

# Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

January 2011

## Our Lady of the Assumption



### Thoughtful Moments

#### Mealtime Prayer

To thank God for providing for our families, Catholic families pray before we eat.

Many of us use the Grace Before Meals

prayer ("Bless us, oh Lord, and these thy gifts ..."). For a change, try singing the prayer instead of praying for it. Or, alternate with a prayer chain and give each person a chance to tell God what he or she is thankful for.

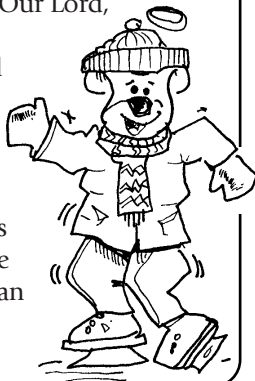


#### Sunday Rest

For many busy families, Sunday has become, not a day of rest, but a day of catch-up. Mowing the lawn, doing laundry, finishing up homework takes priority over honoring the Sabbath. Instead, try making Sunday about your family and God. Start with Mass and then have some family fun.

#### Baptism of Jesus

The Baptism of Our Lord, January 9th this year, is the official end of the Christmas season. This is another reminder that Jesus loved us so much, he chose to share our human experience.



## Tips from the Holy Family

The Bible doesn't tell us much about how Mary and Joseph raised Jesus and prepared him for his unique vocation but we can get an idea by what we know of the adult Jesus. Learn from the Holy Family how to raise a holy family, too.

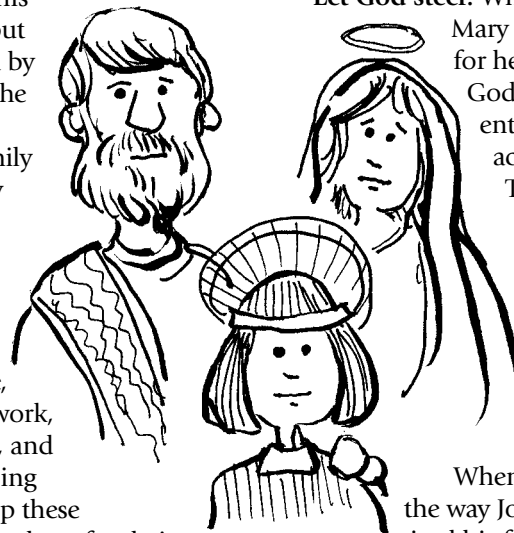
**Nurture virtue.** During his public ministry, Jesus demonstrated the virtues of patience, persistence, hard work, honesty, devotion, and compassion. Helping children to develop these virtues will prepare them for their own unique vocations.

**Give a gentle push when needed.** At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus was reluctant to perform that first public miracle but his mother knew he was ready and capable. At a gentle push from

her, he made something wonderful happen.

**Let God steer.** When the angel told Mary of the plan God had for her life, she allowed God the use of her entire being to accomplish his goals. Teach children, through prayer and sacrifice, to let God control the direction their lives will take. **Strengthen your own faith and practice.**

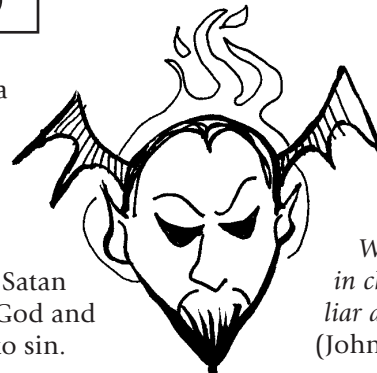
When Jesus was young, the way Joseph lived, how he practiced his faith, and how he answered the boy's questions probably helped to form Jesus' early understanding of God. Be sure your knowledge and practice of your faith is strong so you can properly influence that of your children.



### Why Do Catholics Do That?

Satan was originally a beautiful angel in Heaven but led a rebellion against God and was cast out with his henchmen. Also known as "The Devil," Satan wants us to turn from God and continually tempts us to sin.

