

Thoughtful Moments

Resolutions

The New Year is a good time to set resolutions that will help us grow in character. Even young children can form resolutions that will help them improve. The key is to pick age-appropriate resolutions they can actually accomplish. A good rule of thumb is, the younger the child the fewer the resolutions.



Make it last

Don't take the Christmas tree down just yet. The retail Christmas season starts so early that by the time December 25th comes, we are ready to stuff the decorations away for another year. But for the Church, the Christmas season starts on the 25th and goes until January 9th, the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, the true end of the Christmas Season.

Parents' advice

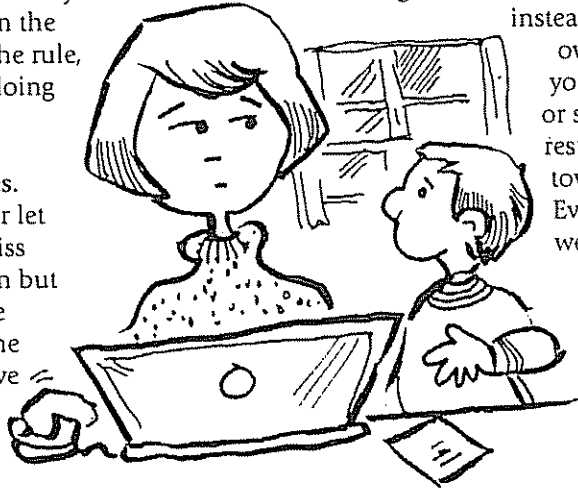
"Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching; graceful diadem will they be for your head; a pendant for your neck" (Proverbs 1:8-9).



Are you teaching your children to sin?

Sounds like a silly question, doesn't it? No Christian parent would teach a child to sin. But, if whether or not you follow God's rules yourself depends upon the situation or the rule, you may be doing just that. For example:

"White" lies. Have you ever let your child miss school for fun but sent in a note saying that she was sick? Have you dodged a phone call by saying, "tell him I'm not home!"? Have you snuck extra items on the express grocery line? If so, you demonstrated that it's okay to break God's law about telling the truth. How can children tell when to stop?



"Thou shall steal?" Do you download copyrighted movies and music without paying? Do you tap into a neighbor's internet or cable service

instead of buying your own? Do you help yourself to napkins or silverware from restaurants or take towels from hotels? Even if the victim is wealthy, you are breaking God's law against stealing.

Do as I do. To our children, what we do is more powerful than what we say. *"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea"* (Matthew 18:6).

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why are there statues and images in our churches?

In the early days of the Church, many of the faithful couldn't read or write. Images, icons, and statues in our churches served as teaching tools and spiritual aids.

Today, images of the Crucifix remind us of Jesus' sacrifice and



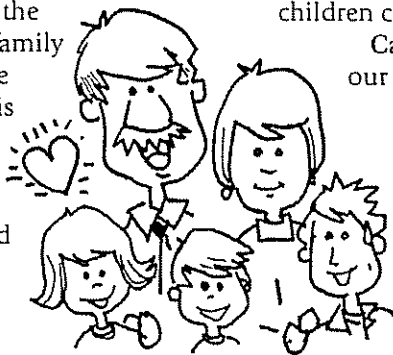
Resurrection. Statues of Mary and the saints recall their heroism and remind us of what we can become. These tools call us to better efforts at holiness, and urge us to ask God for the grace to keep trying for saintliness.

Catholic families shine with love

Pope Benedict recently said that just like the Catholic Church as a whole, the Catholic family is called to “welcome, radiate and show the world the love and presence of Christ.” This love is evident when we:

Care for and educate our children. And studies have shown that youth who feel loved and cared for are more likely to avoid risky behavior like indulging in drugs, alcohol, and sexual activity.

Care for the poor. Families that make a regular practice of helping the poor teach



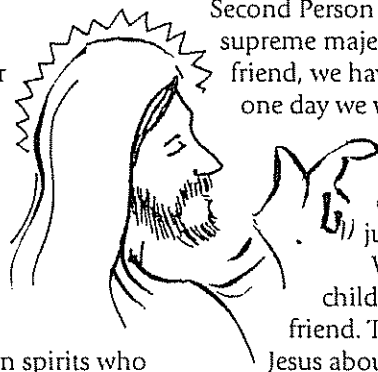
children compassion, empathy, and love of neighbor. Care for our local parish. Without each of us, our parishes can't pay bills, perform necessary ministries or do God's work. Becoming active in and supporting the parish at a young age helps build a child's Catholic identity, and that helps to “radiate” the presence of Christ as an adult.

Strike a balance between work and play. Work is important, but it is often during the family time when we make loving memories that will last a lifetime.

Scripture LESSON

Mark 1:21-28, My Buddy or My God?

This Gospel describes Jesus and his apostles entering the synagogue at Capernaum. Jesus taught those gathered for the Sabbath. Most teachers or prophets would have said, “Thus says the Lord...” But Jesus said something like, “I tell you...” He taught as one who had the authority of God and that astonished his listeners. Even the unclean spirits who tortured a man at the synagogue recognized who Jesus was.



treat Jesus as a buddy and he wants us to trust and rely on him. But as the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus has supreme majesty. While he is our friend, we have to remember that one day we will appear before him on bended knee. He is our divine savior, not just our buddy. We can explain to our children that Jesus is our friend. Teach children to talk to Jesus about anything that happens, good or bad. At the same time, stress that Jesus is God and deserves to be worshipped and adored.

Feasts & Celebrations

In January we celebrate the Holy Name of Jesus. “...At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Philippians 2:10).

January 1 – Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. When we celebrate this feast, we honor Mary, but also Jesus as God.

January 24 - St. Francis de Sales (1622). As bishop of Geneva, St. Francis bolstered the faith of others by his writings and works. For the laity, St. Francis wrote Introduction to the Devout Life, which is as applicable today as it was in his day.

January 26 – Sts. Timothy and Titus (1st century) Timothy was converted by St. Paul and later became his trusted friend joining him in apostolic work. He was with Paul at the founding of the Church in Corinth. Titus, also a friend of St. Paul's, served the early Church as a peacemaker and as administrator to a community on Crete.



Parent TALK

Jeff's job was in jeopardy and we were both worried. We thought we were hiding our concern until I got a call from our third-grader's teacher.



Mrs. Conboy said that Leslie was becoming argumentative, bossing other students around, and even told Mrs.

Conboy that she wished she would be “more proactive,” something I had said to Jeff just a few nights before. Mrs. Conboy chuckled, but I didn't find it funny. We obviously weren't doing a good job of hiding our tension and Leslie was mimicking my behavior.

Before dinner that night, we prayed a family Rosary and talked with the children. We also acknowledged that we have been worried about Jeff's job but also said we knew that God would take care of us. We promised to pray more and worry less.

The atmosphere in the house got lighter and I didn't get any more phone calls from school.

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