

Tips for Helping Your Child Grow in Faith

Young children imitate the behavior of the most important adults in their lives – their parents. They learn much from how you speak and act in their presence. The same is true as your child begins to take their first steps in faith. Everything they learn is filtered through the example you set.

There are so many activities that can help your child to grow in faith and appreciate God's presence and love in all of life. Below are a few activities that families can enjoy together:

- ❖ Place your faith in God at the center of your family life. Participate frequently in your parish's liturgical celebrations. Sit close to the altar so your child can see everything clearly. Encourage your child to sing, respond, and imitate the actions of the assembly as much as possible.
- ❖ Attend parish family events, such as parish picnics, potlucks, and fairs, the blessing of pets on the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Christmas pageant and other seasonal activities. These activities will help your child feel connected to parish life and begin to recognize the parish as their Church home.
- ❖ Explore the beautiful world God gave us with family nature walks at different times of the year. Stimulate your child's awareness of nature through a sense-experience of creation: smelling newly mowed grass, forming a snowball, or looking at clouds.
- ❖ Visit the parish during a quiet weekday to walk through the Church together, pointing out the statues, identifying sacred objects, such as the baptismal font, the altar, the tabernacle, the ambo, the crucifix, and so on.
- ❖ Find regular opportunities to serve others. Making a card for a sick neighbor or collecting for a needy family will help your child understand that God calls us to show our love and care for others in many different ways.

Every time you speak with your child about God, you affirm in them the powerful influence of God in their lives. As life in any family goes, you will have an abundance of opportunities to do this, both formally and informally. Be lavish in showing love for your child. Forgive your child whole-heartily when they express sorrow for misbehavior and affirm your child's effort to share with and show care for others. In these ways, your child will come to know God and God's love as they continue to grow in faith.