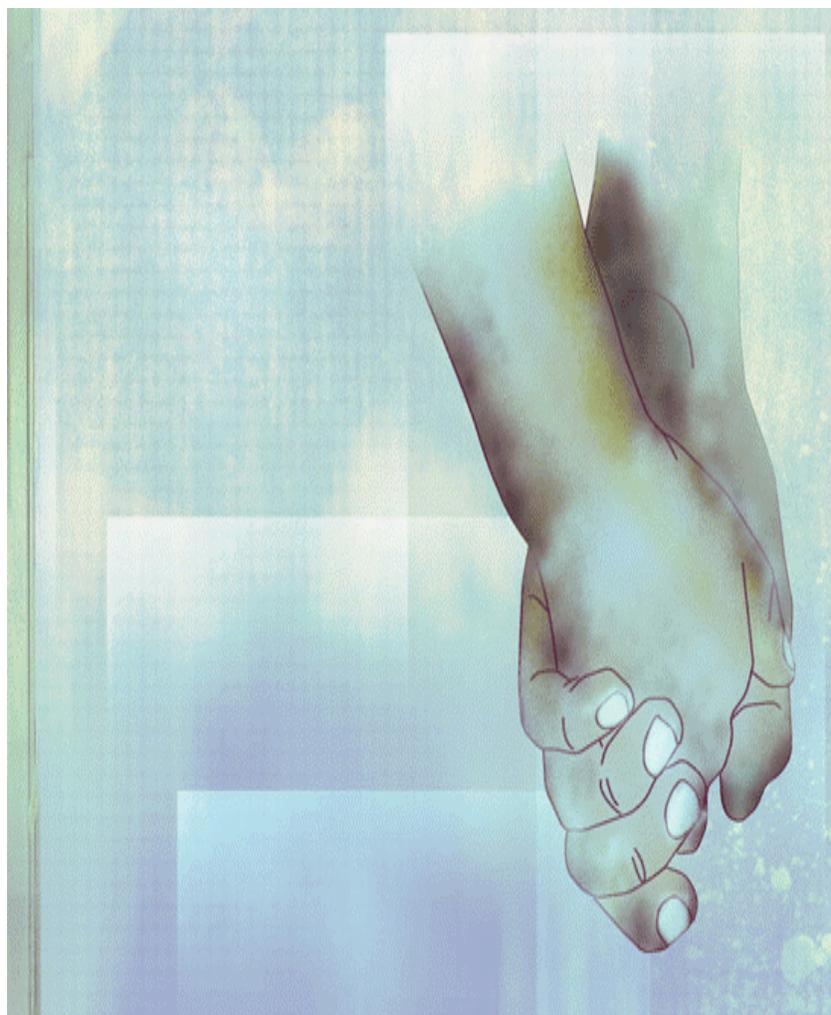


Parent Orientation for Parents New to the Catholic School and to the Religious Education Program



Welcome and Orientation (5/10 minutes)

The leader welcomes the participants (if the group isn't too large have the participants introduce themselves to the group) and provides a focus for the session. The following quotes from the National Directory for Catechesis (NDC) and Bishop Saltarelli's pastoral letter on catechesis may be used as part of the introductory remarks. Be positive and supportive. These parents have chosen to bring their child to a Catholic School or to a parish religious education program.

You can find a powerpoint to accompany this presentation on the Family Page at www.cdow.org/reledfamily.html

Parents are the most influential agents of catechesis for their children. They have a unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators of their children. (NDC, 54C)

They catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives and by their love for the faith. (NDC, 54C) (You may point out that when we love someone we want to be around that person as much as possible and so it is with the Lord and the Lord's community)

*I have quoted the General Directory as saying that "catechesis is more than instruction, it is an apprenticeship in the Christian life." The word apprentice comes from a Latin root meaning "to learn." There are many ways "to learn" what it means to be Catholic, but none more important or more complete than participation in the Sunday Eucharist. "Catechesis both precedes the Liturgy and springs from it." (NDC 33) Pope John Paul II said, "I therefore wish to insist that sharing in the Eucharist should really be the heart of Sunday for every baptized person. It is a fundamental duty, to be fulfilled not just in order to observe a precept, but as something felt as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life." I ask you to examine your participation in the Sunday Eucharist, "the source and summit of Christian life." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 10) Do you participate actively, consciously and fully? (SC 14) Parents, I urge you to come with your children to the Table of the Lord every week.*

(from Bishop Saltarelli's pastoral letter on Catechesis)

Be sure to emphasize that it is a partnership among the parish, the school/religious education program and the family that will nourish a strong faith.

