

# Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

October 2009



## Thoughtful Moments

### Mass

Living a Christian life is not supported by our society today. Our children will have many opportunities to stray from living their faith. Gathering for the Eucharist every weekend is a way we strengthen our children to help them live a Christian life.

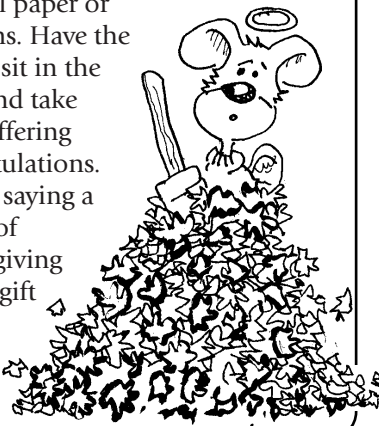


### Swaperoo

Try swapping places at the dinner or breakfast table for a change of view. Throughout the meal, act like the person whose position you took. It'll be fun to see what life looks like from a different perspective.

### The Honor Chair

When someone in the family has a reason to be celebrated, set aside a place of honor at the dinner table or in the family room. Designate a special chair and drape it with colorful paper or balloons. Have the person sit in the chair and take turns offering congratulations. End by saying a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of your family.

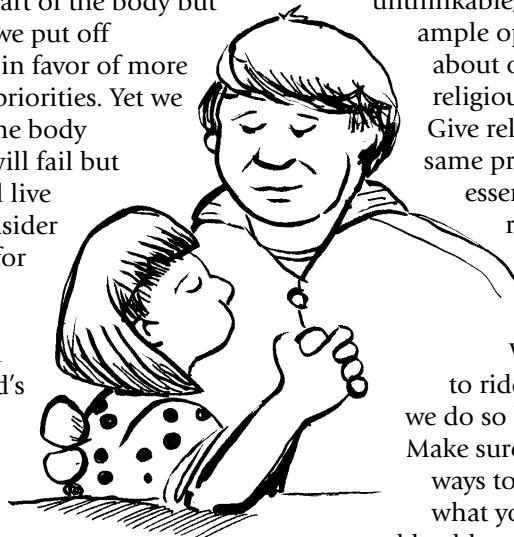


## Care for the most important part of your child

As Catholic parents, we know that our child's soul is the most important part of the body but sometimes we put off nurturing it in favor of more immediate priorities. Yet we know that the body eventually will fail but the soul will live forever. Consider these ideas for raising a strong, healthy soul in your child's body:

**Feed the soul like you would the body.**

Spiritual nourishment can come from attending Mass every weekend, receiving the Sacraments, and encouraging a regular prayer habit. Encourage prayer as a family, too.



**Educate the soul.** Denying a child a proper academic education is unthinkable, so make sure to provide ample opportunities to learn about our faith through religious education programs. Give religious education class the same priority as any other essential subject. Periodically review the homework, check on progress, and don't let him miss class.

**Show by example.**

When we teach our child to ride a bike or tie his shoe, we do so by showing him how. Make sure to also show your child ways to live the faith. Discuss what you do to keep your own soul healthy and strong.

**Daily exercise is key.** We only get better by practice. Make sure your child practices her faith every day. Prayer and service to others are two easy ways to start.

## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why do Catholics have animals blessed in October?

This custom is observed in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, whose feast day is October 4th. This great saint saw himself as a brother to all creation.

St. Francis is credited with the first Christmas crèche because

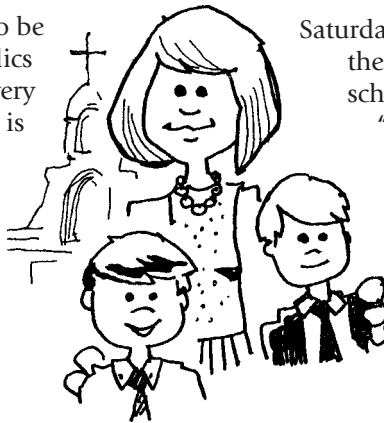


he believed all of creation should be involved in the celebration of Christmas. One story about him says that he once preached to a flock of birds that remained completely still until he gave them a blessing and urged them to go forth and proclaim God's glory.

