of your life. He does not want some of your attention. He wants all of your attention. If Jesus is not the center of your life, how will He become the center of your children's lives? Example is always the best teacher.

What is it that drives your life today? Is it getting ahead financially; being highly successful in your job; living in the right neighborhood or driving the right car? What do we make most important in our lives and in the lives of our children? What is it that comes first? Is it their education so that they can get into the right college and get the right career to make lots of money? Is it the sports they play or other extracurricular activities?

How many sports do your children play? How many practices per week do you attend? If you are like most families, you are running from one activity to another without much time in between. With all this time dedicated to activities, how much time is left to devote to the Lord? Have you ever prayed the Rosary as a family? Do you sit down and pray to Jesus together at bedtime? What the family spends the most time on sends a clear message to your children about what is most important. What we put our money and our time into shows what is most important in our lives.

I am suggesting to you that the message you send to your children should be one in which your faith is what is most important. Other things can certainly be important, but your love and devotion to God should be *most* important. Take a good look at what it is that ties up most of your time and money. Jesus should be the center of your life and the center of your family life. He should absolutely be what is most important. When He is, your whole life will change and your family life will change. You will begin to feel that deep and close relationship with Him and when you do, you will not want to trade it for anything in the world. The person of Jesus can be experienced here and now in our life here on earth.

Each of us is needed in building up the Kingdom of God. Jesus wants great things to happen through each of us. When you place Him at the center of your life, you begin to open up to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Blessed Pope John Paul II called this, "Being docile to the Holy Spirit;" allowing the Holy Spirit to prompt us and lead us in the direction that Jesus wants each of us to go. Yes, it is true that God has great things in mind for you if only you will allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. Let go and give control of your life to the Lord. Your life is in better hands when He is the one leading it.

Recommended Reading: "When the Spirit Comes to Power Rediscovering the Charismatic Dimension of the Christian Life" by Peter Herbeck.

Come Worship as a Family

As parents you send a very clear message to your children on Sunday when you get up and go to Mass together. That message is: “Today is the Lord’s Day. The most important thing we do is go and worship Him.”

The third commandment states, “Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day.” Keeping the Sabbath day holy has always meant that we go to our Church and we actively worship the Lord. It is impossible to keep this commandment by staying at home. Don’t let anyone tell you that you can worship God just as well at home as you can at church. That is simply not true. You are not capable of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at home. You are not capable of changing ordinary bread and wine into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus and then placing His Life into your very souls. Only the Mass can do that.

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath day was on Saturday; the seventh day. This is because God rested on the Sabbath day. He completed all of His work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh. The Jews of the Old Testament worshiped God on Saturday. As Christians, however, we worship not on the seventh day of the week, but instead on the first day of the week. Sunday is the new Sabbath; the Sabbath of the New Testament or New Covenant that Jesus established at the Last Supper, just before He suffered, died, and arose from the dead. We no longer give to God the last day of the week. Instead, we give Him the first day of the week. We do not give to God what is left over; from our surplus. We give to Him from our sustenance. Everything we have comes from God. Every talent; every bit of money; every accomplishment; and all of our time, is a gift from God. We owe everything

to Him who blesses us abundantly. On Sunday, we go to Mass and we worship Him in grateful thanksgiving.

The Mass is a sacrifice. The sacrifice that Jesus offered His Heavenly Father at the Last Supper is made present right on our altars every single Sunday (and at every Mass). We are able to participate in that saving sacrifice even though it happened so long ago. We offer Jesus to God in sacrifice, but we also offer ourselves. The bread and wine that is brought to the altar represents us since it was made by human hands. It becomes the saving cup and life giving bread. We offer our very lives to God at each and every Mass. God in turn changes that ordinary bread and wine into His very Body and Blood. We take and eat it. We place the very life of God into our souls. It transforms us. It makes us holy; giving us the strength to live the life He has planned for each of us; able to love Him and love others.

There is nothing more important than taking your family to Mass every single Sunday (or Saturday evening). You send a clear message that worshipping God is of most importance. On Sunday before we do anything else, we go and worship our God. We come to Him in humble praise and with a spirit of thanksgiving. We offer our very lives to God. In return, He places His life inside of us.

Help your children to begin to understand the Mass. Show them how they can follow along in the Missalette. Teach them that God is talking to them in the Mass readings and that Jesus speaks directly to them in the Gospel. Show them how to fold their hands and to pray when the congregation prays; to respond with the people. Most especially, explain what happens to the bread and wine on the altar; how it becomes the very

Body and Blood of Jesus. Make them aware of the moment of Consecration. When the bells ring, the priest is truly holding up Jesus for all to see. Teach your children, “That is Jesus! He is now present!”

In addition to Sunday Mass, attend Mass during the week if at all possible. The more often you take and eat the Eucharist the more holy you become. Why? Because when you eat the Eucharist God places His very life into your soul. This is truly spiritual food. This is how Jesus remains with us and sanctifies us throughout our lives. For this reason the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass takes place every day in a Catholic Church and usually more than once. It is important to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass to our Heavenly Father every day. This is the sacrifice that saved us and continues to save us.

At Holy Spirit Parish, the Weekly Mass schedule is as follows:

Saturday: 5 pm
Sunday: 7:30 am; 9:00 am; 11:45 am; (Spanish Mass: 2:00 pm)
Monday: 7:30 am; 12:00 Noon
Tuesday: 7:30 am; 12:00 Noon
Wednesday: 7:30 am; 7:00 pm
Thursday: 7:30 am; 12:00 noon
Friday: 7:30 am; 9:00 am School Mass (when school is in session)

There are certain days, besides Sundays, that we are obligated to attend Mass. These are called **Holy Days of Obligation**. Below is a list of Holy Days of Obligation in the United States.

Holy Days of Obligation in the United States:

1. Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God—January 1st
2. Ascension of Jesus—40 Days after Easter
(Usually celebrated on a Sunday, however.)
3. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary—August 15th
4. All Saints Day—November 1st
5. The Immaculate Conception of Mary—December 8th
6. Christmas—December 25th

On these days, we are just as obligated to attend Mass as we are each Sunday. For this reason, our parish church offers additional Mass times: 6:30 am; 9:00 am (school Mass); 12:00 noon; and 6:00 pm. The parish church tries very hard to accommodate all work schedules on these days. (These times will vary from parish to parish.)

There are additional days that are great opportunities to take your family to Mass. These are not Holy Days of Obligation, but they are important days to attend Mass as a family. One day in particular is **Ash Wednesday**. Ash Wednesday is the start of Lent. This is the day that we remember that God made us from the dust of the earth and it is into dust that our bodies will one day return. It is great to bring your children and allow them to receive the blessed ashes.

Holy Week offers us ample opportunities to grow closer to God through Jesus. On Holy Thursday we celebrate the “Mass of the Lord’s Supper.” This is the day in which we remember the Last Supper; the day that

Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Mass. The Mass became the “New Passover Meal”. Jesus replaced the Passover Lamb with Himself. This is also when He instituted the Eucharist. On Good Friday, we celebrate the Veneration of the Cross. This is not a Mass. In fact, Good Friday is the only day each year that the Mass is not celebrated. Each person comes forward to offer a gesture of veneration to the cross held by a deacon or priest. Most people kiss the cross, but some simply touch it and bow or genuflect. We are also offered Holy Communion at the Good Friday worship service. Additional hosts are consecrated on Holy Thursday for this purpose.

These are excellent opportunities to involve your children in our rich Catholic Faith. At the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we are truly Catholic. This is the source and summit of our faith.

Perpetual Adoration

Here at Holy Spirit Parish, we have a Perpetual Adoration Chapel that is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Inside this small chapel you will find chairs with kneelers that face an altar. On the altar is a Monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament.

Please understand completely, that what you see inside this Monstrance is a consecrated host that we call the Blessed Sacrament. As Catholics we believe that this is truly our Lord Jesus Christ in bodily form. People go into this chapel to worship our Lord and pray to Him in person.

He is never left alone and cannot be left alone. For that reason, parishioners have signed up for hour time slots that they keep each week.

I cannot stress to you enough how important it is for your children to learn to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and to have devotion to Him in this way. Take your children inside the chapel to pray once per week or as often as you can. Even if you can only spend 10 minutes with our Lord, it is so important for you to do this. No one else is going to take your children. It is up to you to teach this devotion to them.

Prayer in the chapel provides a very intimate time with our Lord. You will feel His presence and it will take no time before you realize how important and meaningful it is to do this. This also teaches your children to sit down and have quiet prayer time with the Lord.

Be sure to explain to them that they must remain quiet and pray to Jesus from their hearts. Make sure that they understand that what they are seeing in the Monstrance is truly our Lord. In His presence, they can tell Him anything. They simply need to learn to talk to Jesus often and without restraint.

Again, this is something that is very, very important for you to do as a parent for your children to help them to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Teach the Importance of the Sacraments in your Home

Remember, each and every sacrament places God's very own life into our souls. Receiving the sacraments often and with reverence makes us holy. Holiness is needed in order to enter Heaven. Make sure that your children understand that in each Sacrament we come face to face with Jesus and receive His very life into our souls. God actually touches our soul and makes us holy in each sacrament. We are touched by Him and it is a life changing experience. Talk about this at dinner or speak of it at bedtime. Then receive the sacraments as a family as often as possible.

