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Thoughtful Moments

A good friend

Friendship skills aren't natural to everyone. One has to be a good friend to attract good friends. By being a good friend, we can share God's love with others. Some examples include: inviting a friend to play, smiling and waving "hello," listening when the friend talks, saving a seat at the lunch table.



Thou shall not kill

The Fifth Commandment teaches us to respect life. One way to live the Commandment is to avoid watching television shows or movies about murder and to refuse to allow children to play violent video games.

Pick a prayer

Learning new prayers can help enliven a family prayer life. Choose a time of day when the whole family is together and pick a prayer you may not know or don't say often and practice it for a week. For ideas, consult Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org).



Summer time means family time

Summer's slower pace can bring more time together as a family. Plan ahead to make memories this summer and put more faith practices into your family fun, too. Here are some ideas:

Play outside. One of the ways we learn about God is through His creation. Spend time outside this summer giving children a chance to explore the natural environment.

Create a sacred space. Set aside a space at home dedicated to family prayer. For example, decorate a corner in the living room with your favorite icons and candles. Add a statue of Christ and your favorite saint and come together for a Rosary.

Rosaries for Troops. Men and women in harm's way appreciate

handmade Rosaries that meet criteria for those serving in hostile areas. Make this a family project. This website can show you how:

<http://www.seatofwisdom.net/rosary.htm>.

Joyful Noise Night. Children of Christ have much to celebrate.

Designate one night a week as Joyful Noise Night and ask each person to bring to the table one joke, cartoon, comic or funny story. Outlaw glum faces for the entire evening.

Every Sunday Holiday.

Make every summer Sunday a family holiday. Attend Mass together and then take a hike at a local park, go out for lunch, visit with friends or relatives. (Note: to locate a Mass while on vacation, go to: www.parishesonline.com.)



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Relics are the remains or personal possessions of a saint – ordinary people, like us, transformed by God's grace. When we venerate their relics, we honor the saints as models of holiness and can ask them to pray for us. Occasionally,

Why do Catholics venerate relics?

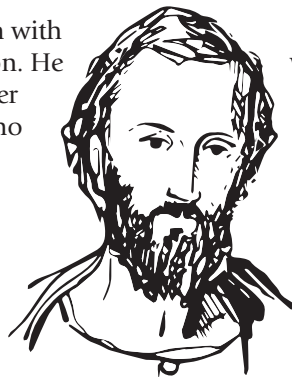
miracles happen as a result, but it is by God's power. The relics of themselves have no special properties. If one's faith in God is renewed or someone experiences a conversion of heart, then those are miracles in themselves.



The ultimate earthly father

Scripture doesn't report that St. Joseph was born with special graces, yet he was chosen to raise God's Son. He may not have had the gift of prophecy, yet he never doubted God's word. He was an ordinary man who lived an extraordinary life.

Ever faithful. As a faithful Jew with knowledge of Scripture, Joseph knew that God sometimes sent instructions through angels. That's why he was open to being guided by an angel in a dream. So Joseph's devotion to God's Word helped him follow God's will.



Steady provider. Joseph left everything to flee with his family to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15). He kept them safe until the angel said to move back (Matthew 2:20-23). Joseph's hard work and skill helped provide for his family in a foreign land.

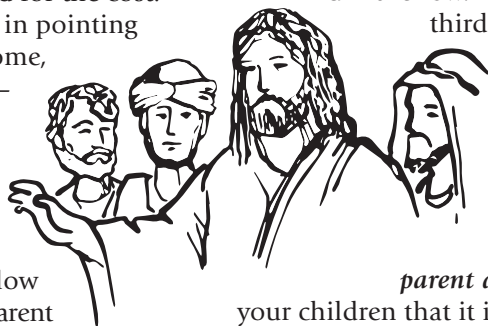
Good man. Scripture said that St. Joseph lived a virtuous life (Matthew 1:19). We also know he was compassionate in his treatment of Mary. Who better to raise the Son of God and care for His Mother than the ultimate earthly father?

Scripture LESSON

Luke 9:51-62, What does it take to be a disciple?

In this Gospel reading, the first man enthusiastically offered to follow Jesus but he wasn't prepared for the cost. Jesus was unflinching in pointing out that He has no home, no shelter, no family – none of the things people normally consider important for a happy life.

It may not always be comfortable to follow Jesus. Burying one's parent was considered a binding religious duty among the Jews, so the second man wanted to fulfill that duty before setting out with Jesus. Jesus' answer pointed out the importance of action when He says it is time to move. In



the third story, Jesus points out that looking back while plowing can ruin the row. He wanted the third man to

understand that we need to have a singleness of purpose to be His disciple.

What can a parent do? Remind

your children that it isn't always easy to be a follower of Jesus. There are things we have to give up and comforts we may have to sacrifice. But He promises us that the rewards will be unimaginable and worth more than the costs.

Parent TALK

My old discipline tools aren't working so well anymore. My girls aren't bad but when they make bad choices, "go to your room" isn't enough.



So I set up a card table in the family room, invested in a few Catholic reference books, such as

Butler's Lives of the

Saints and some drawing and writing materials. When the girls need "redirecting," I now assign short reports, projects, or essays depending upon the misdeed.

When Tessa "forgot" to give me back the change from her lunch money, I assigned a three-paragraph report on St. Nicholas who gave away his money to the poor. When Kara took a test without studying for it, I had her illustrate a comic book about St. Catherine of Alexandria who is said to have converted 50 pagan philosophers using her wisdom and knowledge.

Partnering with saints to raise my children makes more sense than giving time-outs.

Feasts & Celebrations

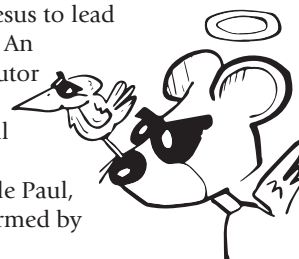
June 5 – The Feast of Pentecost. Today, we celebrate the birthday of the Church, when the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles, following the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus.

June 8 – St. William of York (1154). St. William was born into a noble English family. Even when political opponents slandered him, St. William was never bitter or resentful. He died less than two months after his consecration, probably poisoned.

June 15 – St. Germain Cousin (1601). Born in France, St. Germain lost her

mother at infancy and was mistreated by her stepmother. She became a shepherdess, known for her simple, yet profound faith. She attended Mass daily, leaving her flock in God's care.

June 29 – Sts. Peter and Paul (1st century). Peter, an ordinary fisherman made extraordinary by God's grace, was chosen by Jesus to lead the Church. An early persecutor of the Church, Saul became the Great Apostle Paul, also transformed by grace.



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