If for whatever reason, they have not been as active in nurturing their faith in recent years this is a good time to make a recommitment. You may want to use this quote from Mother Teresa, "God does not want us to be perfect, but to be faithful."

At the end of the introduction, pose this question to the group: "What do you think are the most important things a Catholic family needs to do in order to pass on the faith to their children?" (You may want to write them

down on newsprint, or project them as part of a powerpoint slide, or just go around the room and get a sampling. This should not be a long exercise.)

Present the Four Things We want the parents to do. You may use powerpoint slides #2

What do Catholic parents who want to nurture the faith life of their children and live up to their baptismal promises do?

1. They and their children participate in the weekly Eucharist.
2. They pray with their children and they teach them to pray
3. They provide a home that encourages the formation of a Catholic Christian imagination
4. They show their children that service in the name of Jesus is central to the Christian life.

I. Participate in the Eucharist on a weekly basis....(15 minutes)

There is no greater gift you can give your child(ren) than a deep love of the Eucharist. Regular participation in the Eucharist is at the heart of the Catholic faith.

“It is the source and summit of all Christian life. In the Eucharist, the sanctifying action of God in our regard and our worship of him reach their high point.” (Compendium, #274)

We ask you parents: slide #3

1. to witness to the importance of participation in the Eucharist by your own presence and participation (You cannot give what you do not have) in the Eucharistic celebration of the community.
2. To teach your child the prayers and gestures of the people in the Eucharist (You may want to show a portion of one of these)

DVD A Walk Through the Mass Saint Anthony Messenger Press \$19.95

Father Thomas Richstatter, O.F.M., explores the meaning of the Mass and takes a step-by-step look at the four principal parts of the Mass. Also features "Bread That Remembers," a parable of two brothers who become estranged and later reconcile. Music Video: "The Song of the Body of Christ."

DVD The Mass for Children and Young People Saint Anthony Messenger Press \$19.95
THE MASS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Gaynell Cronin and Jack Rathschmidt, O.F.M. Cap.

This collection of four programs focuses on the Eucharist as an integral part of our lives and spirituality as Catholics.

The Mass for Older Children (Grades 4-8) Like the early followers of Jesus, we gather, tell stories, remember and break bread, and go forth to those in need. This program walks students through the Mass and challenges them to live it in their daily lives. (13 min.)

Mass for Young Children (Grades 1-3) By linking home church and parish church, these two programs invite children to thank God for the gift of Jesus and the gifts of all creation, spotlighting parts of the Mass to which a young child can most easily relate and recognize. **Part 1** (9 min.) focuses on the actions of Gathering and Greeting, Forgiving and Praising, Listening and Caring. **Part 2** (10 min.) focuses on the actions of Giving and Sharing, Remembering and Belonging, Receiving and Serving.

Why Do We Go to Mass on Sunday? (Grades 2-6) In this program, children discover that just as we need to gather regularly as a family at home to listen to one another and celebrate who we are, so must we come together as a parish family to listen to God's Word and break bread in memory of Jesus. Children begin to appreciate the Sunday Eucharist as the source and summit of our faith life and to discover ways to live a eucharistic spirituality

in their daily lives. (12 min.)

Total running time is approximately 44 min.
(Or you may have another DVD that you prefer)

3. To commit to bringing your child to the weekly Eucharist.
Catholic Parent Know-How: Why Do We Have to Go to Mass? \$1.95 OSV
This small pamphlet from Our Sunday Visitor contains tips for parents who have to answer this question from their children.
(You may want to order these and have them in the parent's packet)

(Discussion around these three points. Slide #4 Have them group with their neighbor on the right and have them discuss one of the following questions:

- 1. Of these three requests, what do you think parents will find most difficult to fulfill? Why?**
- 2. In what ways can the parish community help parents fulfill these three requests? Or what would be the best ways for the parish to help the parents fulfill these three requests?**

After five minutes go around the room and solicit some of the answers from the discussion. Be sure everyone can hear the responses. You may want to have someone record them on newsprint.

II. Pray with their children and teach them to pray (10 minutes)

We ask parents: Slide #5

1. To witness to the importance of prayer by praying with their child(ren)
2. To teach their children the responses to the Eucharistic prayers
3. To teach their children the following additional prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before Meals, Prayers of Thanksgiving, Night Prayer.
 - Hand out the list of resources for teaching the responses to the Eucharist.**
 - Hand out the list of prayers, and suggestioned resources for teaching the prayers**
My First Prayer Booklet Joan Ensor & Paul Plum OSV \$2.95
This collection of simple yet meaningful prayers is perfect for children who are learning to pray. Colorful illustrations reflect each prayer's intention, making **Thank You, God!** perfect for even the youngest child.

See elementary curriculum for Grade 1 .
http://www.cdo.org/Outcomes_Grade_1.pdf
 - page 6 of the diocesan curriculum lists prayers to be memorized in first grade and is a good source for an introduction to this part of the program. You may want to copy it and distribute it. All of the prayers are printed in the appendix to the curriculum: http://www.cdo.org/Prayers-Appendix_1.pdf You may want to give this URL to the parents.**

- Discuss One or more of these questions in groups of three give each group if time permits, otherwise:** Slide #6
 1. What are some creative ways for us to teach our children to pray?
 2. What are the best times to pray with our children
 3. What are the advantages of memorizing prayers or praying spontaneously?
- Solicit answers from the groups**

III. Provide a home that encourages a Catholic Christian Imagination (10 minutes)

We ask parents: Slide #7

To provide a home that is visually a Catholic home. Why, because it is important in forming a Catholic imagination. Andrew Greeley says this about the Catholic imagination:

- “the willingness to risk stories about angels and saints and Mary, the Mother of Jesus—
- to risk stained glass windows and statues and stations of the cross and rosaries and medals and rituals that mark the passing of the year
- Acquired early in life
- tenacious

Take a visual inventory of your home. **Pass out the handout with the inventory? Give the parents five minutes or so to review the questions?**

Are there any visual clues that your family is a Catholic family?

- Do you have any crucifixes in your home?
- Images of the Saints or the Blessed Mother?
- Are there any scripture quotes adorning any walls?
- Is there an image of the Last Supper in your kitchen or dining room to link your meals with the Eucharistic banquet?
- A picture of the Holy Father?
- Other images to provoke the religious imagination?
- Rosaries and Medals?
- Is there a copy (well worn!) of the Scriptures in some prominent place?
- Are there DVD's of bible stories for the children in your home?

The Storykeepers" 4 DVD Set \$140

This is an animated video series created for children that tells the story of Ben the baker, and his wife Helena, who are Christians in Rome at the time of the Neronian persecutions (64 A.D.). Ben and Helena have adopted four children whose parents were lost during the fires set by Emperor Nero. The hope-giving stories and parables of Jesus are told in the course of their exciting adventures, including the passion narrative from the Gospel of Mark.

<http://www.storykeepers.com/usa.html>

Animated Bible Classics 8DVD Set 99.00

These animated classic bible stories can be purchased separately or as a group.

http://www.christianedwarehouse.com/cep/showdetl.cfm?&DID=6&Product_ID=15487&CATID=34

your child's religious imagination.

- Are there any children's bible storybooks in our home?

There are numerous children's books with the Bible stories available through Amazon, or you local religious goods store. There are also some bible stories in your child's religion textbook. Our diocesan curriculum also includes bible stories we hope each child will know by the end of first grade. http://www.cdow.org/Outcomes_Grade_1.pdf pg. 8

Questions for Discussion Slide #8 **Depending on how much time you have remaining, you may just want to go around the group and solicit some responses to the first two and then ask them to turn to a neighbor and come up with two things they would like to do in their homes to support the Catholic imagination of their families**

1. What is your initial reaction to this inventory?
2. Do you have any fond memories of a religious image from your childhood?
3. What can you do in your own home?

IV. Service in the name of Jesus is central to the Catholic faith? (10 minutes)

We ask parents Slide #9

1. To witness to their children by their own service its importance to living the Catholic life.

Ask them to think about what services in the name of Jesus they currently provide (this is a private examen)

Develop a list of all service opportunities through the parish or school that you can pass out.

2. To introduce their children to service in the name of Jesus
“The spiritual and corporal works of mercy and the many charitable institutions formed throughout the centuries are a concrete witness to the preferential love for the poor which characterizes the disciples of Jesus.” (Compendium, #520)

Process: Slide #10

- Have them turn to their neighbors and ask them to come up with three ways that they can introduce their children to service in the name of Jesus? Write on poster paper**
- Ask the question, “Why do you think we insist on including that it is “service in the name of Jesus”?**

V. Closing: (5 minutes) Slide #11

A Blessing of the Parents & Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Leader: Dear Parents/Guardians, Several years ago you brought your sons and daughters to the door of the Church and the priest or deacon addressed you and said,
“You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor”

I ask you now to renew your promises made at the baptism of your child? (Pause)

Will you continue to nurture the faith of your son or daughter?

At baptism, you traced the sign of the cross on the forehead of your child?

Will you do what you can to see that the sign of the cross is present in your home?

At baptism, your child was given a white garment as a sign that they have become a new creation and clothed themselves in Christ?

Will you teach them the ways of service in the name of the Lord?

At baptism you were given a lighted candle and asked to help your son or daughter “walk always as children of the light.”

Will you teach them to listen and speak with God in prayer?

Prayer Blessing

God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless these mothers, fathers and guardians of our children. They are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. May they be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus Our Lord.

Amen.

Handout 1

Resources for Parents

Campbell, James. *52 Simple Ways to Share Faith With Your Kids About Faith*. Loyola Press: Chicago.

Dunlap, Judith. *Bringing Home the Gospel*. St. Anthony Messenger: Cincinnati. 2008

Ensor Plum, Joan and Paul. *My First Book of Prayers*. Our Sunday Visitor: Huntington 1999

Everyday Catholic—a monthly newsletter for Catholic Families from St. Anthony Messenger Press

Hayes, Edward. *Prayers for the Domestic Church: A Handbook for Worship in the Home*. Forest of Peace: Notre Dame. 2007

Lahr, Maureen & Pfitzinger, Julie. *Keep Talking: Daily Conversation Starters for the Family Meal*. Liguori Publications: Liguori. 2009

Roberto, John (editor) *Living Well: Christian Practices for Everyday Life*, Lifelong Faith Associates: N augatuck. 2009

McGrath, Michael. *Patrons & Protectors* (3 volumes). Liturgy Training Press: Chicago.

McGrath, Tom. “Mealtime Matters” A pamphlet from Loyola Press stressing the importance of mealtimes and with helpful suggestions. www.loyolabooks.org/mealtime

Merhaut, Jim. *Your Catholic Family: Simple Ways to Share Faith at Home*. St. Anthony Messenger: Cincinnati. 2006

Take Out: Family Faith on the Go. A monthly mini magazine filled with ideas for helping parents in their role as first catechists. Our Sunday Visitor www.osv.com

Thigpen, Paul and Leisa. *Building Catholic Family Traditions*. Our Sunday Visitor: Huntington.

Visit the website of your child’s textbook series for great ideas, information and direction. www.sadlier.com; www.harcourtreligion.com; www.rclbenzinger.com; www.loyolapress.com

Christian Music for Children:

Each textbook publisher has a CD of music to go along with the lessons. You can obtain the CD by going on line. See the sites listed above.