There are 7 sacraments:

1. **Baptism:** This is the first sacrament. This is the first time we receive God's life into our souls. During Baptism water is poured over us. This cleanses us of Original Sin and lights our darkened souls. The water is a symbol of "New Birth." Our old selves have died and we have risen to a new life in Christ. The priest or deacon then anoints us with holy Chrism. He makes the sign of the cross on us with this Chrism. We receive the Holy Spirit into our souls. We are permanently marked as a child of God. It is then that we enter into Covenant with God, our Father. We become His very own child. We are given a lighted candle symbolizing the "Light of Christ" that is now burning within us. Then we are clothed with a white garment. This symbolizes that we have "put on Christ" and will help to bring Him to the rest of the world.

2. **Reconciliation:** At the "age of reason" we are allowed to make our first Reconciliation or first confession. A child's first experience of forgiveness

comes from you. When your young child comes to you and is sorry for something he or she has done, you have the opportunity to show the child mercy and forgiveness. It is here that the child begins to understand your unconditional love. This paves the way for the child to understand God's unconditional love as well. It is very important for children to learn to be sorry for their sins. That teaching comes from you as well. As parents we want our children to understand that certain acts are sinful. Teaching the Ten Commandments and not allowing your children to break them is one of the best things you can do for your child. We live in a world where many things are relative. Society teaches us that what is wrong for one person is not necessary wrong for someone else. This simply is not true. What is right and what is wrong is not up to us as human beings to decide. God and God alone determined and continues to determine what is right and wrong. The commandments and the beatitudes along with the teachings of the Church are our best guides. We cannot simply take a poll and publish it in the New York Times and consider what the majority feels is wrong to be wrong and what the majority feels to be right is right.

Your example is again the greatest teacher. Go and receive the sacrament of Reconciliation as a family monthly. At the bare minimum receive this sacrament every two months. Waiting any longer and you will not remember many of your sins. Children who do not see their parents go to confession get the idea that adults do not have to confess their sins. Nothing could be further from the truth. On the contrary, the sins that adults commit are far more serious than the sins of a child. By going to confession as a family monthly, you will instill a habit in your children that will continue for the rest of their lives. Children, who confess their sins often, state

that they like this sacrament very much. It makes them feel very good inside. Well, no wonder! Remember, every sacrament places God's very life inside of our souls. The Sacrament of Reconciliation gives us a special Grace that helps us to avoid sin. We simply sin less the more often we avail of this sacrament. In addition, we learn to see ourselves in humility; the way we truly are; the way that God sees us. We learn to admit that we make mistakes and that we want to do better. This type of humility makes us very, very holy. What a gift to give your children! A humility that helps them to be in a closer and deeper relationship with God our Father and Jesus Christ our Savior.

Help for Reconciliation can be found in the appendix of this book. Included is an Examination of Conscience for several ages including adults and instructions on "How to Go to Confession."

3. **Eucharist:** We are a two part being—body and soul. We need spiritual food just as much as we need food for our physical bodies. Our souls are going to live forever. Think about that for a moment...Forever. Our bodies are going to live for what? 70, 80, 90 years? But our souls are going to continue to live forever. Clearly, what part of us is the more important? Yet we tend to give our body everything it desires while we tend to think very little about taking care of our soul's needs. Give your soul what it craves. Your soul knows God and craves God. Place God into your soul. The most direct way to do this is to receive the Eucharist at Mass as often as you can. The more you do, the holier you become.

Did you know that holiness is needed in order to enter Heaven? It's true. The Bible states: "Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48). "Strive

for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). “Nothing unclean (with sin) will enter Heaven” (Rev. 21:27). The Bible, God’s very Word, teaches us that we must attain a certain amount of holiness right here on earth in order to enter the heavenly Kingdom. Receiving the Eucharist often and humbly confessing your sins on a regular basis ensures that holiness. Add to this a deep prayer life; the desire to sin no more; and a commitment to do all things for the love of God, and you are well on your way to the heavenly Kingdom.

4. Confirmation: Confirmation is a sacrament that, like Baptism, can be received only once. The Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that we received in Baptism. It gives us spiritual muscles and it marks us as a witness so that we can go forth and witness our faith to others. Witnessing our faith can be done in many ways. The greatest way is by example. Our actions many times speak louder than our words. But it is true that we should be ready and willing to give a reason for our faith; for our hope. Catholics are especially questioned on their faith by our Protestant brothers and sisters. We possess the entire truth of the Kingdom of God. By gently explaining our faith in a loving way, you can win a soul for God. That is a great thing to be able to do.

5. Matrimony: The Sacrament of Matrimony is what most people call marriage. It is important to understand that when you married, you received a sacrament. Remember all sacraments place God’s life into your soul. The sacrament of Matrimony gives you special graces that help you during your marriage in all its trials and tribulations. God’s grace is sufficient for you. He has given you all the grace you need to make your marriage

last until ‘death do you part.’ Your family was created by the love between you and your spouse. Your children thrive in this loving environment. Your loving marriage is a reflection of Jesus’ love for the Church. He is the bridegroom and the Church is His bride. Jesus gave His life for His bride. He held nothing back. Our marriages should be an imitation of this unconditional love and sacrifice.

Remember that your marriage is your vocation. There are only 4 vocations: Married Life; Single Life; Religious Life; and the Priesthood. You have chosen the vocation of ‘Married Life.’ This means that you must put your marriage first and your job second. Many of our marriages fail because our marriage is placed behind our careers. Your children need your marriage to be strong. God’s grace is sufficient for you. Place your marriage first and be willing to let your spouse have his or her way more often than you get your way. Spend quality time together. Make family your priority.

6. Anointing of the Sick: The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is not just for those who are about to die. It is a sacrament of healing. Before a major surgery and during a serious illness we can avail of this sacrament. Yes, we should be anointed when we are gravely ill, because the graces we receive from this sacrament can be of great benefit as our sins can be completely forgiven just before we die. But this sacrament can be given to us more than once. We need the strength it gives when we are sick or having surgery.

Remember that unless you tell someone that you want a priest called if you were in a serious accident, your family members may not call one. Make your wishes known. And remember that children who are in need can

be anointed as well. Before an appendectomy; the removal of tonsils; or any serious illness you can ask a priest to anoint your child.

7. Holy Orders: Holy Orders is the sacrament that a man receives when he becomes a priest. Speak of this sacrament often in your homes. Remember that God has a plan for each of our lives. There is something specific that God needs each of us to do in order to build up the Kingdom of God. God may be calling one of your children into the priesthood. The best thing you can do for each of your children is to teach them to listen to and trust in the plan that God has for their lives. Explain to your children that they should pray for God to lead their lives. This is where true happiness can be found.

Pray as a Family

It is very important to take time to pray as a family each day. When your family gathers at meal time, you should say grace before the meal. There is also a “Grace After Meals” prayer that is a great addition to your family meal time. Saying grace after the meal is over will keep everyone from leaving the table as soon as they are finished eating. Sharing a meal together once or twice a day may be the only time that you have to spend with the entire family present. Make this time special. Turn off the TV and really listen to one another. Even when you’re done eating, stay seated and talk to one another. When everyone has finished eating, pray the “Grace After Meals” prayer together.

In addition to grace before and after meals, families should sit down and pray together. Children in grades kindergarten through eighth grade have several grade level prayers to memorize each year. Praying each day as a family using the prayers they are required to learn, will help them to commit these prayers to memory. It will also reinforce these prayers as important and ensure that your children will pray on their own more often.

People don't automatically know how to pray and your children are no exception. Even the Apostles asked Jesus how to pray. Memorized prayers give us the words we want to say to Our Lord at times when we cannot seem to come up with the words ourselves. They can actually teach us how to pray. Using memorized prayers to pray to God is an excellent way to teach your children how to pray. After a while, your children will begin to develop their own prayer life and will begin to simply talk to Jesus. Their prayer life will become a combination of

memorized prayers and spontaneous prayer to Our Lord. This is exactly what you want.

“The Morning Offering” is an excellent way to start off each day and one that our Bishop, Robert Baker, asks every Catholic to pray each morning. In “The Morning Offering” we offer our day to the Lord. Everything we do becomes an act of love to Him. In addition, everything we do becomes an offering to God for the reparation of our sins. “The Act of Contrition” is a great prayer to pray before we go to sleep at night. “The Act of Contrition” tells God that we are sorry for our sins and want to do better each day. These are excellent ways to begin and end each day. They become even more meaningful when the entire family prays them together. Both of these prayers can be found in the appendix of this book.

When you come together to pray as a family, incorporate spontaneous prayer as well. Pray for our Holy Father, Pope Benedict the 16th; our Bishop, Robert Baker, and our priests by name. Ask Jesus to guide them and make them holy. Pray for your own holiness and the holiness of your children. Ask Jesus to guide each of your lives. Pray for anyone who is sick or need of your prayers. Pray for help for this world such as praying that God will lead our elected officials and for an end to abortion. Pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Ask Jesus to help your family members with any difficulties they may be facing. Finally pray for family members by name who have died, that God will welcome them into Heaven to be with Him for eternity.

This combination of memorized prayer and spontaneous prayer will benefit your children in so many wonderful ways. You will be teaching your children by

example how to pray; how important prayer is; and that we rely on God for everything. These are the greatest life lessons you can give to your children.

For a complete list of the grade level prayers that your children should be learning, go to the appendix of this book. You can also find them on our Religious Education Website at www.holyspirithsv.com Click on “Sunday Religious Education Classes.” Then click on “Prayers”. You can print all of them or a specific grade level.

The Rosary:

Praying the Rosary as a family each evening or at least weekly is a Catholic tradition. It also instills the importance of the Rosary in your children making it more likely that they will pray it as adults. Saint Francis de Sales said, "The Rosary is the ladder to Heaven" and truly, it is. Many saints have confirmed that every problem can be solved by praying the Rosary. Remember, the Rosary is a critical link to Jesus through the intercession of His mother, Mary.

If your family owns an iPad, you can get the iRosary App. This is a really fun way for the family to pray the Rosary together. Your children can take turns pulling down each bead. The iRosary App. is also good for learning how to pray the Rosary as it guides you right through it. All prayers are written out and there is even a picture of each mystery. Your children will love it!

We teach our sixth graders how to pray the Rosary in our Religious Education Classes and we require them to memorize the Mysteries. What we find is that the children quickly forget what we taught them. Soon they simply do not know how to pray the Rosary at all. They were taught in sixth grade, but because they never

practiced this devotion at home and it has never become part of their actual life, they do not ever really know how to pray it. If families would pray it, the children could internalize it. I guarantee that the practices developed in childhood continue on in adulthood. Our Blessed Mother, Mary, has appeared on the earth several times in recent centuries. You may recall the story of "Our Lady of Fatima." Every pope since the appearance of "Our Lady of Fatima" has proclaimed this apparition to be "worthy of belief." Our Blessed Mother's message at Fatima is very clear: "Pray the Rosary and souls will be saved." She asks each of us to pray the Rosary daily. If you are like me, you just want to do what God asks us to do. One of the things He is asking us to do in this century is to pray the Rosary. Our lives change when our habits change. Let praying the Rosary as a family, become a habit in your family life. Your children will continue this into adulthood and make it apart of their own family life once they are married and have children.

You will find directions on how to pray the Rosary in the Appendix of this book on the last page.

Prayers of the Rosary

Apostles Creed:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic

Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen

Our Father:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

Hail Mary:

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen

Glory Be: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Fatima Prayer:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins and save us from the fires of Hell. Lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of your mercy.

Hail Holy Queen:

Hail! Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope, to you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears; turn, then, most gracious Advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement! O loving! O sweet Virgin Mary! Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

Mysteries of the Rosary

Glorious Mysteries: (Sundays and Wednesdays)

1. The Resurrection
2. The Ascension
3. The Coming of the Holy Spirit
4. The Assumption of Our Blessed Mother, Mary into Heaven
5. The Coronation (Crowning) of Our Blessed Mother, Mary, Queen of Heaven

Joyful Mysteries (Mondays and Saturdays)

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Birth of Our Lord
4. The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple
5. The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple

Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesdays and Fridays)

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord

Luminous Mysteries (Thursdays)

1. The Baptism in the Jordan
2. The Wedding at Cana
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of the Eucharist

Purgatory and Indulgences

Purgatory

All of us would like very much to go straight to Heaven when we die. But let's face it; the chances are slim that our souls will be in a perfect state of grace at the moment of our death. It is very likely that we will need to be purified before we can enter into the Heavenly Kingdom. We will probably have some Venial Sins on our soul or possibly some unpaid debt (Temporal Punishment) at the moment of our death. Purgatory is a place of purification, for those who die in the love of God, but who have not fully let go of whatever separates them from that love. Before we enter God's presence in Heaven, we must be cleansed of every trace of sin. This cleansing can be very painful in the lower levels of Purgatory depending on how much purification the soul needs. For this reason, and since the earliest days of the Church, Catholics pray for those who have died, to ease their transition.

It is very likely that our deceased loved ones, like us, will spend some time in Purgatory. If a soul does not reach the kind of holiness needed to enter Heaven in his or her lifetime, he or she will need to reach that holiness in Purgatory. It takes just as long to reach holiness in Purgatory as it does here on earth. Therefore, souls can spend several decades in Purgatory as they are slowly purified. You and I have the power to speed up that transition. We can help to move a loved one upward and out of Purgatory more quickly by praying for them. You see, the souls in Purgatory cannot pray for themselves. We have to pray for and offer Masses for our deceased family members so that they will be able to move upward

and out of Purgatory much more quickly. The worse thing we can do is to assume that our deceased loved ones are in Heaven, when in fact they could very well be in Purgatory.

As a family, pray for deceased loved ones, that God will bring them into Heaven. Mention them by name and pray for them daily. Bring your children to the Church Office and schedule Masses to be offered for your deceased family members. Involve them in that process and show your children how this is done. It is customary of pay a stipend to the priest. We generally offer \$10.00 for the Mass that is said for our deceased loved one. Teach your children the traditional prayer for the deceased: “Eternal rest, grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.”

Help your children to see that we are concerned about our deceased loved ones and that we are responsible for helping them to reach Heaven. As Catholics we are happy to do this. We understand that the Church does not exist solely on earth. The Church exists in Heaven, in Purgatory and on earth. We are all connected as the Mass opens up the entire Church and allows all souls to worship together.

When you grow old and pass on, you will have the comfort of knowing that you taught your children the Catholic Faith well. They will pray for you daily and have Masses said for you. Your children will help you to move upward and out of Purgatory so that you can reach Heaven more quickly. This will be true, because you taught them how to live their Catholic Faith well.

Indulgences

Definition of Indulgences:

An indulgence is the lessening, in the eyes of God, of the **Temporal Punishment** due to sins that have already been forgiven.

An Explanation of Indulgences:

There are two consequences for every sin we commit. One is **Guilt** and the other is **Temporal Punishment**. When we confess a sin and are sorry for it, God forgives the **guilt** of that sin. We are no longer guilty. However, we still owe a **debt** for that sin. We are still required to repair the damage that sin caused in the world. We are therefore required to make reparation for that sin. This debt that we owe is called **Temporal Punishment**.

Indulgences are gifts or pardons that the Church gives to us in order to lessen the Temporal Punishment that we owe in order to make up for the sins we have committed. The Church gives us a task to complete and some conditions to follow. If we follow the conditions and complete the task with reverence, we gain or obtain the Indulgence. This indulgence either wipes away all Temporal Punishment or part of it.

Two Types of Indulgences:

There are two types of Indulgences, Plenary and Partial. **Plenary Indulgences** free us from all of the Temporal Punishment or all of the debt that we owe for all of the sins we have ever committed up until that time. **Partial Indulgences** free us from some of the Temporal

Punishment or some of the debt that we owe for the sins we have committed.

A person can gain or obtain one Plenary Indulgence per day. A person can gain many Partial Indulgences each day.

The Church has the Authority to Grant Indulgences:

What Jesus has done for us is immeasurable. Jesus' work of redemption on the cross has built a tremendous "Treasury of Graces". Even his work of healing, preaching, and teaching during His time on earth helped to build this Treasury of Graces. To a lesser degree, the Blessed Virgin Mary has contributed to this Treasury of Graces by her good works throughout her life and the way she cooperated with God's plan of salvation. The Saints, who came before us, have helped to contribute to this Treasury of Graces by their good works. Even we can contribute to this Treasury of Graces by offering our good works and sufferings to God each day.

So the Church possesses this Treasury of Graces filled with the works of Christ, filled with the works of Our Lady, and filled with the works of the saints. Our Holy Father, the Pope, who is the Vicar of Christ here on earth, who has been given the "Keys to the Kingdom" and the Power to "Bind and Loose," can draw upon this Treasury of Graces and grant the tremendous privilege of a Plenary Indulgence to us.

When our Holy Father grants an indulgence to us, he is acting on his Spiritual Authority to do it. He has the authority to grant these indulgences to us. When the Holy Father, the Pope, grants an Indulgence, it is also an act of charity and compassion toward us. He grants it to us because he loves us and he wants to encourage us to continue on our path toward heaven.

Five Conditions that Must be Met to Obtain an Indulgence:

In order to receive an Indulgence, the following five conditions must be fulfilled:

- 1) The Catholic must be in a state of Grace—in other words, not guilty of any Mortal Sin.
- 2) The Catholic must have no attachment to sin—the person feels in their heart that they do not want to sin anymore.
- 3) The Catholic must make a good confession to a priest within 21 days before the Indulgence or within 21 days after the Indulgence.
- 4) The Catholic must receive Holy Communion within 21 days before the Indulgence or within 21 days after the Indulgence.
- 5) The Catholic must pray for the intentions of the Holy Father (usually by praying one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be).

Plenary Indulgences Available Each Day:

A Plenary Indulgence is granted to Catholics each day who complete one of the following tasks and meet the Five Conditions:

- ❖ Visit the Blessed Sacrament for at least a half an hour.
- ❖ Pray the Stations of the Cross in a church.
- ❖ Pray the Rosary in a church, in a family, or in a prayer group.
- ❖ Read the Sacred Scriptures as spiritual reading from an approved Holy Bible with reverence for at least a half an hour.

Plenary Indulgences Available at Special Times of the Year:

These Plenary Indulgences are available at only special times of the year and granted to Catholics who complete one of the following tasks and meet the Five Conditions:

- ❖ Devoutly participate in a solemn Eucharistic procession, held inside or outside the church, especially on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Feast of Corpus Christi).
- ❖ Receive Holy Communion for the very first time as a First Communicant or devoutly attend the First Holy Communion Mass of others.
- ❖ Spend at least three entire days in the spiritual exercises of a retreat.
- ❖ Devoutly participate in the Adoration of the Cross in the solemn liturgical action of Good Friday. (Good Friday evening service)
- ❖ Renew your baptismal vows in any legitimately approved formula at the celebration of the Easter Vigil or on the anniversary of your own Baptism.

Plenary Indulgence Available at the Point of Death:

This Plenary Indulgence is granted at the point of death to any Catholic. If the person cannot fulfill the usual conditions personally, the Church dispenses the person from that requirement.

- ❖ Receive the Apostolic Pardon from a priest near the point of death.

If a priest is unavailable, Holy Mother Church generously grants this plenary Indulgence at the point of death provided the person has been in the habit of reciting some prayers during their lifetime and is in a state of grace.

Partial Indulgences Available Throughout the Year:

A Partial Indulgence is granted to Catholics each day who complete one of the following tasks and meet the Five Conditions:

- ❖ While carrying out your duties and enduring the hardships of life, raise your mind in humble trust to God and make some sort of pious prayer such as “Jesus, I trust in you”, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner,” “Jesus, Mary, Joseph,” or “All for Jesus,” etc...
- ❖ Led by the spirit of faith, give compassionately of yourself or of your goods to serve others in need.
- ❖ In a spirit of penance, voluntarily abstain from something that is pleasurable. (Give up something)
- ❖ Give clear and open witness of your faith before others.
- ❖ Teach or study Christian doctrine.
- ❖ Visit the Blessed Sacrament for adoration.
- ❖ Make an act of thanksgiving after Communion using an approved Church prayer such as the “Anima Christi”.
- ❖ Examine your conscience with the purpose of amendment—a purpose of changing your ways and sinning no more.
- ❖ Recite the Act of Contrition before going to Confession.
- ❖ Devoutly use articles of devotion that have been properly blessed by either a priest or deacon such as Rosaries, medals, and Scapulars.
- ❖ For personal learning, devoutly spend time in mental prayer.
- ❖ Either at dawn, noon, or evening devoutly recite the “Angelus” with its accompanying prayer.

- ❖ Devoutly address the Blessed Virgin Mary with some approved prayer such as the “Hail Mary”, “Memorare,” or “Hail Holy Queen”.
- ❖ Devoutly invoke the care of your guardian angel with a duly approved prayer such as “Angel of God, My Guardian Dear.”
- ❖ Devoutly recite approved litanies such as the “Litany of the Most Holy Name of Jesus,” “The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,” or the “Blessed Virgin Mary.”
- ❖ Devoutly offer grace before and after meals with prayers such as “Bless us, O Lord” prayer before meals and the “We Give you thanks, Almighty God” prayer afterwards.
- ❖ Devoutly sign yourself with the Sign of the Cross using the customary words “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
- ❖ Recite an Act of Faith, Hope, and Love in any legitimate formula.
- ❖ Recite the Apostles’ Creed or the Nicene Creed.

Indulgences Granted to Those in Purgatory:

Indulgences can be obtained for yourself or you can obtain them for someone who is in Purgatory. Any Indulgence can be given to those in Purgatory, but there is a Plenary and Partial Indulgence that can only be applied to those in Purgatory:

Plenary Indulgence only for those in Purgatory: On any or each day from November 1st to the 8th devoutly visit a cemetery and pray for the departed. **Partial Indulgence:** Visit a cemetery and pray for the deceased any day of the year.

Devotion to Our Blessed Mother, Mary

It is very important for all of us to have a relationship with the Blessed Mother, Mary. It is very important to help our children to develop a relationship with her. At the moment of our death, Mother Mary prays for those who turned to her in their life. Mary does not answer our prayers herself. Rather she speaks to Jesus on our behalf. Her prayers for us are very powerful.

Wearing a Scapular:

One way to show your devotion to Mary is by wearing a scapular. The most popular is the Brown Scapular dedication to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. In order to wear a scapular; it is important that you become 'enrolled' by a priest. Many First Communion gift boxes contain a scapular for a young child. Scapulars can also be purchased online at "The Catholic Company" website. First read about scapulars, and in particular the Brown Scapular, before wearing one so that you can learn about them.

May Crowning:

It is a really good idea to create a prayer garden in one of the flower beds at your home. You can place a statue of Mary in the garden and a little bench to sit and pray. Children love to help plant flowers around the statue and help keep it beautiful. Or if a garden is not possible, place a statue of Mary on a table or pedestal that you have inside your home.

During the Month of May, your children can make a crown out of silk flowers or even real flowers to place on the head of the statue of Mary. You can even have a ceremony of this crowing at your house. Creating

memories like this will last long into your children's adult life.

Novena: A Novena is a Rosary that is prayed for nine straight days; nine straight weeks; or nine straight months for a specific intention. Many people pray a Novena when someone is very ill or when a call for desperate measures is in order.

If your family is in the habit of praying the Rosary daily, why not pray a Novena for someone who needs prayers desperately. It is a great to teach your children this act of mercy and kindness for others. They will learn that God is capable of taking care of all of our needs, but sometimes there is a call for persistence in prayer.

Why the number nine? There were nine days between the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven and coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus told His disciples to pray and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. They prayed and waited for nine days.

Live the Liturgical Year

The Liturgical Year

The Liturgical year is the Church Year. Just like we have the seasons of Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall, the Church also has seasons. The order of the Liturgical Year is: Advent; Christmas; Ordinary Time; Lent; Easter Triduum; Easter; and Ordinary Time. Each season is marked with a specific color. Advent and Lent are purple; Ordinary Time is green; Easter Triduum is red; Christmas and Easter are white. These colors are reflected in the vestments the priest wears as well as the color of the altar cloth and decorations.

Advent

Advent marks the beginning of the Liturgical year. It begins four weeks before Christmas. An Advent Wreath is displayed in the church with 3 purple candles and one pink candle each representing the 4 Sundays of Advent. It is a time of waiting and readying our hearts for the coming of the Christ Child on Christmas. During Advent we reflect on the meaning of Christ our Saviour coming into the world and how He conquered sin and transformed death into life. It reminds us that Christ will come again in Glory. We do not know the day nor the hour of His return, yet we must be ready for Him.

The Gospel of Luke is a great tool to use in your families during Advent to help your children to prepare for Christmas. If you open to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, there are great stories to read to your children during this time. If they are old enough, allow them to act out these stories and they will remember them with great clarity.

Acting out the Gospel Stories in Luke:

During Advent, allow your children to put on a play acting out several Gospel stories from Luke. You can quickly write a script for each actor simply by reading the stories.

- 1) The Announcement of the Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25)
- 2) The Announcement of the Birth of Jesus or “Annunciation” (Luke 1: 26-38)
- 3) Mary Visits Elizabeth (Luke 1: 39-56)
- 4) The Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1: 57-80)
- 5) The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-20)

You can use cousins or the children of friends to be in the plays as well. This is a great way to help your children to think deeply about the joy of our Savior being born into the world.

Scraps of material can be placed over the children’s heads and tied with a rope to make a quick costume, if you like. Simply fold a piece of material in half. Then, make a slit large enough to get your child’s head through. Next, drape the material over your child’s shoulders and tie it around the waist with a piece of rope. There you will have an instant costume. You can even add a head piece or a long narrow piece to make a stole. Your children will love dressing up in Biblical costumes and putting on a play. What’s more is that they will really remember and internalize these Gospel stories.

A Family Advent Wreath:

Display a family Advent Wreath during Advent. Light the candles according to the week. During the First Week of Advent, light one purple candle each night and pray your nightly prayers around the wreath. During the Second Week of Advent, light two purple candles each night and pray your nightly prayers around the wreath. During the Third Week of Advent, light two purple candles and one pink candle and pray your nightly prayers around the wreath. During the Fourth Week of Advent light all four candles: Three purple candles and one pink, and pray your nightly prayers around the wreath.

Advent Calendar:

Young children love an Advent Calendar. Advent Calendars are generally cardboard or wooden scenes with 25 doors on them. The children are allowed to open one door each day in the 25 days in December leading up to the birth of Jesus on the 25th. They are very excited about opening a door each day and revealing what is behind it. At our house we have a wooden Advent Calendar. There is a scene of a stable in the center with 25 wooden doors that open all around the frame. Inside each door is something to add to the scene in the center. It might be a star to place in the sky; or a donkey to add to the stable; or a shepherd, king, or lamb. Eventually Mary and Joseph are added. Finally on the last day, Jesus is laid in the straw. All of these items are magnetized and the children can place them wherever they like slowly building the scene.

Nativity Scene:

Display a Nativity Scene in your home during Advent. Allow your children to help you set it out. Many

Nativity Scenes are very expensive with nice porcelain figurines. But you can also purchase Nativity Scenes for young children that are made of plastic and come with plastic characters. In this way your children can play with the set and act out the birth of Jesus. This is a wonderful way for them to role play and think deeply about the importance of the birth of Our Lord. Children's Nativity Scenes are available at most Christian Book stores during the month of December and cost only about \$20.00.

Christmas

Christmas should be a time of great joy in your home. First and foremost go to Mass as a family. Talk to your children about the birth of Jesus and how He came to save the world from sin and death. Make Christmas Cookies together. Use cookie cutters that are religious in shape such as angels; stars; and Christmas Trees. Stress the importance of Jesus at Christmas and try not to make it all about Santa Clause.

Make a Birthday Cake for Jesus:

Make a birthday cake for Jesus on Christmas day or Christmas Eve. Use any recipe you like. Using icing from a tube, write "Happy Birthday Jesus" on the top of the cake. This is a great way to help drive home the point that it is Jesus' birthday we are celebrating on Christmas. In a world that has become so commercialized on Christmas it is hard to focus your children's attention on the true meaning of Christmas. This is one way that will help. You can even use a special cake recipe that is only used on Christmas for Jesus' birthday cake. When eaten only once per year, this cake will be extra special and sure to be a tradition that is handed down to the next generation.

Read Christmas Stories:

Read the Christmas story and any other story books that have to do with our Faith at Christmas. Keep in mind that Christmas is not just one day. The Christmas Season of the Church is actually 12 days long, hence the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas.” If you visit a Christian book store or go online looking for Christmas story books, you will find several that you and your children will soon treasure. Here are some books you might want to purchase: “The First Christmas” by Carol Heyer; “The Real Twelve Days of Christmas” by Helen Haidle; The Littlest Angel by Charles Tazewell.

Lent

Lent is the time when we remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying just before He began His public ministry. When He had fasted and prayed for 40 days, the devil appeared to Jesus and tempted Him three times. Each time Jesus resisted his temptations and focused His attention on God. This can be found in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 4 verses 1 through 11 and the Gospel of Luke chapter 4 verses 1 through 13.

We, like Jesus, fast and pray for 40 days during the Season of Lent. Lent is the time we take to prepare our hearts and souls for Easter, the day that Jesus arose from the dead. By His cross and Resurrection Jesus has truly set us free. He has conquered sin and transformed death into life. We need this season of Lent to turn our minds and our hearts toward what should be most important in our lives, God. So we perform acts of penance all through Lent. We practice penance in order to

gain control of our earthly desires and keep them in check. By depriving ourselves of some things we enjoy, we become practiced at controlling ourselves. Then we are better able to control ourselves when we are tempted to do wrong. We also spend more time in prayer during Lent; growing closer to God while turning away from all the distractions that the world offers us. We give alms to the poor especially during this time, realizing that we have more than we truly need. Sharing what we have with others helps us to become less selfish.

Fasting and Abstaining:

Remember to observe your Lenten obligations as a family. Abstain from eating meat on the Fridays of Lent. Fast and Abstain from meat on **Ash Wednesday** and **Good Friday**. During Holy Week, attend the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper and the Good Friday Veneration of the Cross. Both are usually at 7pm in the church.

Teaching the Purpose of Lent:

Teach your children that the purpose of Lent is for us to grow closer to Jesus and to purify our souls so that we are ready for Easter. They should pray more during Lent just as you are praying more during Lent.

Children can give up something for Lent, but help them to understand that whatever they give up should help them to grow closer to Jesus. For example, giving up fighting with a brother or sister; arguing with parents; or gossiping, is far better than giving up chocolate. These things actually help us to grow closer to the Lord.

Giving up food is fine as long as we understand why we are doing it. Giving up food helps us to control our desires and keep them in check. Our souls need to be in charge of our actions. It is easy to let our bodies and our desires become the boss of us. So giving up something that we really enjoy can help us to practice control over our bodies making us stronger when we are tempted to sin.

Random Acts of Kindness:

Children should also plan to do extra good deeds in the home during Lent. This can be helping around the house doing things that they normally don't or going around doing random acts of kindness for others. One thing that is nice to do, as a family during Lent, is to place each family member's name in a small container and allow everyone to draw a name out. Whosever name is drawn out, that person does random acts of kindness for all during Lent. Do not reveal the name of the person you drew out until Easter. It is fun to sneak around doing kind actions without getting caught. It also makes family members feel really good about giving to one another.

Stations of the Cross During Lent:

Make it a point to attend Stations of the Cross during Lent. Stations of the Cross are offered each Friday evening in the church at 7pm during Lent. On Good Friday, Stations of the Cross take place at 3pm. We offer both "outside" and "inside" stations for you to attend. Teach your children to seriously meditate upon the stations and to think deeply about what Jesus did for each of us. His suffering is made deeply known to us during the Stations of the Cross. It is important that we are grateful for His sacrifice and do not take it for granted.

Children who begin to think deeply about the sacrifice that Jesus made for us are able to see that our sins caused His pain. It helps then for you to open up a dialog about how we should try very hard to not sin at all for love of Him.

Ordinary Time

There are 34 weeks of what we call Ordinary Time in the Church Year. This does not mean that these weeks are ordinary. Instead it means that we count the weeks making them ordinal numbers.

This time is filled with the feast days of the saints and many days of liturgical celebration. As a family you can celebrate these days easily by highlighting each day and bringing the saint or feast day to the minds of your family members. Simply display a saint card for the saint whose feast day is being celebrated. Cards for this purpose can be purchased in a complete set from Loyola Press. They come in a box set already in the correct order entitled, “Saints Kit.” Each card has a picture of the saint and information on his or her life. You can purchase this on the Loyola Press website for about \$70.00. The cards are high quality and will last for as long as you need them.

This is a perfect way to help your children to live their rich Catholic Faith and learn about the saints. Children love to pull out the cards and set up a small table each day to honor the saint being celebrated.

Celebrating Baptismal Anniversaries

The day that you were baptized was the most important day of your life. This was the day that you became a child of God. This was the day that God's Life entered your soul for the very first time. The Holy Spirit entered your soul and has remained there ever since. On your baptismal day, you entered into Covenant with God and became his very own son or daughter. Why not celebrate this day? Shouldn't the day we were baptized be a day of great celebration? After all, before baptism you were merely a child, but after baptism you became a child who truly belongs to God. Your soul was dead, but is now alive!

Celebrate the date that each member of your family was baptized by having a special dinner with the whole family present. You can even allow the person whose baptismal date is being celebrated to choose what you will have to eat for dinner that night. It would be great to have the god-parents present if possible. Light candles for this special dinner reminding everyone that Jesus is the light of the world and that His light now shines within us. After dinner, bring out the family member's baptismal candle (the candle he or she received at Baptism) and allow him or her to hold it. Light it and keep it lit while the family member renews his or her baptismal vows. One person (most likely a parent) should ask the questions that the priest asked at Baptism, while the family member replies, "I do." Below is a Renewal of Baptismal Vows that can be used. You can even give a religious gift such as a saint medal, a Rosary, a prayer book, a Bible, a book of saints, or a holy card to the family member whose baptismal anniversary is being celebrated.

Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Do you reject Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty promises?

I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

I do.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Celebrating Your Patron Saint

Another great thing you can do as a family is to celebrate the Patron Saints of your family members. When you named your children, you probably chose names for them that were saint's names. These saints are now the patron saints for your children. Look up these saints on the Internet to find out when their feast day is celebrated and what they accomplished in their lives. Then you can celebrate this as a family.

For example, my son's name is Justin. When I *Google* "Saint Justin," I find out that his feast day is on June 1st. I also learn that Saint Justin is considered to be the greatest Catholic Apologist of the first century. Saint Justin wrote several apologies to the Roman Emperor defending the Catholic Faith. We learn from his apologies that the Catholic Church believed that the bread and wine really and truly become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus at every Mass even back in the year 150 AD. We also learn from Saint Justin that the Mass that was celebrated back in the year 150 AD was the same as it is today, as Saint Justin describes the Mass in one of his apologies. We learn that the Catholic Faith then is the same as the Catholic Faith today! What we believe and what we practice has not changed. What a great gift Saint Justin has given to us!

So on June 1st, we allow our son, Justin, to choose his favorite meal for dinner and we make a big deal about the fact that this day is Justin's Feast Day. At dinner we discuss what Saint Justin did and why he is such a great saint. We encourage our son to have a special devotion to Saint Justin and explain that Saint Justin will especially

watch over our son. It is good for Justin to ask Saint Justin to intercede for him.

