

### **Three Key Family Faith Activities**

The family is a primary influence on faith maturity during adolescence. Three key family activities can strengthen the faith growth of youth. Engaging in these activities together as a family is more powerful than young people simply observing their parents modeling religious behaviors.



#### **Family Faith Conversations**

The frequency of family faith conversations is tied to greater faith maturity in adolescents. Find ways to talk about experiences of God's presence and the joy of Christian living, as well as questions, doubts, and struggles of faith.

- Be aware of the "talkative" time of day for your child and invite discussions then.
- Maximize teachable moments that connect life and faith—patience while waiting in line, courage when facing challenges, and so on.
- Talk about teachings of the Church in relation to current events.
- Share your experiences of Church when you were young, and how faith impacts your life. Allow your child to question you about your beliefs.
- Use media as conversation starters: "What do you think about the choices made in that TV show? What might Jesus say?"
- Choose a Christian "value of the week" (e.g., forgiveness, compassion, generosity) and discuss how family members experience it.
- Read parables from Scripture and talk about them. Describe how Jesus might tell the stories today.
- Write sentence starters on index cards, and randomly draw one to begin a faith conversation. Here are a few examples:
  - ▶ If I could ask Jesus one question right now, I would ask . . .
  - ▶ If God wrote a text message to the world, it would say . . .
  - ▶ The hardest part about being a Christian this week was . . .

#### **Key Family Faith Activities**

- Faith Conversations
- Rituals and Devotions
- Outreach and Service



## ***Family Rituals and Devotions***

Many families share rituals and traditions for holidays, birthdays, and other significant life events. Establishing “faith” traditions throughout the year keeps the family grounded and growing spiritually. Add a faith dimension to existing family traditions, or develop new patterns for acknowledging the sacred in everyday life.

- Celebrate the ethnic religious traditions from your own cultural heritage.
- Establish a simple morning blessings exchange:
  - ▶ **Parent:** “May God bless and guide us this day.”
  - ