

Partnering with Families

Keys to Sanctity in Youth

In the past, we now recognize, we too often stressed the material aspect – religious knowledge – to the detriment of the formal aspect – commitment of faith. Such overemphasis upon the doctrinal aspect, especially in school catechesis, usually did little harm as long as the religious education within the family put great emphasis on the personal adherence to God. The disastrous consequences of such imbalance became much more evident as families began to fail in their educational task. Children who had been through eight or more years came to the end of this program with little interest in religion and less committed than they were at the time of their First Communion.

~ Fr. Johannes Hofinger, SJ, *Evangelization and Catechesis*, 1976

Questions:

Ask yourself – How can a teen of this age recognize and surmount the barriers to holiness?

Ask yourself – How can a teen of this age experience the Father, Son, Spirit, and Church?

Ask yourself – How a teen of this age discover authentic models to follow?

FOUR KEYS TO YOUTHFUL SANCTITY . . .

1. Humility – Learning to trust – This will always be the bottom line – Childlike faith is the victory.

2. Redemptive Suffering – Living sacrificially in ways beyond your normal – Intense love does not measure, it just gives (Mother Teresa).

3. Mentorship – Becoming a loyal son or daughter to a good father, a good mother in the faith – Half of holiness is choosing the right companions (St. John Bosco).

4. Eucharistic Trust – I am in love, and out of it, I will not go (C.S. Lewis).

St. John Bosco's educational conception of obedience following from reasonableness depended largely on the outstanding personal qualities of each educator – on the outstanding example given by those in authority. The family spirit atmosphere gave expression to cheerfulness because its characteristics were those of love, freedom, and joy. Bosco's pedagogy was imbued with teachings on the impermanence of life, the transient nature of things, the fear of the Lord, and the religious sense of duty. Love was the basis of Bosco's system, for he was firmly convinced that to educate children, one must find the way to their hearts. Students must, in general, be led to meditate upon whatever is calculated to inspire them with a growing horror of sin, upon the causes of their own faults, upon mortification that removes such causes, upon the principal duties of their state, upon fidelity to grace and its abuse, and upon Jesus Christ, the model for penitent sinners.

~ John Morrison, *The Educational Philosophy of St. John Bosco*

Looked Up To By Others

Faith
is not the belief
that God
will do what you want,
but that God
will do
what is right.



*The absence
of God
is worse
than
material
poverty
because
it kills
every
firm hope
and
leaves
the person
alone
with
his pain.*

*Archbishop
Paul Cordes*

A thousand times
I've failed, and
still Your
mercy remains.

Live so that your life on earth
draws those you love to the God
who alone can reunite you in Heaven.

Peace of Soul



Photo by Kevin Lamarque

Looking Up To Him

Divinely wise souls often
infuriate the worldly-wise
because they always see
things from the
Divine point of view.
The worldly are willing to let
anyone believe in God
if he pleases, but only on
condition that a belief in
God will mean no more than
belief in anything else.
They will allow God,
provided that
God does not matter.
But taking God seriously
is precisely
what makes the saint.
As St. Teresa put it,
“What is not God to me
is nothing.”
This passion is called
snobbish, intolerant, stupid,
and unwarranted intrusion;
yet those who resent it
deeply wish in their own
hearts that they had the
saint's inner peace
and happiness.

*Archbishop
Fulton Sheen*

The Bottom Line of a Vibrant Sacramental Life:

Getting Sunday Right

If you don't have time for praising God, you are busier than He ever intended you to be.

Making Confession a Way of Life

It's not about trying not to sin – but focusing so much on Jesus that sin isn't an option.

Scheduling the Most Vital Relationships

I am in love, and out of it, I will not go. ~ C.S. Lewis

Becoming an Earnest Student and a Loyal Son or Daughter

Feed your faith, and all your fears will starve to death.

Living Sacrificially in Ways Beyond Your Normal

Intense love does not measure, it just gives. ~ Mother Teresa

Learning to Trust ~ This Will Always Be the Bottom Line

Childlike faith is the victory.

How to *effectively* reach parents to truly enable them, not just exhort them and how the Catechetical Institute can help.

1. How to reach out to families to return to Mass?

- Defeating Anonymity – feel your way into their shoes, which means *making space to listen to them*–1) to learn their urgencies, and 2) to give them a Mark 10:21 moment – a loving, simple, personal invitation, followed by unremitting trusting patience.
- Defeating Complacency – feel your way into a place of *need for them, personally*– 1) their calling matters to *you* (Eph 2:10), and 2) *you* are incomplete (1 Jn 1:4).
- Bottom-line of what to do: People want to come to Church to the degree the Church wants to come to them. YOU are God's wanting.
- CI workshops that would help: Family: Domestic Church and School of Holiness / Essential Link Between Liturgy and Catechesis / A Foundational Vision: The Role of the Laity / Discipling Adults / Building the Mentoring Relationship: Empathic Listening

2. What are best practices in moving towards family-based formation?

- The *runway* is as important as the takeoff / stepping *back* is as important as stepping up / it is vital to look at *lived* models.
- Go slow and steady through parents' issues of awkwardness with faith conversations / your heart attitude changes in the direction of gentleness and a generous spirit to the degree you make time to meet with and listen to parents.
- Bottom-line of what to do: Genuinely *discuss* what the workshops below challenge in your parish's approaches; in your own views.
- CI workshops that would help: The Family as the Context of Catechesis / Shifting to Family-Centered Formation / Partnering with Families in Youth Ministry/ Adult Catechetical Methodologies & Learning Styles

3. What are strategies to engage families better in specific areas: First Communion, Confirmation, Children's Catechumenate, and Schools?

- Retreats – for adults – that aim at three things in Christ: 1) healing, 2) mercy, 3) kerygma. Look for models.
- Use assignments to impact interactions among family members / see the goal of all assignments as fostering the health of the home.
- Bottom-line of what to do: Discuss in your parish or school the degree to which your programs aim at supporting the centerpole.
- CI workshops that would help: First Penance & First Eucharist Preparation / Confirmation Preparation/ Family Systems in a Catholic School

4. How to effectively incorporate our workshops for parents?

- Think of yourself as a teacher and formator of *adults* / see your testimony and others' as *indispensably* decisive.
- Adult ministry thrives when: 1) personal invitation becomes the norm, 2) state-of-life, healing, and their urgencies are the focus.
- Bottom-line of what to do: Our myriad of workshops for parents are best applied surgically, specifically, and sacramentally.
- CI workshops that would help: Parent Saints / Mentoring within a Family / Fostering Holiness in Children / A Foundational Vision: The Community of the Family / The Sacramental Economy / Being Guided and Guiding Souls / Vocational Spirituality

5. What are two key areas of engaging families that most parishes overlook, that if developed will produce strong results in parish life?

- Make infant Baptism preparation a ministry of *continuity*– abandon a moment-in-time view or a sacramental-pass-class.
- Make marriage preparation a ministry of *continuity*– build a serious like-to-like, pot-stirring, personal accompaniment.
- Bottom-line of what to do: Ask yourself, if these two sacraments were the *only* preps available, what would we dream/dare to do?
- CI workshops that would help: Mentoring Other Families / Theology of the Family/ Conversion in Modern Culture/ upcoming help

6. What other helpful resources does Franciscan have to offer to help our parish or school succeed in our mission?

- Our resources section on the site: www.FranciscanAtHome.com/resources.
- Our annual [St. John Bosco Conference](#) and all Franciscan University's [other](#) summer conferences.
- Our ministry formation magazine – [The Catechetical Review](#).
- Our [events](#) regularly held for dioceses, local and on-line, our [tutorials and webinar series](#).
- Our University's online and on-ground [degrees](#) and [School of Spiritual Direction](#).
- Our intentional priority on formation for pastoral accompaniment, with workshops that help build you in that specific skill set, and the option to join the [Franciscan International Guild of Catechists and Leaders](#).

How to help children and teens desire God and love His Church, not just go through programs or be informed in a classroom, and how the Catechetical Institute can help with that.

1. Understanding what programs and resources are capable of as stand alones?

- Structuring for personal encounter, not just movement through calendared classes and events requires an *unschedulable* expectancy.
- Remember that the structure/program with the most *continuity, effectiveness, and access* to one-on-one moments is: their families.
- **Bottom-line of what to do:** Read what Bosco and Sheed are saying and take it to prayer relative to what you are doing.
- **CI workshops that would help:** Preventive System of St. John Bosco / The Evangelizing Classroom / Facilitating Conversion in a Catholic School / Family Systems in a Catholic School / Partnering with Families in Youth Ministry / Engaging Youth Culture / Effective Strategies for Evangelizing Children / Observing and Measuring Discipleship in Children / Mentoring within a Family

2. How do God and His prophets teach with power, and what can that say about our way of being impactful with children and teens?

- Your passion for giving God's love: The prophetic light as the one indispensable, authentic element.
- Their ability to receive God's love: Teaching people not topics.
- **Bottom-line of what to do:** Ask yourself often as you prep: So what? Why do I care if this true? Why should they care if this is true?
- **CI workshops that would help:** The Vocation of the Catechist / Teaching for Conversion / The Catechist: Witness to the Truth / Fostering Holiness in Children / Pedagogy of Revelation and Response of Faith / Child Catechetical Methodologies and Learning Styles: Going Deeper / Incarnational Ministry: Relational Ministry with Teenagers / A Vision for Effective Youth Ministry

3. How can our teaching engage children's and teen's lives better and make organic connections with the life of faith?

- Transforming your teaching from informative to formative: The Ecclesial Method and Analyzing Doctrine.
- Testing your lessons before you teach them: Six S's: Son Sacraments Saints Satan Suffering Self. Now reduce it to one test question: Is it *abundantly* clear in what I've prepared to teach how it will help these young people more deeply love and trust their Daddy?
- **Bottom-line of what to do:** Put yourself and others under master catechist saints to see the patterns that make for success.
- **CI workshops that would help:** The Ecclesial Method / A Guide to Echoing the Mystery: Unlocking the Deposit of Faith in Catechesis / Analyzing Doctrine / Connecting Child Development with Catechetical Formation / Effective Catechesis in Youth Ministry

4. What are ways to help catechists and teachers aim for yearning, not just learning?

- Knowing how *faith* and *desire* grow is a different awareness from how knowledge grows (school norms can disadvantage us here).
- Knowing how faith and desire grow in a child or teen is not static, but have distinctives that are definable in stages.
- **Bottom-line of what to do:** Make a study of the ages you are teaching or raising using these targeted workshops.
- **CI workshops that would help:** Faith & Moral Development: Ages 3-6 / Faith & Moral Development: Ages 6-12 / Faith & Moral Development: Ages 12-18 / Introducing the Liturgy to Children / Introducing the Scriptures to Children / Contemporary Teaching Strategies / Teaching Your Children About God's Plan for Sexuality / General Introduction to Adolescent Development





The Church's Young Treasure

In children we have a great charge committed to us.

*Let us bestow great care upon them, and do everything
that the evil one may not rob us of them.*

But now our practice is the reverse of this. . .

*We take care of our possessions for our children,
but of the children themselves we take no care at all.*

Form the soul of thy son aright, and all the rest will be added hereafter.

~ St. John Chrysostom, Homilies 9 on 1 Timothy



A Trust-Led Life

Holiness is the point of every life. Basis of holiness is . . .

- ☐ Not education or intelligence
- ☐ Not social background or giftedness
- ☐ Not age level or random

Basis of holiness is:

The desire for the joy of relationship.

All we need to be holy comes from Mother Church . . .

- ☐ Have you received Baptism?
- ☐ Do you have access to the truth?
- ☐ Do you have access to a witness to lead you?

What then could be lacking?