This is a great way to teach your children about the lives of the saints. They are great role models for our children especially in a world where good role models are hard to find. Our children feel very special on the feast day of their Patron Saint. They look forward to that day almost like a birthday. As with the anniversary of their Baptism, you can give a religious gift to your child: a saint medal; a Rosary; a prayer book; a religious story book; a holy card; or a cross necklace.

There are great religious books available at www.loyolapress.com. Click on "catalogs" at the very bottom of the page and then "store". Their children's books are outstanding!

Keep in mind that sometimes you have to improvise. Our daughter's name is Caitlin and there is no saint Caitlin. However, Caitlin is derived from Catherine. So we celebrate the feast day of Saint Catherine. You can also use your child's middle name if it is the name of a saint.

Using Sacramental Objects and Actions in Your Home

A sacramental is any blessed object or action used to help us grow closer to God. Sacramentals can be divided into two categories: Sacramental Actions and Sacramental Objects.

Sacramental Actions:

- Making the Sign of the Cross
- Folding your hands in prayer
- Genuflecting toward the Tabernacle
- Bowing toward the altar
- Blessings

Sacramental Objects:

- Rosaries
- Statues
- Holy Water
- Ashes
- Palms
- Crucifixes
- Candles
- Holy Cards
- Medals
- Scapulars

The Appearance of Your Home:

If someone walked into your home would they know that a Catholic lived there? It is a Catholic practice to hang a blessed crucifix in every bedroom and a few throughout the home. A statue of Mary or other saints can

be seen on a table or on the fire place mantel. A Bible that is used is readily available on a coffee or end table. Pictures of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary are seen hanging on the wall. A prayer garden with a statue of Mary is in one of the flower beds. A Nativity Scene is set up at Christmas. An advent wreath with candles is displayed during Advent. We might even see a Rosary available for use in the family room. Prayer books are available for use along with books on the saints for the children to read or to be read aloud. The Ten Commandments are displayed on the wall or a table etc...

Using Sacramental Objects and Actions:

When praying with your family, always make the sign of the cross and fold your hands. Keep a bottle or basin of Holy Water in your home for blessing yourself and your children. Display a crucifix in your home and in each bedroom. Light a candle when you pray. Buy saint medals and cross necklaces for your children as gifts. Make sure each of your children have their own Rosaries. Large wooden Rosaries are even available for purchase for young children. Display and use a Bible in the home. Treat these objects with reverence. There is a difference between treating objects with respect and reverence and worshiping them. Sacramental objects and actions help us to become closer to God. They help us to worship the true God and Our Lord, Jesus Christ. They do not take the place of Him.

Living the Works of Mercy

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus describes the judgment that He will give when He comes in Glory (Matthew 25: 31-46). According to Jesus, He will separate the good from the evil as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Those who lived the “Corporal Works of Mercy” will be welcomed into the Heavenly Kingdom, while those who did not live the “Corporal Works of Mercy” will be placed into eternal fire.

What are the Corporal Works of Mercy? They are acts of mercy that we show to those in need. Every person we meet is a child of God. Therefore, when we help one another, we are truly helping the Lord.

Corporal Works of Mercy:

- Feed the Hungry
- Give Drink to the Thirsty
- Shelter the Homeless
- Clothe the Naked
- Care for the Sick
- Help the Imprisoned
- Bury the Dead

As a family, try to live the Corporal Works of Mercy. When you go grocery shopping, don't forget to pick up an extra can of green beans, a jar of spaghetti sauce, or some peanut butter for the Saint Vincent DePaul Food Pantry at church. If your children are given allowance, teach them to take a bit of their money and buy something, possibly monthly, for the poor. A can of green beans, peas, or corn are very inexpensive. Your child can purchase a can for about 50 cents. Make a big

deal about how he or she fed some very hungry people out of pure generosity.

Remember to donate clothing that is good, but too small for your children to local charities such as “Good Will” or “Purple Heart”. Involve your children in this process. Keep in mind that there may be families in our own parish church who could use the clothing that your children have out grown. We have some families with six to nine children who would be very grateful.

In the back of the church is a baby basket. This is for donations of items for expectant mothers who have little or no money. This is a great charity to become involved in.

As your family gets older you can all become involved in “Habitat for Humanity” if you like. They build homes for families in need and are always looking for help. It is a great experience for your children to understand that they are building a home for a needy family.

The Downtown Rescue Mission serves meals in Huntsville. It is a good idea to volunteer to help out there once in a while. This can help your children to see just how fortunate they are.

The Kairos Ministry is a prison ministry that Holy Spirit Church is involved in. Kairos goes into the prison and prays with the prisoners and teaches them about the love of Jesus. People of our parish volunteer to go on these mission trips to the prisons. Although children are not allowed to go into the prisons, parishioners do bake cookies and brownies for the prisoners. This is a great way to involve your children in caring for the imprisoned without actually taking them to the prison. They can help

bake brownies and cookies and know that they are going to men who are in prison. In their small way, they helped to brighten the life of an inmate.

From time to time we see people on the street with signs that say “I will work for food”. Sometimes we may be walking down the street and people ask us for a bit of money for food. One thing families can do is to buy coupon books from local fast food chains to give out to people who are hungry. Just keeping a coupon book in your car or purse for such an occasion sends a very clear message to your children that you care about those who are less fortunate than you. What a great lesson to teach. Example is always the best teacher.

Bedtime Stories

A great tradition to begin in your home is the reading of bedtime stories to your children. Reading just one bedtime story is of huge benefit to your children. Research shows that children who are read to are far more likely to become avid readers themselves. Reading is one of the best ways for your child to grow in vocabulary and get better grades in school.

Don't forget that bedtime stories should include religious stories as well. Purchase a book of the saints to read to your children. For great books on the saints visit Loyolapress.com. Click on "Store" and then "Books" and then "Children". This site has lots of children's books on the faith that are excellent. "Arch Books" are also great to read to children. These are stories from the Bible that are well illustrated and meant for children. They are available for purchase on line. Simply Google "Arch Books."

Appendix

Grade Level Prayers:

The following is a list of prayers that each grade level is required to learn. This is a great schedule to follow in your homes as you help your children to learn their prayers. Remember to always review the prayers learned in previous years so that your children do not forget them. These make great prayers to say at bedtime along with the Act of Contrition or in the morning along with the Morning Offering.

Kindergarten Prayers:

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive from your bounty, through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Grace After Meals

We give you thanks, O Almighty God, for these and all your gifts which we have received through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to Guardian Angel

Angel of God, my Guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Grade 1 Prayers:

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your most Sacred Heart.

(end for children in grade 2 and younger)

(Add this next paragraph for students in grade 3 and up)

In union with the most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all, and in particular for the Holy Father's intentions. I wish to gain all the indulgences attached to the prayers I shall say and the good works I shall perform this day. Amen.

Grade 2 Prayers:

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Seven Sacraments

- Baptism
- Reconciliation
- Eucharist
- Confirmation
- Matrimony
- Holy Orders
- Anointing of the Sick

Two Great Commandments *(Mt 22:37-40; Mk 12:29-31; Lk 10:27)*

- You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.
- You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Grade 3 Prayers:

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was

crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Twelve Apostles (*cf. Mk 3:14-19*)

- Peter
- Bartholomew
- Andrew
- Matthew
- James
- James the Less
- John
- Jude
- Philip
- Simon
- Thomas
- Judas

Four Marks of the Catholic Church (*cf. 750*)

- One
- Holy
- Catholic
- Apostolic

Grade 4 Prayers:

Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe you are one God in three Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe in Jesus Christ, your son, who became man and died for our

sins, and who will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, trusting in your infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Love

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Ten Commandments *(Ex 20:1-17)*

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Beatitudes

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
- Blessed are the meek, they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are they who mourn, they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, they will be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, they will be shown mercy.
- Blessed are the clean of heart, they will see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called the children of God.
- Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Grade 5 Prayers:

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
Enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your
Spirit and they will be created. And you will renew the
face of the earth.

Let us pray:

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the
hearts of your faithful. In the same Spirit help us to relish
what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We
ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy Days of Obligation:

- Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1)
- Ascension of Jesus (40 days after Easter)
- Assumption of Mary (August 15)
- All Saints Day (November 1)
- Immaculate Conception of Mary (Dec. 8)
- Christmas (Dec. 25)

Liturgical Year

- Advent
- Christmastime
- Ordinary Time
- Lent
- Easter Triduum
- Eastertime
- Ordinary Time

Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Clothe the naked
- Care for the sick
- Help the imprisoned.
- Bury the dead.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Share knowledge.
- Give advice to those who need it.
- Give correction to those who need it.
- Comfort those who suffer.
- Be patient with others.
- Forgive those who hurt you.
- Pray for the living and the dead.

