

Catholic Parenting Newsletter

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Bits and Pieces from Here and There

öWhen we pray, we bring our whole self to God.ö
Joyce Rupp

öTake care...not to forget the things which your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart as long as you live, but make them known to your children.ö
Deuteronomy 4:9

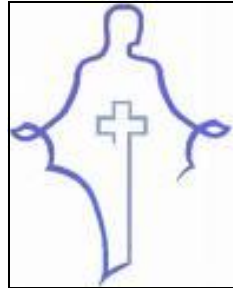
öWe worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget he is someone today.ö
Stacia Tauscher

öScarred people come for healing only to scarred hands! Only a risen Jesus with scars can understand our hearts.ö
Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

WE CELEBRATE

Mar 17· St. Patrick's Day
Mar 19· Feast of St. Joseph
Mar 20—Spring Begins
Apr 1· Palm Sunday
Apr 8· Easter
Apr 22· Earth Day

Easter—The Greatest Catholic Feast



Easter is the greatest feast in the Christian calendar. On Easter Sunday, Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Easter is a day of celebration

because it represents the fulfillment of our faith as Catholics. Through his death, Christ saved mankind from bondage to sin, and he destroyed the hold that death has on all of us; but it is his resurrection that gives us the promise of new life, both in this world and in the next. At Easter we celebrate the new life and recall that:

By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life. Romans 6:4

At Easter we can remember and celebrate our own baptism, the time we chose new life. There are signs of new life that we have experienced throughout the different growing moments of daily life. Share some of these experiences as a family. The first people to arrive at the tomb after Jesus was buried were very surprised to find it empty! When they realized what had happened, they were overjoyed. Share some resurrection stories in your family. Was there a time when you were sad and discouraged and then things suddenly changed? What changed? Or was there a time you were surprised by something wonderful? What was the feeling like? Ask older family members to share with everyone their favorite memories/traditions. Ask younger family members what Easter traditions they would like the family to begin.

Recommended Reading: "Beyond the Birds and the Bees" by Greg and Lisa Popcak

öThe Talk.ö It's one of the most daunting prospects parents face. Communicating the richness of Catholic teaching on sexuality in a faithful and effective way can be an overwhelming responsibility. But does it have to be so? In this thoroughly revised version of öBeyond the Birds and the Bees," Greg and Lisa Popcak empower you with the tools needed to move well beyond öThe Talk.ö by offering a comprehensive guide to raising sexually whole and holy children. Using the riches of Blessed John Paul II's Theology of the Body, the Popcaks help you safely navigate your children from infancy through the teenage years and beyond. The book answers the questions parents may have, including:

- What lessons must my children learn at each stage to develop a healthy Christian sexuality?
- How can I have age-appropriate conversations about sensitive issues with my children?
- How can I teach my children what it takes to be a true Catholic man or woman?
- How can I help my children have healthy, Christian dating relationships?
- ...and much more.

14 Family Lessons from the Stations of the Cross



As Catholics, we do not approach the Stations of the Cross lightly. Each Lent, as we contemplate these 14 moments of Christ's Passion and death, we reflect on the unquenchable love that sustained Jesus through that dark day. We parents may find ourselves wondering, too, how the pain and mystery of the Stations speak to our children. Below are some lessons your family may draw from this enduring Catholic devotion.

1. **Jesus is condemned to death.** *Befriend the outcast.* Teach your children how to walk away from group ridicule when it's directed at them.
2. **Jesus takes up his cross.** *Don't hide your problems or your pain.* Be honest with your children about your own struggles; encourage them to do the same.
3. **Jesus falls the first time.** *Good people fall, too.* Set a good example by being alert to the gossip you pass on. Prepare your children for the fact that even though they might do their best, sometimes they will fail.
4. **Jesus meets his mother.** *Compassion begins at home.* As Blessed Mother Teresa said, "if you have only one smile to give some days, make sure to save it for your family."
5. **Simon of Cyrene carries the cross of Jesus.** *We learn much from trading places.* Pick up a stack of teen magazines or pay a visit to an online chat room to learn what your child is facing in the world.
6. **Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.** *Small kindnesses mean a lot.* Teach your children the value of "random acts of kindness," noting the ripple effect they create.
7. **Jesus falls the second time.** *When others stumble, offer to help.* Involve your family in service projects, such as collecting food and clothing or volunteering at a local soup kitchen.
8. **Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem.** *Comfort those who mourn.* Help kids reach out to their friends who experience a loss.
9. **Jesus falls the third time.** *When life is hardest, we need to rely on God more.* Don't duck your children's most difficult "Why?" questions. Many times you'll just have to say, "I don't know, honey."
10. **Jesus is stripped of his garments.** *Humans are clothed in dignity, most of all.* Small children need to know that their bodies are sacred, a special gift from God, and that nobody has the right to touch, hurt, or ridicule them.
11. **Jesus is nailed to the cross.** *Forgive those who hurt you.* Forgiveness always helps and heals the forgiver whether the offender admits guilt or not. Attend a parish Reconciliation service as a family so your children see that sin, forgiveness, and reconciliation affect us all.
12. **Jesus dies on the cross.** *We exist for something larger than ourselves.* As news stories filter into your house via newspapers and TV, ask, "What if you were that person's brother or sister or neighbor?" Jesus says we are their brother or sister or neighbor.
13. **Jesus is taken down from the cross.** *Follow up and follow through.* As a family, make a conscious choice to take on a difficult task for others and follow through.
14. **Jesus is laid in the tomb.** *Keep hope alive.* Challenge yourself and your family on your tendencies toward negative thinking. When awaiting something important, lean on each other for support. Keep prayer vigils. Use the rich symbolism of waiting and darkness: Light a family "hope candle" as a vivid reminder to keep your prayers flowing and your hope alive.