My desire

*My little children, with whom I am again in travail
until Christ be formed in you! ~ Galatians 4:19*

10 Primary Threats to Raising Faith-Filled Kids:

1. Parents do not live as Catholics should; this manifests as a lack of joy in God
2. Children are not clear why their parents "do" religion
3. Over busyness – activities are the main dimension of life, rather than the family
4. Materialism defines the goals of adults and children
5. TV, peers, reading material, adults around them do not support faith
6. Relativism and pluralism are allowed to deaden the family's zeal for souls
7. Some information about the faith is learned, but little or no formation in love
8. Misunderstanding of suffering and its relation to developing strong disciples
9. Misunderstanding of the relationship with Jesus and the role of prayer
10. Do you want your child to be a saint?





Saints & Holy Witnesses for Young People

The witness of the saints is all around us. Their lives are memorialized in shrines, devotions, and feast day celebrations. This page is a resource to help discover new saints—specifically *young* saints—and learn more about the ones you already know and love. Enjoy exploring these lives; may they inspire and encourage you!

Saint Cecilia
young martyr, 2nd cent.

Saint Tarcisius
young martyr, 3rd cent.

Saint Agatha
20 years old, 251

Saint Agnes of Rome
12-13 years old, 254

Saint Philomena
13 years old, 304

Saint Dymphna
15 years old, 7th cent.

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary
24 years old, 1231

Saint Rose of Viterbo
18 years old, 1251

Blessed Imelda Lambertini
11 years old, 1333

Saint Joan of Arc
19 years old, 1431

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha
24 years old, 1680

Saint Dominic Savio
14 years old, 1857

**Saint Bernadette
Soubirous**
35 years old, 1879

Saint Therese of Lisieux
24 years old, 1897

Saint Anna Wang
14 years old, 1900

Saint Maria Goretti
11 years old, 1902

Saint Gemma Galgani
25 years old, 1903

Blessed Laura Vicuna
13 years old, 1904

**Venerable Zepherin
Namuncura**
19 years old, 1905

Blessed Isidore Bakanja
22 years old, 1909

Blessed Karolina Kozka
16 years old, 1914

Blessed David Okelo
16-18 years old, 1918

Blessed Francisco Marto
10 years old, 1919

Blessed Jacinta Marto
9 years old, 1920

Venerable Anne de Guigne
10 years old, 1922

**Blessed Pier Giorgio
Frassati**
24 years old, 1925

Blessed Miguel Pro
36 years old, 1927

Blessed Antonia Mesina
15 years old, 1935

Venerable Antonietta Meo
6 years old, 1937

**Venerable Maria Theresa
Gonzalez-Quevedo**
20 years old, 1950

**Servant of God Faustian
Mangano**
17 years old, 1963

Blessed Chiara Badano
18 years old, 1990

**Servant of God Angela
Louise Baird**
19 years old, 1997



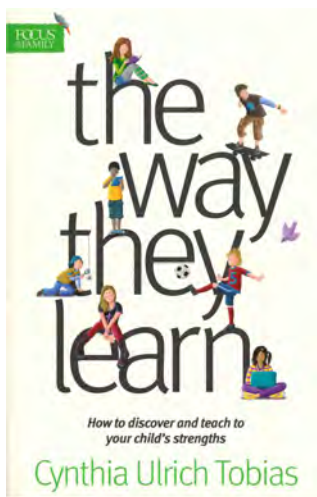
Here are some resources that can be purchased to help bring the stories of the saints to life:

Holy Heroes

- ✦ Home page: <https://www.holyheroes.com>
- ✦ To find radio dramas and other resources:
 - *Glory Stories*: <https://www.holyheroes.com/Glory-Stories-Audio-CDs-s/61.htm>
 - *Holy Heroes*: <https://www.holyheroes.com/Holy-Heroes-Audio-CDs-s/60.htm>

Quiet Waters

- ✦ Home page: <https://quietwaters.us>
- ✦ To find audio recordings and other resources:
 - *Truth to Inspire*: <https://quietwaters.us/store/Truth-to-Inspire-Series-c23852698>



Seeing Jesus for real...

"A child identifies his parents with God, whether they want that role or not." ~ James Dobson

- ✦ Sit in the Gospels
- ✦ Sit in the saints

- ✦ Sit in adoration
- ✦ Sit in the confessional

Seeing your child for real...

"Focus more on who your child is, rather than what your child does. Remember, you're growing a person not fixing a problem." ~ L.R. Knost

The Mind of Your Child ~ Learning Style

There are generally three ways people learn. Occasionally we may venture out and show interest in other approaches to learning, but for the most part we respond to a certain type of teaching more positively than others.

- ❶ Scholarly-Intellectual / ❷ Emotional-Intuitive / ❸ Kinesthetic-Practical

"I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught."
~ Winston Churchill

The Heart of Your Child ~ Love Language

Your child needs to know he is loved in order to grow into a giving, loving, responsible adult. Every child has a primary love language, a way in which he understands a parent's love best.

- ❶ Physical Touch / ❷ Words of Affirmation / ❸ Quality Time
❹ Gifts / ❺ Acts of Service

"You may truly love your child, but unless she feels it – she will not feel loved . . . Whatever love language your child understands best, she needs it expressed in one way – unconditionally. Without this kind of love, parenting is bewildering and confusing." ~ Gary Chapman

The Soul of Your Child ~ Temperament

Our temperament is part of our God-given nature, our predisposition to react in certain ways – our default setting, so to speak.

- ❶ Choleric / ❷ Melancholic / ❸ Sanguine / ❹ Phlegmatic

"The primary lifetime threat to your child is his or her own anger."
~ Gary Chapman

The Path of Your Child ~ You

"Remember that one day your child will follow your example instead of your advice." ~ Charles Kettering

Motivated by Loving Obedience

Ephesians 6:1-3

Motivated by Loving Fear
Matthew 18:6

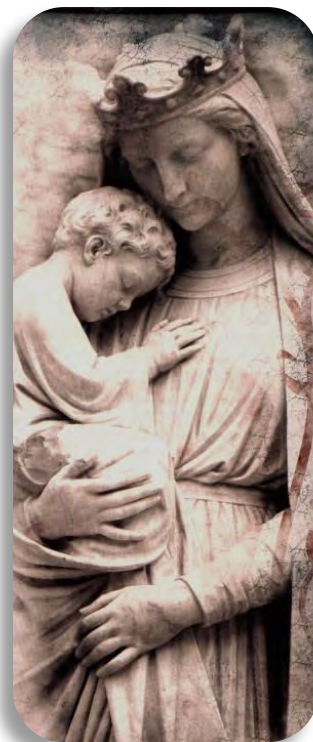
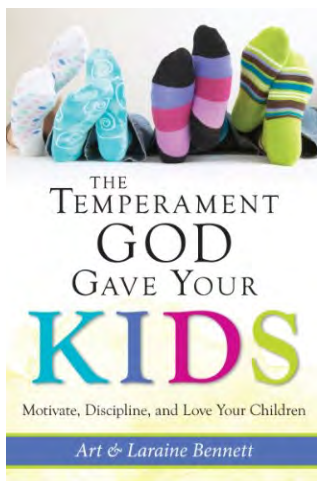
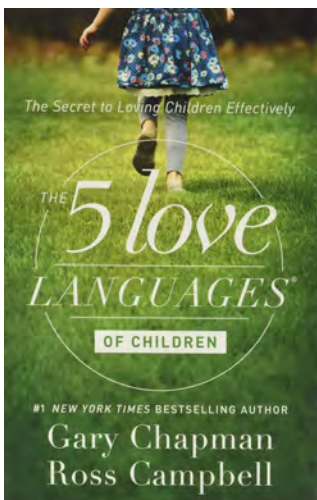
Motivated by Loving Trust
Romans 8:14-17

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.
~ Proverbs 3:5-6*

From the Holy Father

I would like to ask you, dear families: Do you pray together from time to time as a family? Some of you do, I know. But so many people say to me: But how can we?... After all, prayer seems to be something personal, and besides there is never a good time...Yes, all that is true enough, but it is also a matter of humility, of realizing that we need God...Praying the Our Father together, around the table, is not something extraordinary: it's easy. And praying the Rosary together, as a family, is very beautiful and a source of great strength! And also praying for one another! The husband for his wife, the wife for her husband, both together for their children, the children for their grandparents.

~ Pope Francis, St. Peter's Square, 27 October 2013



PROVE IT PRAYER!

BY AMY WELBORN



The Virgin Mary, by El Greco, 1595

Assignment: Read this book over the next two months, and then answer the eight questions below. It is wise to familiarize yourself with the questions before reading the book, so you can be looking for your answers. As you read, if you need help with certain words or phrases, ask your parents to assist you. If need be, you may ask me.

Due Date: December Confirmation Session.

Questions to be answered:

- 1) Why would you bother to pray if God already knows what you need? Answer this question, and then ask at least one of **your parents** this question, and write down the answer you get.
- 2) List ten ways that God has shown His love for you in the last two months. Then, ask at least one of **your parents** to do the same, and write down the answer you get.
- 3) List five things that are distractions for you in prayer. Then, ask at least one of **your parents** to do the same, and write down the answer you get.
- 4) List five things that might help you overcome or remove those distractions.
- 5) What is the purpose of the Bible? What help can it be in trying to learn to pray?
- 6) What does it mean to 'pray'? How might prayer be necessary to a true Christian life?
- 7) What does it mean to find 'joy'? How does your relationship with God fit into that?
- 8) What does the word 'love' mean? How do prayer and love go together?

How to answer the questions:

Length: Minimum of two pages of single-spaced text, maximum of five pages.

Typeface: 12 point font size, single-spaced; can be handwritten only if necessary.

Help: If you need help, this would be an excellent assignment to do with your parents.

APRIL CONFIRMATION SESSION

◀ 7th Grade ▶

**One cannot be strong in prayer
and also continue to sin habitually.**

**Either he will give up prayer
or he will stop sinning.**

~ St. Alphonsus Liguori

- ✧ Read together the quote at the top of this page, and the two lists at the bottom. What is the value of prayer in your life? Parent and student together, list three ways that you could seek to develop your family's prayer life.
- ✧ Parent and student together, make a list of people who your family should be remembering to pray for in your lives. Who should be on that list always; who is most important on that list?
- ✧ Who do you know who is a prayer "warrior"? What makes them so? How can you follow their example?

The desire to PRAY grows from:

- + Desire to love.
- + Desire to grow.
- + Desire to hope.
- + Desire to need Him.
- + Desire to thank Him.
- + Desire to be joyful in Him.

The desire to PRAY dies from:

- ✧ Sin unaddressed.
- ✧ A thankless life.
- ✧ No model to follow.
- ✧ Lack of ability to listen.
- ✧ No docility or surrender.
- ✧ No friend to give an account to.
- ✧ Overly focused on trying to feel right.
- ✧ Overly focused on getting the words right.
- ✧ Unreflective life – no thought of your death.

**Vocation fosters
Purpose**

"If you find what you do each day seems to have no link to any higher purpose, you probably want to rethink what you're doing."

~ Ronald A. Heifetz

**Vocation fosters
Peace**

"God has traced a way for each of us. Both our earthly and eternal happiness depends on following our vocation very carefully.

Every vocation is a call to motherhood or fatherhood, earthly, spiritual or moral. God has placed in us an instinct for life."

**Vocation fosters
Principle**

"What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."

~ Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.



Sample Vocations Plan

Kindergarten to College

K-3 Grades

- ☐ Angel in the Waters
- ☐ Will You Bless Me?
- ☐ Can God See Me in the Dark?
- ☐ What Can I Give God?
- ☐ Becoming Father Bob
- ☐ Where Do Priests Come From?
- ☐ Joseph's Hands
- ☐ The Princess Kiss
- ☐ DVD - The Best of Little Children
- ☐ The Pre-Born Christ (Precious Life Books)
- ☐ Victor Finds His Vocation (Precious Life Books)
- ☐ Father Phillip Tells a Ghost Story (Precious Life Books)
- ☐ The Little Turtledove Finds His Mate (Precious Life Books)
- ☐ The Most Beautiful Thing in the World (Precious Life Books)



4-6 Grades

- ☐ My Path to Heaven Workbook
- ☐ The King of the Golden City
- ☐ CDs - Glory Stories (17 stories available)
- ☐ DVD - Knights of Columbus on the Priesthood, Religious Life, Marriage
- ☐ DVD - The Miracle Maker
- ☐ DVD - A Time for Miracles

7-8 Grades

- ☐ Vocational Retreat in the Confirmation Program
- ☐ Books, movies, and CDs used in the course of the quarterly projects
- ☐ The Princess Kiss
- ☐ DVD - Interviews of Ann Arbor Dominican Sisters
- ☐ DVD - Beloved by the Nashville Dominican Sisters
- ☐ DVD - Fr. Don Calloway's Conversion Story
- ☐ DVD - Champions of Faith, Baseball Edition
- ☐ DVD - The Catholic Priest Today
- ☐ DVD - Fishers of Men
- ☐ DVD - A Greater Yes
- ☐ DVD - I Confess
- ☐ DVD - Miracle at Moreaux
- ☐ DVD - The 13th Day

9-12 Grades

- ☐ DVD - The Priestly Vocation
- ☐ DVD - Fireproof
- ☐ DVD - Courageous
- ☐ DVDs - Life-Work Program
- ☐ DVDs by Jason Evert Mount 2000 and Beyond Retreat
- ☐ Franciscan University of Steubenville's Summer Youth Conference
- ☐ High School-age Archdiocesan vocations retreats for boys
- ☐ High School-age women's discernment retreats for various religious orders
- ☐ Pure Love / Pure Womanhood / Pure Manhood / Pure Faith Booklets



College

- ☐ College-age Archdiocesan vocations retreats for boys
- ☐ College-age women's discernment retreats for various religious orders
- ☐ Application mailings for strong Catholic colleges
- ☐ Franciscan University of Steubenville's Encounter Conference for Youth Adults



“Jesus looked up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.’”

~ John 8:10-11~



Sexuality and Chastity

Online Resources:

- Catholic Answers: catholic.com
- Chastity (Catholic Answers Chastity Outreach): chastity.com
- Chastity Project: chastityproject.com
- Courtship: courtshipnow.com

Same Sex Attraction

Films that promote chastity:

- Blackstone Films: The Third Way
- Desire of the Everlasting Hills: everlastinghills.org

Books:

- *Courage to be Chaste* by Fr. Benedict Groeschel
- *Homosexuality and the Catholic Church* by Fr. John Harvey
- *Living the Truth In Love: Pastoral Approaches to Same-Sex Attraction* by Fr. Paul Check
- *Made For Love* by Fr. Mike Schmitz
- *Same-Sex Attraction: A Parents' Guide* by Fr. John Harvey
- *Why I Don't Call Myself Gay* by Daniel C. Mattson

Online Resource:

- Courage: couragerc.org

Sex and Pornography

Books:

- *Delivered: True Stories of Men and Women Who Turned from Porn to Purity* by Matt Fradd
- *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction* by Mark Laaser
- *The Porn Myth: Exposing the Reality Behind the Fantasy of Pornography* by Matt Fradd
- *Restored: True Stories of Love and Trust After Porn* by Matt Fradd
- *Treating Pornography Addiction* by Kevin Skinner

Mobile Resources:

- Fortify App: App for smart phone that requires subscription
- The Victory App: Free download for smart phone

Online Resources:

- Addo Recovery: addorecovery.com/resources/
- Covenant Eyes: covenanteyes.com
- Fight the New Drug: fightthenewdrug.org
- Fortify: Joinfortify.com
- Integrity Restored: integrityrestored.com
- K9 Web Protection: <http://www1.k9webprotection.com>
- Purity is Possible: purityispossible.com
- Sexaholics Anonymous: sa.org
- Sexual Addicts Anonymous: saa-recovery.org
- The Porn Effect: theporneffect.com
- The Victory: lifeteen.com/blog/5-reasons-you-need-the-victory-app/

Podcasts:

Matt Fradd. “Love People Use Things”. Available on iTunes and Stitcher. lovepeopleusethings.fm



“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

~ Luke 4:18-19~

Abortion Recovery

- Project Rachel: hopeafterabortion.com
- PATH: healingafterabortion.org
- Redeemed Girl: redeemedgirl.org
- Silent No More: silentnomoreawareness.org

Drugs and Alcohol

- Above the Influence: abovetheinfluence.com
- Alcoholics Anonymous: aa.org
- Al-Anon: al-anon.org
- Alateen: al-anon.org
- All Treatment: alltreatment.org
- American Addiction Centers: americanaddictioncenters.org
- Hope Links: hopelinks.net
- Narcotics Anonymous: na.org

Self-Harm and Eating Disorders

- Cornell University: selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu
- Help Guide: helpguide.org
- Self-Injury Outreach & Support: sioutreach.org
- To Write Love on Her Arms: twloha.com
- Suicide Prevention: suicidepreventionlifeline.org
 - 1-800-273-8255

Healing of Identity

- *Captivating* by John and Stasi Eldredge
- *Unbound* by Neal Lozano
- *Wild At Heart* by John Eldredge



Depression and Anxiety

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America: adaa.org
- Catholic Therapists: catholictherapists.com
- Help Guide: helpguide.org
- National Alliance of Mental Illness: name.org
- National Institute of Mental Health: nimh.nih.gov
- Online Catholic Counseling: holyfamilycounseling.org
- Psychiatric Disorders and Mental Health Issues: psychiatric-disorders.com

Media Safety

- Covenant Eyes: covenanteyes.com
- Decent Films: decentfilms.com
- Internet Safety: internetsafety101.org
- PluggedIn: pluggedin.com

EVANGELIZATION (Servant of God Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.'s Catholic Dictionary)

Zealous proclamation of the Gospel in order to bring others to Christ and his Church.

In the words of Pope Paul VI, “Evangelizing means *to bring the Good News into all the strata of humanity*, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new, ‘Now I am making the whole of creation new’ (Revelation 21:5). But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed *by baptism, and by lives lived according to the Gospel*” (*Evangelic Nuntiandi*, 18).

Evangelization, therefore, includes three distinctive elements: 1. interior conversion to Christ and his Church; 2. affecting not only the individual person but the whole culture; and 3. as a result, changing this culture and its institutions to make them Christian and Catholic. (Etym. Latin *evangelium*; from Greek *euangelion*, good news, reward for bringing good news, from *euangelos*, bringing good news: *eu-*, good, + *angelos*, messenger.)

MORTIFICATION (Servant of God Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.'s Catholic Dictionary)

The What and Why

The best description of mortification was given by Our Lord. He said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after me, let him *deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*” (Mat 16:24).

Mortification, therefore, is self-denial. And self-denial is doing the will of God, even when the Divine will crosses at right angles to our will. *Mortification is the imitation of Christ* in the surrender of what we naturally like in order to please God.

Self-Denial to Make Up for Past Sins

There is one big difference, however, between our mortification and the self-denial that Christ practiced in doing the will of His Father. We are sinners who must practice mortification *to make up in greater generosity to God for our failure to love Him as we should have in the past*. We are sinners who must expiate our sinful self-indulgence by giving up creatures we might otherwise lawfully enjoy.

More than Important

Mortification is not only important, *it is necessary*. Why?

- Because only mortified persons are *willing to surrender to God the most precious possession* they have, namely their own self-will.
- Only mortified persons are *willing to love God in the patient endurance* of whatever crosses He sends them.
- Only mortified persons are *living in the real world* where sins are so widespread and where sinners need the grace of repentance to be gained by the prayerful penance of the friends of God.

Patience and Faithfulness

We can practice mortification by giving up some delicacy in food or drink, or some pleasure that we could legitimately have. But we also *practice mortification every time we patiently accept whatever trial or pain* He sends us, and every time we faithfully carry out whatever His mysterious providence commands of us.

It is this second kind of mortification that Jesus had in mind when He told us that “*anyone who loses his life for my sake, will find it*” (Mat. 16:25).

The Key to Heaven

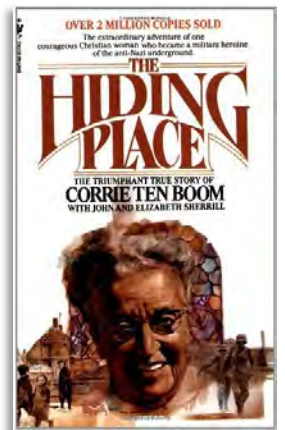
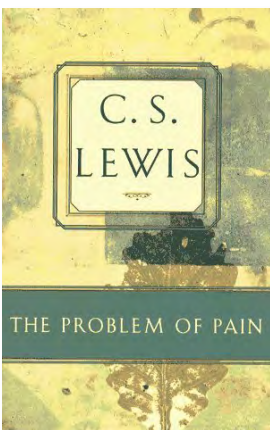
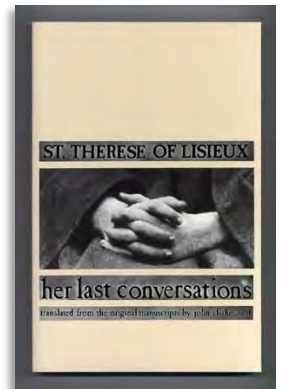
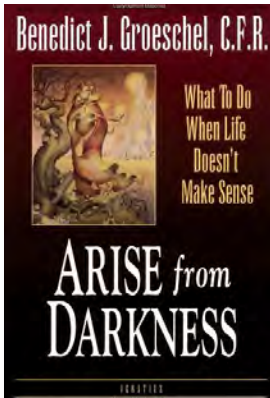
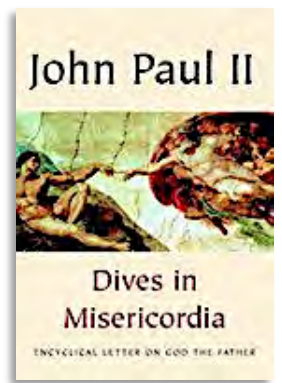
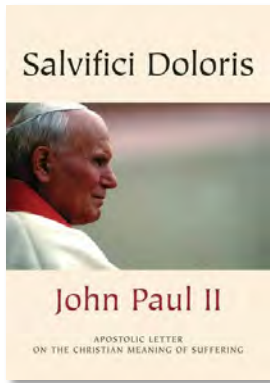
If we are willing to mortify (literally “cause death to”) our self-will in this world, we shall gain eternal life in the world to come. On these terms, *only mortified people will enter Heaven*.

EN 41 (Pope St. Paul VI,)

Without repeating everything that we have already mentioned, it is appropriate first of all to emphasize the following point: for the Church, *the first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life*, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal. As we said recently to a group of lay people, “*Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses*.” St. Peter expressed this well when he held up the example of a reverent and chaste life that wins over even without a word those who refuse to obey the word. *It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus- the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity*.

CCC 2015

"The way of perfection passes by the way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the asceticism and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes"



**A Soul that
Desires God**

*The world offers you comfort.
But you were not
made for comfort.*

*You were made
for greatness ...*

*Each of you
has a personal vocation,
which He has given you
for your own joy
and sanctity.*

*When a person is conquered
by the fire of His gaze,
no sacrifice seems too great
to follow Him and give Him
the best of ourselves.*

~ Pope Benedict XVI



Six Keys to Engaging Parents and Families in Parish Faith Formation

Authored by [Joseph D. White](#) in [Issue #2.3](#) of *The Catechetical Review*

The family has a privileged place in catechesis. The *Catechism* states that “parents receive the responsibility of evangelizing their children” and calls them the “first heralds” of the faith.^[i] The family is also called “domestic church”—the church of the home.^[ii] Catechesis in the parish can give structure and support to faith formation in the home. Parish catechesis is systematic and comprehensive, while the formation that parents provide is more organic and focused on particular occasions in the life of the family. Parents play an indispensable role in helping the faith come alive for their children. The family is the first place where each of us is called to live the faith that we have received.

Despite the important role of family in catechesis, many catechists and catechetical leaders find it a challenge to involve parents in parish faith formation programs. Here are six keys to engaging parents and families in catechesis:

1. Take time to listen to families.

Who are the families of the children or teens you serve? What are their challenges and struggles, their interests and priorities? Pope Francis states:

Today more than ever we need men and women who, on the basis of their experience of accompanying others, are familiar with processes which call for prudence, understanding, patience and docility to the Spirit, so that they can protect the sheep from wolves who would scatter the flock. We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur.^[iii]

One implication of these words is this: if we wish to evangelize the families of our parish, first we must listen to them. This means reaching out to families, sharing about ourselves, and expressing genuine interest in getting to know them. The time we make to do this will be some of the most valuable time spent in ministry with families.

2. Help families make connections between faith and family life.

We live in a highly secularized society—an environment that tells us that faith is something we practice at church on Sundays, not something we live in our everyday lives. This stands in sharp contrast to living as intentional disciples, for Jesus calls us to be the “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (Mt 5:13-14). In such a societal context, how can we begin to make the faith real for families we serve?

One place to begin is in the everyday moments of family life. In this year of mercy, we hear frequent mention of “works of mercy.” When parents of young children hear the Corporal Works of Mercy discussed, they might say to themselves, “I wish I had time to do these things, but I’m too busy with raising my children.” What they might not realize is that every day they are doing works of mercy as they minister to the needs of their family members. How many times have you, in your tasks as a parent, fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, or visited the sick? Parents do these things often for their children. It’s important that parents recognize this as mercy in action, especially because Jesus says, “as you did it to one of the least of these..., you did it to me” (Mt 25: 40). Every time a mother or father cares for their children, they have an opportunity to have an encounter with Jesus himself.

Provide families with resources for connecting everyday moments of family life more explicitly with their Catholic faith. In addition to practical ways to live out the lessons being learned in faith formation sessions throughout the week, give families resources such as family prayers for bedtime, blessings for times when family members leave the home each day, special blessings for milestones and family events, seasonal resources, and guides to creating a home altar or sacred space.

2. Foster a sense of community among families.

Families today often find it a challenge to come together due to busy schedules, conflicting priorities, and other practical issues; but making connections with our parish family is an essential aspect of what it means to be Catholic. Ours is not a solitary tradition of only an individual, personal relationship with God, but always encompasses a communal one, in which we celebrate and pray together as brothers and sisters. The Letter to the Hebrews admonishes us, “We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another” (Heb 10:25). Facilitating connections and building community between our families is one way we can help our families to appreciate the value of togetherness and build relationships that will last for years to come.

Consider hosting some sessions of faith formation for parents and children together, so parents can experience your sessions for themselves and are better able to reinforce the lessons at home. If possible, arrange some optional meetings for families outside of the regular sessions. Potluck dinners, class programs and plays, or attending a family movie as a group can be great ways to build community among the families in your parish. Seasonal gatherings for families can also be a fun way for families to learn and celebrate their faith together. They can take some preparation, so it might help to get families involved in the planning and setup as well.

4. Pay attention to the developmental stages of family life.

Consider how the faith formation program involves families at every stage. One period of family life that is often overlooked by parishes is the time between baptism and the school-age years. This is unfortunate, because families are restructuring during these early childrearing years—shifting priorities and routines as well as social circles as they adapt to the new realities of parenthood. If the parish is walking closely with families as they realign their priorities and social circles, this stage of family life might provide an opportunity for families to form a close bond with parishes that will last for years to come.

Adolescence is another stage of family life in need of particular focus. Research indicates that the parents of adolescents experience the highest levels of parenting stress, but parenting classes and groups are usually focused on parents of younger children. Forming Catholic conscience in teens is particularly challenging in today’s world. Parishes can increase the chances that teens will remain active and faithful Catholics by partnering with parents of adolescents and supporting them in this task.

5. Structure catechetical ministry for parent involvement.

The parish is not meant to take this responsibility of forming children in faith away from parents, but must support and equip parents by making catechesis organized and systematic and by giving parents the tools they need in order to be primary catechists. One way to communicate this clearly is to give parents a variety of ways to be involved in the parish catechetical program. Volunteer roles could include catechists and also catechetical assistants, teams to help with special events and projects, and volunteers from other ministries who can share their ministry with groups of children as appropriate.

6. Help families share their faith.

Every baptized person is called to be a missionary—to share Christ with others through word and action. The call to evangelization is directed towards us as individuals, towards the entire Church, and also towards our families—the domestic

Church. Parents are called to be evangelizers of their children. Children, too, learn to be missionaries as they share what they are learning with family members and others, and as they strive to be examples to peers and younger brothers and sisters.

Catechists help children share their faith by helping them articulate what they have learned. Still, knowing the faith is not enough. We must be witnesses in our families, our schools, parishes, and communities. In every catechetical session, always include some discussion of how to live what we have received. Roleplay good and moral decision-making exercises. Offer families ways to participate in service projects together. Provide parents with conversation starters they can use to talk about the faith with their children.

Involving parents in catechesis can be a difficult task, but it's too important to give up. Let us renew our efforts to engage whole families in learning about, *and* living out, their faith.

Dr. Joseph D. White is a National Catechetical Consultant for Our Sunday Visitor. He is a contributor to the Alive in Christ catechetical series and author of the booklet, Involving Parents, Engaging Families: Tested Tips for Catechists and Teachers.

Notes

[i] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2225.

[ii] *Ibid.*, par. 2224.

[iii] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, art. 171.

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Mexico's Miracle of 'Reverse Aging'

Renowned Catholic author and evangelist Jason Evert meets thousands of bullied children in a hardscrabble community who seem to be 'aging in reverse.'

By Kevin Wells

December 23, 2022

CHALCO, Mexico — Never before had Catholic author Jason Evert seen anything resembling it. In more than 25 years of speaking on chastity to more than two million people throughout the world, what he paid witness to recently at the Girlstown community in Chalco, Mexico, startled him.



