

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.

We must be present and listen, not preach; realize that they are witnessing us; and perhaps more importantly – pray for them.

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: Saint Monica

Monica is a model of patience. Her long years of prayer, coupled with a strong, well-disciplined character, finally led to the conversion of her hot-tempered husband, her cantankerous mother-in-law and her brilliant but wayward son, Augustine.

Vignette:

Bill is the father of 4 grown children. His youngest, Joe, is 22, and recently moved back home after graduating from college. Bill wants to lay down the law "if you're living under my roof, then my rules, which includes going to mass on Sunday." However, Bill has learned from his older children that this did not work well. Bill tried another approach and asked his son why he doesn't attend mass regularly. This question led to an honest dialog about his son not believing the true presence of the Eucharist among other things. Bill and Joe had a good discussion, and Bill encouraged Joe to keep questioning, and researching his faith. Bill was glad that his son felt comfortable enough to engage in a conversation about his faith and Bill continues to pray that God continues to work in Joe's life.

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?

For fathers of 10 year olds: Do you actively, consistently pray with your children, ie. bedtime prayers?

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_____.

For fathers of 40 year olds, Have you shared your spiritual journey (ups and downs) with your adult children?

For Grandfathers, Are there things you wished you would have done with your children that you can now do with your grandchildren to influence their faith (and helping your kids witness that)?

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) Pray for guidance. After all, God the Father knows how you feel.....how many of His children have not followed Him???

References:

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/>

A great 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/>

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