

Sharing the Catholic faith when your children are 10, 20 and 40

Objective:

Evangelizing the members of your own family can be very challenging. Fathers in different stages of parenting have questions and concerns about how to share the faith with their children. Children at 10, 20 and 40 also have questions and concerns about matters of faith as they mature. Fathers' Team members are very effective in sharing wisdom and inspiration. We can be always be better witnesses to God's love and mercy.

Song Suggestion: They Will Know We are Christians (Blue 476, Red 728)

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Mt 19:13-14

Then children were brought to Him that He might lay His hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"

Jn 17:15

Jesus said "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one."

Pv 22:6

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"

Catechism 2226

Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.

Saint: St. Philip Neri

For forty-five years St. Philip Neri evangelized thousands of people at Rome, from the poor to the popes. He buttonholed them in life-changing conversations, instructed them in conferences, attracted them with beautiful music, and mainly drew them to conversion in the confessional. Philip won their hearts with his consistent kindness and jovial sense of humor. www.brandonvogt.com/neri

Vignette:

Forty five year old Tim is the single father of three kids, ages 10-21. He is struggling to work his job and take care of his kids at home. Lately he's noticing his oldest is resisting going to church with him on Sunday and the other children are listening to her arguing with her dad.

Also, Tim's realizing that he values more than ever the wisdom and guidance of his own father whom he wishes would open up more about his faith.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

Have you been tempted to not take responsibility for sharing the faith with your young children, thinking that their good Catholic school will take care of it?

What are some successes you have had in sharing your faith with your children, in whichever stage of life they are?

How do you handle it when your teenager tries to defy your authority as spiritual head of the house?

For fathers of 20 year olds: Ask yourself "What do I fear? What is my deepest concern?" when my adult daughter says she doesn't believe in _____.

Do you agree with Brandon Vogt (author of the Word on Fire article), that you shouldn't force your college age child to go to Mass with the family when he's home for a visit?

For fathers over 40, What do you wish your own father had shared with you about his faith when you were 10, 20 or now?

Is Proverbs 22:6 too simplistic: ("train up a child and when he is old he won't depart from it", really??)

Action Plan:

1) This week, think about how your faith impacts your life. Look for ways to share your thoughts with your child of any age.

2) Talk with your children about their successes and struggles in going back to school, or in their job. Do they see God in the events of their lives?

3)

4)

Additonal Resources:

A great article for faith sharing ideas for parents of young kids

<https://www.uscatholic.org/life/everyday-spirituality/2012/02/show-and-tell-six-ways-teach-your-children-faith>

A thought provoking article, includes a link to a free 4 part video series about leading your adult child back to the faith!

<https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/blog/3-ways-not-to-lead-your-fallen-away-child-back-to-the-church/4969/>

An article from a youth minister for parents of teenagers and young adults

<https://faithit.com/parents-push-their-kids-away-from-god-realizing/>

For parenting 20, 40 and beyond!

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/when-your-adult-child-chooses-a-different-path/>

Author: Vince Phelan