Oregon Catholic Press is one of the largest publishers of Catholic Church Music. They have numerous cd’s of children’s music. <http://www.ocp.org/products/keyword/Children>

Evangelio Segun los Ninos. CD’s Vols. 1 &2. Mariano Fuertes has produced two Spanish language CDs bringing alive the characters of Scripture.. www.jspaluch.com World Library Publications.

Handout 1A
Resources for Teaching Children About the Liturgy

Gotier, R and D. Piscitelli. *The Mass Book for Children*. Our Sunday Visitor. Huntington 2004. \$6.95

Here's a delightful way to introduce your little ones to Jesus in the Eucharist. With its captivating writing style and charming art, **The Mass Book for Children** not only teaches young children the parts of the Mass but also shows them why joining in the joyful gathering is an experience of love. For children preschool to 9 years old.

Plum, Joan Elsenor & Paul. *Teach Me About the Mass*. Our Sunday Visitor; Huntington 1999. \$4.95

Part of a series designed to help children explore their world and their relationship with God in a story format, this colorful, fun book will provide parents with a resource for introducing young children to our celebration of the Eucharist and for explaining various parts of the Mass in terms a child can understand.

Teach Me About the Mass is adapted for a young child's level of understanding and experience. It's packed with activities and discussion ideas for children ages 3 to 7.

Leichner, Jeanine. *Joy, Joy the Mass, Our Family Celebration*. Our Sunday Visitor: Huntington. 1978 \$5.95

Takes children through the whole Mass step by step, explaining each part in a simple and inviting way. For classroom or home use, this book helps children understand why the Church does what it does. Each page introduces one simple idea, illustrated by a line drawing that children can color, and always leaving room for children to participate by filling in the blanks or offering their own ideas. Extensive notes for parents and teachers explain the object of each page, suggesting ways to go beyond the lesson and integrate the ideas into the children's own thinking.

Moore, Gerard. *We Learn about Mass*. Liturgy Training Publications: Chicago. \$3.95

This resource is for use with second, third, fourth, and fifth graders preparing for their first Holy Communion or Christian initiation. The perfect supplement to any diocesan approved religious education text book, it is also a helpful resource for parents looking for ways to discuss and guide their child through the liturgy.

Handout 2 Cultivating the Catholic Imagination

Take an Imaginary Walk Through Your Home. What Do You See?

- Do you have any crucifixes in your home? Where?
- Images of the Saints or the Blessed Mother? A shrine?
- Are there any scripture quotes adorning any walls?
- Is there an image of the Last Supper in your kitchen or dining room to link your family meals with the Eucharistic banquet?
- Images of your children's name saints if available?
- A picture of the Holy Father?
- Other images to provoke the religious imagination?
- Is there a copy (well worn!) of the Scriptures in some prominent place?
- Are there DVD's of bible stories for the children in your home?
The Storykeepers" 4 DVD Set \$140

This is an animated video series created for children that tells the story of Ben the baker, and his wife Helena, who are Christians in Rome at the time of the Neronian persecutions (64 A.D.). Ben and Helena have adopted four children whose parents were lost during the fires set by Emperor Nero. The hope-giving stories and parables of Jesus are told in the course of their exciting adventures, including the passion narrative from the Gospel of Mark.

<http://www.storykeepers.com/usa.html>

Animated Bible Classics 8DVD Set 99.00

These animated classic bible stories can be purchased separately or as a group.

http://www.christianedwarehouse.com/cep/showdetl.cfm?&DID=6&Product_ID=15487&CATID=34

These are only two examples of the many possible videos you can order to enrich your child's religious imagination.

- Are there any children's bible storybooks in our home?
There are numerous children's books with the Bible stories available through Amazon, or you local religious goods store. There are also some bible stories in your child's religion textbook. Our diocesan curriculum also includes bible stories we hope each child will know by the end of first grade. http://www.cdow.org/Outcomes_Grade_1.pdf pg. 8

(There is much good modern religious art to compliment the tradition religious images. A simple search of the internet can help you find either traditional images or more contemporary renderings for the home.)