He looked into a sea of teenagers who seemed to have aged in reverse.

"I can honestly tell you that I have never seen anything like it in my life," Evert said a few hours after his short visit. "It took my breath away. ... I want everyone to see what I saw."

What exactly did the Catholic author and evangelist see?

Evert termed it "restorative innocence" — or teenagers who appeared to be getting younger by the years.

Evert knew in coming into the community of more than 3,000 teenage girls that many had been abused by men in a fashion borne of evil. So when he first looked upon more than 1,000 teenagers sitting before him, he didn't expect such clear-eyed, deep joy. He didn't expect to see once-bullied teens looking back at him with the pure and carefree eyes of small children.

"I've gone into many American high school classrooms and given talks to freshmen and sophomore girls who looked like 23- and 24-year-olds. Many looked like they had already spent a few years in a sorority," he said. "But what I saw in that gymnasium in Girlstown was a thousand or so 17- and 18-year-old teenage girls who looked like they were 9 or 10 or 11 years old.

"The reason why it was so breathtaking is because I know so many had been exposed to horrible and abusive things — physical and sexual things," Evert said. "And to see them look into my eyes as the most innocent and pure children brought tears to my eyes. The only other place I've ever seen this type of piercing joy has been in cloistered convents." The Sisters of Mary community in Chalco, Mexico, and Boystown in Guadalajara — and in communities in five other countries throughout the world — work tirelessly to eliminate the haunting wounds that have become Siamese twins for many of the 20,000-plus children at the authentically Catholic boarding schools founded in 1964 by Washington, D.C., native Venerable Aloysius Schwartz.

Initially, when their chaplain Father Dan Leary came to understand the scope of the same abuse that Evert became aware of, he found himself as stunned as he was brokenhearted. But as time went on, and Father Leary began to understand the weight of the abuse that so many of the teenagers carried with them into the schools, he often found himself to be enraged.

“I always wanted to go around and punch walls,” said Father Leary, 54, who before leaving to serve as chaplain for the Sisters of Mary, was a priest for 23 years in the Archdiocese of Washington.

“Over and over, kids unpacked their stories of abuse and trauma to me. And I just kept thinking, if I ever saw the abuser come around, that I would have had to take them behind the tool shed and have a come-to-Jesus meeting.”

After some time, though, Father Leary understood his anger was stunting his spiritual fatherhood, so he began to pray for guidance on how to practically remove the devastation of their memories. He knew as their spiritual father that he had to reach into and redirect these afflicted souls to Christ through Our Lady. And Scripture came to his soul: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.”

And it was then that a sacred curative was revealed to the priest.

The Holy Eucharist

Hyper-tuned to the interior spiritual battles taking place in the students’ souls, it came to Father Leary that the finest remedy would be to provide near-constant exposure to, and Adoration of, Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. He was certain silent time at the feet of Jesus — assisted by spiritual direction and the sacrament of



reconciliation — would be the best way to heal their memories and enormous wounds. And little by little, as the summer of 2020 bled into the fall and then the winter of 2021, Father Leary began to watch as thousands of teenagers seem to actually reverse in age. Lined faces softened, ringed eyes brightened, and stooped postures regained their proper form. Girls who always looked into the ground raised their chins to show him clear and joy-filled eyes.

As he watched the darkness of their memories fade, he (like Evert) believes that time in front of the Holy Eucharist had actually allowed the teenagers to appear younger than on the day they arrived at the five-year school.

Evert paid witness to this dynamic one evening when hundreds of girls knelt quietly and reverently before a four-foot monstrance. Candlelight flickered and the room became quieter than the other side of the moon.

“The peace and restoration of these girls through Father Dan’s ministry, the Sisters’ work and the Eucharist is unlike anything I’ve seen in my ministry,” he said. “There isn’t any way these girls could have had the same look of joy and purity when they walked through the gate on their first day here.”

“All of this transformative work is impossible without the Eucharist,” Evert said. “Pope John Paul II said, ‘If we were to disregard the Eucharist, how could we overcome our deficiencies. ... [He also said] Let Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament speak to your hearts. It is he who is the true answer of life that you seek. He stays here with us: He is God with us. Seek him without tiring, welcome him without reserve, love him without interruption.’”

Evert believes Father Leary’s presence at these 13 Boystown and Girlstown communities in Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, Tanzania and the Philippines is of a providential nature.

“I was thinking about how Our Lady arranged the roses in Juan Diego’s tilma, placing them right where she wanted them,” Evert said. “In a very real way, I think Father Dan has been placed into a very specific role, poured out in a special way for these thousands of children so in need of a true spiritual



father. He is stepping into massive wounds each day — and relying on the Eucharist to lead the way to their healing.”

Since his time in seminary at Mount St. Mary’s in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in the early 1990s, Father Leary has always been deeply drawn to the Holy Eucharist and its manner of deepening his devotion to Christ. He said is thrilled to see the same dynamic taking shape in the teenagers spread throughout the world.

“Through the Eucharist, I get to witness the resurrection of children from their afflictions. These are the little Lazaruses... There is a stunning vulnerability in how they open up to me the stories of their pain to begin their long healing process.

“Their courage often leaves me wordless. ... It is remarkable the number of times I’ve heard the same question asked in the process of their healing: ‘Father, how can I be holy now?’ ... How sacred, simple and innocent is that statement?

“Truly, these are the little ones that Jesus spoke of — the children that can’t ever be hindered or hurt. The kingdom of heaven belongs to these.”

World Villages for Children (WVC) is a non-profit organization that financially supports the Sisters of Mary as they help children break free from a life of poverty and lead them to Christ. WVC provides food, shelter, clothing, medical expenses, Catholic education and vocational training to more than 21,000 children in Boystowns and Girlstowns in six different countries around the world. To donate to World Villages for Children, please go to: www.worldvillages.org/poverty/.



Kevin Wells is a Catholic speaker, writer, president of the Monsignor Thomas Wells Society for Vocations, and author of the bestselling book *The Priests We Need to Save the Church* (Sophia Institute Press, 2019).