Grade 6 Prayers:

The Joyful Mysteries

(Mondays and Saturdays, and Sundays in Advent. Also after Epiphany until Lent)

- The Annunciation
- The Visitation
- Birth of our Lord
- Presentation of the Jesus in the Temple
- The finding of Jesus in the Temple

The Sorrowful Mysteries

(Tuesdays and Fridays, and Sundays in Lent)

- Agony of Jesus in the Garden
- Scourging at the Pillar
- The Crowning of Thorns
- Carrying of the Cross
- The Crucifixion

The Glorious Mysteries

(Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays after Easter until Advent)

- Resurrection of Jesus
- Ascension of Jesus into heaven
- Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (Pentecost)
- Assumption of Mary into heaven
- The Crowning of Mary as queen of heaven

The Luminous Mysteries (*Thursdays*)

- Christ's baptism in the Jordan River
- The self-revelation of Christ at the marriage of Cana
- Christ's announcement of the kingdom of God
- The Transfiguration of Christ
- The institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper

Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Books of the Old Testament

Pentateuch

- Genesis (Gn)
- Exodus (Ex)
- Leviticus (Lv)
- Numbers (Nm)
- Deuteronomy (Dt)

Historical Books

- 1 Samuel (1 Sm)

- 2 Samuel (2 Sm)
- 1 Kings (1 Kgs)
- 2 Kings (2 Kgs)
- 1 Chronicles (1 Chr)
- 2 Chronicles (2 Chr)
- Ezra (Ezr)
- Nehemiah (Neh)
- Tobit (Tb)
- Judith (Jdt)
- Esther (Est)
- 1 Maccabees (1 Mc)
- 2 Maccabees (2 Mc)

Wisdom Books

- Joshua (Jos)
- Judges (Jgs)
- Ruth (Ru)
- Job (Jb)
- Psalms (Ps)
- Proverbs (Pry)
- Ecclesiastes (Eccl)
- Song of Songs (Sg)
- Wisdom (Wis)
- Sirach (Sir)

Prophetic Books

- Isaiah (Is)
- Jeremiah (Jer)
- Lamentations (Lam)
- Baruch (Bar)

- Ezekiel (Ez)
- Daniel (Dn)
- Hosea (Has)
- Joel (J1)
- Amos (Am)
- Qbadiah (Oh)
- Jonah (Jon)
- Micah (Mi)
- Nahum (Na)
- Habakkuk (Hb)
- Zephaniah (Zep)
- Haggai (Hg)
- Zechariah (Zec)
- Malachi (Mal)

Grade 7 Prayers:

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and
invisible.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son
of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God,
Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not
made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all
things were made. For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was
incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the

third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother! To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Hail Holy Queen

Hail Holy Queen, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then most gracious Advocate your eyes of mercy towards us and after this our exile, show onto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

Angelus

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord

Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary...

And the Word was made Flesh.

And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Hail Mary...

Let Us Pray:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that, we to whom the Incarnation of Christ, your Son, Was made known by the message of an Angel, May by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Regina Caeli

O, Queen of Heaven, rejoice! Alleluia.

For He whom thou didst merit to bear, Alleluia.

Hath arisen as He said, Alleluia.

Pray for us to God, Alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, Alleluia.

For the Lord hath risen indeed, Alleluia.

Oremus (Let us pray)

O God, who, through the Resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, Didst vouchsafe to fill the world with joy; grant, we beseech Thee, that, through His Virgin Mother, Mary, We may lay hold on the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Theological Virtues (*cf. 1813*)

- Faith
- Hope
- Love

The Cardinal Virtues

- Prudence
- Temperance
- Courage
- Justice

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Knowledge
- Right Judgment
- Courage
- Reverence
- Wonder and Awe

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

- Charity
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Goodness
- Kindness

- Long Suffering
- Humility
- Faithfulness
- Modesty
- Self-control
- Chastity

Capital Sins

- Pride
- Greed
- Lust
- Anger
- Gluttony
- Envy
- Sloth

Books of the New Testament

- Matthew (Mt)
- Mark (Mk)
- Luke (Lk)
- John (Jn)
- Acts of the Apostles (Acts)
- Romans (Rom)
- 1 Corinthians (1 Cor)
- 2 Corinthians (2 Cor)
- Galatians (Gal)

- Ephesians (Eph)
- Philippians (Phil)
- Colossians (Cal)
- 1 Thessalonians (1 Thes)
- 2 Thessalonians (2 Thes)
- 1 Timothy (1 Tm)
- 2 Timothy (2 Tm)
- Titus (Ti)
- Philemon (Phlm)
- Hebrews (Heb)
- James (Jas)
- 1 Peter (1 Pt)
- 2 Peter (2 Pt)
- 1 John (1 Jn)
- 2 John (2 Jn)
- 3 John (3 Jn)
- Jude (Jude)
- Revelation (Rv)

Grade 8 Prayers:

Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
2. Jesus takes up his cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets his mother.
5. Simon helps Jesus to carry the cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls the second time.

8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

Precepts of the Church

1. Assist at Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, doing no unnecessary physical work on those days.
2. Confess serious sins at least once a year.
3. Receive holy Communion frequently and, at a minimum, during the Easter season.
4. Fast and abstain on days appointed.
5. Contribute to the support of the church.
6. Observe the laws of the church concerning marriage and give religious training to one's children by word, example, and use of parish schools or catechetical programs.
7. Join in the missionary spirit and work of the church.

Confiteor (I Confess)

I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Magnificat (Mary's Song)

My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit finds joy in God my savior. For he has looked upon his servant in all her lowliness. All ages to come shall call me blessed. God who is mighty has done great things for me, holy is his name; his mercy is from age to age on those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm; he has confused the proud in their inmost thoughts. He has deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. The hungry he has given every good thing while the rich he has sent empty away. He has upheld Israel his servant, ever mindful of his mercy, even as he promised our fathers, promised Abraham and his descendants forever.

Parts of the Mass:

Introductory Rites

- Entrance Song
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite
- Gloria
- Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel

- Homily
- Profession of Faith
- General Intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts
- Prayer over the Gifts
- Preface
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Memorial Acclamation / Great Amen
- Communion Rite:
 - Lord's Prayer
 - Sign of Peace
 - Breaking of the Bread
 - Communion
 - Silence/Song of Praise
- Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rite

- Prayer
- Blessing
- Dismissal

How to Go to Confession

When you come in the door or walk up to the priest...

Say... "Good morning, Father." Or "Good afternoon, Father." Or "Hello, Father."

Make the Sign of the Cross with the priest....

Say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Tell the priest that this is your first confession....

Say, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession. I am sorry for...." Now, tell the priest your sins. (Make sure you have examined your conscience ahead of time and you are ready to list your sins.)

Listen to what the priest tells you...

He will give you a prayer to say or a good deed to do for your penance to show God you are truly sorry.

Say the Act of Contrition (He may have you say this later.)

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our savior, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

The priest will then give you absolution...

As he holds his hand above your head, the priest will say the words of absolution. Make the sign of the cross when he blesses you.

Your sins are forgiven....

Say, "Thank you, Father." (At this time, you may shake the priest's hand if you like or you may hug him.) Then say, "Good bye." You are now free to go with the grace and peace of Christ.

Please understand one important thing.... Jesus has just forgiven your sins and given you a very special gift. That gift is called **Grace**. This grace that you have just received, will give you the power to resist sin and temptation. If you want this grace to help you, it will. It will help you to be very good. It will help you choose to do the right thing. It is very powerful, but can only work if *you* want it to. Try, with the help of this grace, to see how many days or weeks you can go without committing a sin.

Examination of Conscience for Grades 2 and 3

- 1. I am your God. I shall be number one in your life over everything else.**

I ask myself:

1. Is God my friend?
2. Do I love God as much as I should?
3. Do I let toys or name-brand clothes come first in my life?

- 2. The name of God is holy. Use it correctly.**

I ask myself:

1. Do I speak kindly of God and Jesus?
2. Do I speak kindly about other people?
3. Do I speak respectfully to my parents?

- 3. The Lord's Day is important. Take time to praise and thank God on the Lord's Day.**

I ask myself:

1. Do I go to church regularly?
2. Do I thank God often for all God has given me?
3. Do I pray for myself and others each day?

- 4. Parents are important. Give them the right respect and honor.**

I ask myself:

1. Do I obey my parents and other adults?

2. Do I love my parents and cooperate with them?

5. **Protect the people around you and help them to live.**

I ask myself:

1. Do I respect my life and take care of myself?
2. Do I go around picking fights or hurting people on purpose?
3. Do I try to help people when they are hurting?

6. **Take care of your body and respect the bodies others.**

I ask myself:

1. Do I take care of my body?
2. Do I respect the bodies of other boys and girls?

7. **Other people have a right to keep what belongs to them. Respect that right.**

I ask myself:

1. Have I taken something that doesn't belong to me?
2. Have I destroyed some things that don't belong to me?
3. Have I encouraged others to take or to destroy things?

8. Always tell the truth.

I ask myself:

- 1.** Do I tell the truth?
- 2.** Have I lied to get out of trouble or to make myself look better?
- 3.** Have I told stories on other people?

9. Always treat other people in a kind way and think kindly of them.

I ask myself:

- 1.** Do I think kindly of other people?
- 2.** Do I get jealous or envious when my friends are with other friends?
- 3.** Do I try to break up other people's friendships?