### Who is Satan?



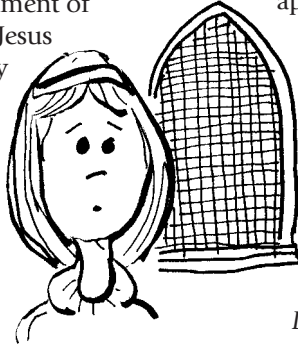
Jesus said, "He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

## What's so great about Confession?

Confessing sins to a priest is part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This Sacrament was created by Jesus (John 20:23) to give us the gifts we need to stay strong in virtue and join him in Heaven.

**Grace:** Grace is the free gift God gives us to help us live lives that please him. We receive sacramental grace during the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Guidance:** Many priests offer faith-based advice on how to amend our lives during Confession. If you find that helpful, make an



appointment for a face-to-face Confession or seek Confessions by different local priests to find one with whom you are comfortable.

**Unity:** Going to Confession as a family shows children that we all make mistakes but God is always ready to forgive us and welcome us back. Forgiveness becomes a family value.

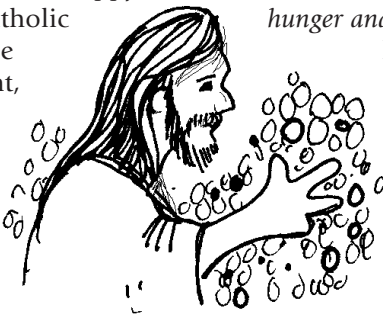
**Renewal:** The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to learn from our mistakes and try again. *"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light"* (Ephesians 5:8).

### Scripture LESSON

#### Matthew 5:1-12, paths to happiness

When God created us, he put into our hearts the desire to be happy (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1718). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus points out the path for happiness, and gives us a compass we can use to navigate our way. Our path to happiness lies in surrendering to God's will and putting all our trust in him.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they who mourn,"* he promised that when we turn to God in times of trial, we will be comforted



and cared for. When he referred to *"the meek, the merciful, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,"*

he was giving us a compass. We are to measure our behavior against these standards to see if we are on the right path to happiness.

*What can a parent do?* Read the Sermon on

the Mount with your children and teach them compare their behavior against its standards. Help them to see that Jesus gave us these guidelines to help us be happy on Earth and eventually get to Heaven.

### Parent TALK

Money was tight when my husband lost his job. He finally landed another one but it pays a lot less than the old one. After much prayerful



discussion, we decided to sell our current home and move to one that's smaller and more affordable.

None of us wanted to leave. The new one was in a nice neighborhood and had plenty of room but it didn't feel like home. After settling in, I invited our pastor to come over and bless the house. The kids were enthralled by the blessing ceremony Fr. Joe performed. He made a big deal about blessing every surface and, in particular, the rooms where we would spend the most time.

As I was tucking her in that night, our oldest daughter said, *"That's why this place didn't feel like home, Mom. Jesus hadn't moved in yet. Now it's all cozy."* You know, I completely agree.

### Feasts & Celebrations

In January we celebrate the Holy Name of Jesus. *"...at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth"* (Philippians 2:10). In fact, the English letters IHS – representing the first three Greek letters in Jesus' name – used to be written over the doors of Christian homes.

**January 21 – St. Agnes (258).** At a young age, St. Agnes pledged chastity for Jesus. Reportedly she was turned in for being a Christian by a suitor whom she refused to marry. She maintained her chastity and her faith and was

executed as a result.

**January 31 – St. John Bosco (1888).** St. John Bosco combined catechetical training and fatherly guidance to teach young men and women how to unite their spiritual life with their work and play. He opened the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales and provided workshops for boys in shoemaking and tailoring. In 1859, he founded the Salesians who were committed to education and mission work.



### Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children  
Success Publishing & Media, LLC  
Publishers of Growing in Faith™ and Partners in Faith™  
(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax  
<http://www.growinginfaith.com>  
(Unless noted Bible quotes and references are from the Revised Standard Version and the New American Bible.)

© Copyright 2011 Success Publishing & Media, LLC