Adapted from "At Home With Our Faith"



Palm Sunday Celebrations • Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem to celebrate Passover before his death. Palms are blessed before Mass, so place them in a place of honor in your home. Create a bouquet of palms to use as a centerpiece during Holy Week. Talk with your children about Palm Sunday. Jesus is honored in a special way as he enters the city of Jerusalem because people are beginning to see that he is the Son of God. Ask your children what are some ways to honor Jesus at church and in our daily lives? Adapted from "Take Out"

Teaching Your Children Responsibility

The issue of responsibility is important to family and individual growth. For families to be happy and harmonious, there needs to be a fair distribution of chores. Beginning with preschoolers, all members of a family need to shoulder some share of household responsibility. Parents can help children cooperate in carrying out regular responsible behaviors. For the most part, this means performing tasks on a routine basis that help the whole family. These would include feeding pets, vacuuming, cooking meals, doing dishes, buying groceries, taking out the garbage, and recycling.

Teach through Modeling. Parents teach children responsibility not through their words, but through their behavior. If parents handle their chores responsibly, children are likely to do the same. Modeling also involves demonstrating how various chores are to be done. Children may benefit by watching parents take out the garbage efficiently. A wise parent demonstrates carefully how to change cat litter before assigning that chore to a child.

Don't Make Mountains out of Molehills. Learning responsibility is important as children develop. At certain stages, some irresponsibility is to be expected, however, and the emotional strain that parents direct toward altering nature's course hardly seems worth it. For example, many pre-adolescents (around ages ten, eleven, and twelve) seem to be reluctant to become involved in taking care of their possessions. As a result, their bedrooms resemble a junkyard. In the long run, it may be easier for parents simply to insist that the door to the room remain closed,

rather than constantly harping on the need for clean-up.

Give a Voice, but NOT a Choice. Simple compliance is not the equivalent of responsibility. Although children may go through the motions of completing chores, including making their beds or washing dishes, such overt responsibility in and of itself may not positively influence the development of self-discipline. Merely keeping one's room neat and doing assigned chores doesn't assure responsible decisions in other areas. Responsibility is not innate, nor is it automatically acquired at the age of reason. Like any other skill, it's acquired over long years of practice.

Assign Age-Appropriate Chores. When a child requests a particular privilege, parents often give in after a certain amount of nagging, feeling that they've somehow come out the victor because they've demanded that the child take on responsibility for a new privilege. Keep the child's developmental level in perspective when assigning responsibilities.

Allow Failure. Oftentimes, children will complete a task or chore in a way that doesn't come up to the standards of the parents. When teaching responsibility, make sure children are reinforced for following through with the task. But, if the task is not done perfectly, the child needs to be allowed to fail and perhaps try again. What is important is that they are doing the task—not that it is done in a perfect way.

Adapted from Peaceful Parenting



Hidden Surprise Easter Egg Treats *(Give these Easter egg-shaped goodies a shake to hear the tasty surprise inside—M&M'S candies!)*

Ingredients: 3 tablespoons butter or margarine (diet is not recommended).

#1 package (10 oz., about 40) regular marshmallows or 4 cups miniature marshmallows, 6 cups Kellogg's Rice Krispies cereal, 1/2 cup M&M'S Easter colored chocolate candies, 12 plastic snap-apart 3x2 in. Easter eggs. **Instructions:**

1. Clean, then coat inside of plastic eggs with cooking spray. Set aside. 2. In large saucepan, melt butter over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Remove from heat. 3. Add Kellogg's Rice Krispies cereal. Stir until well coated. 4. Using greased hand, firmly press 1/4 cup of Rice Krispies mixture into both halves of each plastic egg. Use fingers to make hollow center in each half. Remove from molds. Place on wax paper. Cool slightly. 5. Place about 6 M&M'S candies in one half of each egg. Gently press two halves of each egg together until they stick. Cool completely. (Makes 12 eggs)

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**Catholic Parent
Newsletter**

Place your parish logo,
and/or contact person
information here!

Heavenly Father,

**Thank you for the gift of HOPE you gave us on Easter morning.
Because of You we know that no problem is too difficult
And even death does not have power over us.**

**Thank you for the gift of JOY You gave us when You were resurrected.
Because of You we know that no matter how challenging life may be,
In the end we will rejoice again.**

**Thank you for the gift of LOVE You gave us when You laid down Your life.
Because of You we know that there is no sin too great to separate us
And we know how much You love us.**

**Thank you for the gift of LIFE You gave us when You left the tomb.
Because of Easter we know this world is just the beginning
And we will spend forever in heaven with You.**

**We celebrate You, Jesus, with hearts full of praise and gratitude
For who You are and all You've done for us.**

Amen.