10. Be happy with what you have.

I ask myself:

- 1.** Do I always want what other people have?
- 2.** Do I want more than I need?
- 3.** Am I satisfied with what I have, or am I always complaining?

Examination of Conscience for Grades 4 Through 6

First Commandment:

- 1) I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.
 - Did I give time to God each day in prayer?
 - Do I spend time on other things, but have no time for God?
 - Do I give things like money, TV, games, my friends, pleasure, possessions, etc my attention and forget about praying to God?

Second Commandment:

- 2) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
 - Do I insult God?
 - Do I take God's name in vain?
 - To I curse or use bad language?
 - Do I get angry with God and blame Him when things don't go my way?
 - Do I swear?

Third Commandment:

- 3) Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
 - Did I miss Sunday Mass or a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?

- Do I come to Mass on Time? Do I leave early?
- Did I set aside Sunday as a day of rest and a family day?
- Am I respectful of holy places and objects?
- Do I behave and pay attention at Mass or do I distract others?

Fourth Commandment:

4) Honor your Father and your Mother.

- Did I disobey or disrespect my parents, teachers, or other adults who are in charge of me?
- Do I help out around the house cleaning up after myself or am I a burden to others?
- Am I easy to get along with or do I cause fights?
- Do I do my very best at home and a school or am I lazy?
- Do I respect my parents decisions concerning me or do I argue and fight with them?

Fifth Commandment:

5) You shall not kill.

- Did I physically injure anyone?
- Have I said things that hurt other people's feelings?
- Am I selfish, refusing to share with my brothers or sisters?

- Did I get angry, impatient, envious, unkind, proud, revengeful, jealous, or hateful toward another?
- Do I talk about others behind their back?
- Do I join in when others are being unkind?
- Do I use Face Book or other electronic forms of communication to insult others; talk about them; or do them harm?
- Am I a bully? Do I tell others not to be nice to someone or treat them bad?

Sixth Commandment:

- 6) You shall not commit adultery.
- Am I a faithful friend or am I a friend one minute and an enemy the next?
 - Do I lead my friends into sin talking them into doing things that are wrong?

Seventh Commandment:

- 7) You shall not steal.
- Did I steal, help or encourage others to steal or keep stolen goods? Have I made restitution for stolen goods? (paid them back)
 - Have I cheated on tests or in games?
 - Have I vandalized others property?
 - Have I harmed things that are not mine?
 - Do I take care of my possessions or do I treat them badly?
 - Have I done my best at school or at home?

Eighth Commandment:

- 8) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- Did I lie?
 - Did I deliberately deceive others, or injure others with my lies?
 - Did I gossip or reveal others' faults or sins?
 - Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?
 - Do I tell stories to make myself look great?
 - Do I tell my parents I am going one place, but really go another?

Ninth Commandment:

- 9) You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.
- Do I wish someone else's girlfriend or boyfriend was mine?
 - Do I try to break up other people's friendships?

Tenth Commandment:

- 10) You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.
- Am I jealous of what other people have?
 - Do I envy the families or possessions of others?
 - Am I greedy or selfish? Do I always want more; the biggest; or the best?
 - Am I satisfied with what I have?

- Are material possessions the most important thing in my life?
- Do I trust that God will care for all of my material and spiritual needs?

Examination of Conscience for Teens

First Commandment:

- 1) I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.
 - Did I give time to God each day in prayer?
 - Do I spend time on other things, but have no time for God?
 - Do I give things like money, TV, games, my friends, pleasure, possessions, etc my attention and forget about praying to God?

Second Commandment:

- 2) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
 - a. Do I insult God?
 - b. Do I take God's name in vain?
 - c. Do I curse or use bad language?
 - d. Do I get angry with God and blame Him when things don't go my way?
 - e. Do I swear?

Third Commandment:

- 3) Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
 - a. Did I miss Sunday Mass or a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?
 - b. Do I come to Mass on Time? Do I leave early?
 - c. Did I set aside Sunday as a day of rest and a family day?

- d. Am I respectful of holy places and objects?
- e. Do I behave and pay attention at Mass or do I distract others?

Fourth Commandment:

- 4) Honor your Father and your Mother.
 - a. Did I disobey or disrespect my parents, teachers, or other adults who are in charge of me?
 - b. Do I help out around the house cleaning up after myself or am I a burden to others?
 - c. Am I easy to get along with or do I cause fights?
 - d. Do I do my very best at home and a school or am I lazy?
 - e. Do I respect my parents decisions concerning me or do I argue and fight with them?

Fifth Commandment:

- 5) You shall not kill.
 - a. Did I physically injure anyone?
 - b. Have I said things that hurt other people's feelings?
 - c. Am I selfish, refusing to share with my brothers or sisters?
 - d. Did I get angry, impatient, envious, unkind, proud, revengeful, jealous, or hateful toward another?
 - e. Do I talk about others behind their back?
 - f. Do I join in when others are being unkind?

- g. Do I use Face Book or other electronic forms of communication to insult others; talk about them; or do them harm?
- h. Am I a bully?
- i. Do I tell others not to be nice to someone or treat them bad?

Sixth Commandment:

- 6) You shall not commit adultery.
 - a. Am I a faithful friend or am I a friend one minute and an enemy the next?
 - b. Do I lead my friends into sin talking them into doing things that are wrong?
 - c. Do I look at impure things on the Internet; TV; or magazines?
 - d. Did I commit impure acts by myself or with another?

Seventh Commandment:

- 7) You shall not steal.
 - a. Did I steal, help or encourage others to steal or keep stolen goods? Have I made restitution for stolen goods? (paid them back)
 - b. Have I cheated on tests or in games?
 - c. Have I vandalized others property?
 - d. Have I harmed things that are not mine?
 - e. Do I take care of my possessions or do I treat them badly?
 - f. Have I done my best at school or at home?

Eighth Commandment:

- 8) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 - a. Did I lie?
 - b. Did I deliberately deceive others, or injure others with my lies?
 - c. Did I gossip or reveal others' faults or sins?
 - d. Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?
 - e. Do I tell stories to make myself look great?
 - f. Do I tell my parents I am going one place, but really go another?

Ninth Commandment:

- 9) You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.
 - a. Do I wish someone else's girlfriend or boyfriend was mine?
 - b. Do I try to break up other people's friendships?

Tenth Commandment:

- 10) You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.
 - a. Am I jealous of what other people have?
 - b. Do I envy the families or possessions of others?
 - c. Am I greedy or selfish? Do I always want more; the biggest; or the best?
 - d. Am I satisfied with what I have?

- e. Are material possessions the most important thing in my life?
- f. Do I trust that God will care for all of my material and spiritual needs?

Examination of Conscience for Adults

1) I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

- a. Did I give time to God each day in prayer?
- b. Do I have false gods in my life, like money, profession, drugs, pornography, TV, fame, pleasure, property, etc?

2) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- a. Do I blaspheme or insult God?
- b. Did I take God's name in vain?
- c. Do I get angry with God?

3) Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

- a. Did I miss Sunday Mass or a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?
- b. Do I come to Mass on Time? Leave early?
- c. Did I set aside Sunday as a day of rest and a family day?

4) Honor your Father and your Mother.

- a. Did I disobey or disrespect my parents or legitimate superiors?
- b. Did I neglect my duties to my husband, wife, children or parents?

- c. Did I neglect to give good religious example to my family?
- d. Did I fail to actively take an interest in the religious education and formation of my children?
- e. Did I fail to educate myself on the true teachings of the Church?
- f. Did I give scandal by what I said or did, especially to the young?
- g. Did I give a full day's work for a full day's pay?

5) You shall not kill.

- a. Did I physically injure anyone?
- b. Did I have an abortion, or advise someone else to have an abortion?
- c. Did I abuse my children?
- d. Did I get angry, impatient, envious, unkind, proud, revengeful, jealous, hateful toward another, lazy?

6) You shall not commit adultery.

- a. Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or desires?
- b. Did I deliberately look at impure TV, videos, plays, pictures or movies? Or deliberately read impure materials?
- c. Did I commit impure acts by myself or with another?
- d. Did I marry or advise anyone to marry outside the church?

7) You shall not steal.

- a. Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal or keep stolen goods? Have I made restitution for stolen goods?
- b. Do I pay my bills; rashly gamble or speculate, and deprive my family of the necessities of life?
- c. Did I waste time at work, school or at home?
- d. Did I make material possessions the purpose of my life?

8) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- a. Did I lie?
- b. Did I deliberately deceive others, or injure others by lies?
- c. Did I commit perjury?
- d. Did I gossip or reveal others' faults or sins?
- e. Did I fail to keep secret what should be confidential?

9) You shall not desire your neighbor's wife.

- a. Have I consented to impure thoughts?
- b. Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations?

10) You shall not desire your neighbor's goods.

- a. Am I jealous of what other people have? Are material possessions the purpose of my life?
- b. Do I envy the families or possessions of others?

- c. Am I greedy or selfish?
- d. Do I trust that God will care for all of my material and spiritual needs?