## Don't be too busy for Mass every weekend

Studies show that the best way for parents to be sure their children will remain faithful Catholics when they grow up is to take them to Mass every weekend. That's how children learn that Jesus is there for them now and always. If you have trouble getting your family to Mass every weekend, consider this:

*"Weekends are a busy time for our family."* Schedule Mass on the calendar the way you would an important soccer game or dance performance. There are many different Mass times at different parishes, including



Saturday vigils and Sunday nights. Think of Mass the way you do a favorite television show and schedule it in.

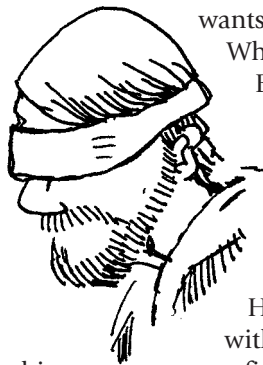
*"My children go to religious education class. Isn't that enough?"* Giving children a firm grounding in the faith is very important but without taking them to Mass every Sunday, it's like serving them a steak dinner that's missing the steak. Jesus is present, body and blood, every Sunday in your church. Don't miss the chance to bring your children there, too.

### Scripture LESSON

### Mark 10:46-52, a blind man shows the way

A blind beggar saw Jesus more clearly than the followers who were his companions. Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was near and cried out, "Son of David," a title reserved for the Messiah. Although people tried to quiet him, Bartimaeus persisted and Jesus finally noticed him and had his disciples call him over.

Bartimaeus responded by casting aside his cloak and rushing to Jesus. Even the little he had was thrown aside. The only person in Mark's gospel to call Jesus, "Master," Bartimaeus stood before Jesus humble and confident



that his prayer would be answered. It is this profound trust that Jesus wants to elicit from the crowd.

When his prayer was answered, Bartimaeus followed Jesus as his disciple.

*What can a parent do?* Sometimes difficulties of being

Christian can blind us to the joys of following Jesus.

Help children approach Jesus with excitement and confidence. When we trust him as Bartimaeus did, we become true disciples who can tackle the difficult task of leading others down the road to God.

### Parent TALK

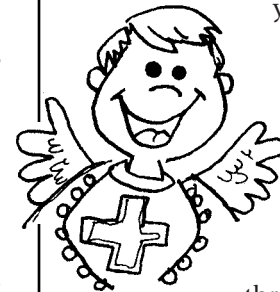
It always bugs me that All Saints Day gets overshadowed by Halloween. Last year, I thought of a way to combine them. I challenged my son to bypass the superheroes and instead portray his favorite saint.

After scouring through books, Joshua decided on St. Michael. When we read how he led the angels in the great battle against Satan, Joshua was proud to dress as someone still protecting us today.

We found a cool warrior costume and put a cross on the chest. We made wings and a spear from cardboard we painted silver. It was perfect.

As we went door-to-door, neighbors asked him what character he was dressed as and Joshua beamed as he replied, "St. Michael the Archangel."

Not only did Joshua get more candy that night, he made quite an impression on the neighbors. After all, it's not every day you're in the company of an angel.



### Feasts & Celebrations

**Oct. 7 - Our Lady of the Rosary (1571).** Pope Pius V created this feast to thank Our Lady of Victory who helped the Christians defeat the Ottoman Turks. The feast was renamed Our Lady of the Rosary by Pope Gregory XIII.

**Oct. 15 - St. Teresa of Avila (1583).** Founder of a strict religious order whose nuns wore rough brown habits and sandals instead of shoes. St. Teresa founded more than 17 convents of Discalced Carmelites and helped reform the Carmelite friars.

**Oct. 18 - St. Luke (1st century).** St. Luke was a Christian physician from

Antioch who wrote two books of the Bible. His Gospel and Acts of the Apostles were probably written between 70 and 85 A.D.

**Oct. 28 - Saint Simon and Saint Jude (1st century).** St. Simon was a Zealot who once expected the Messiah to be a political leader. St. Jude was a fisherman. After being called by Jesus as apostles, they evangelized until they were martyred in Persia.



### Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
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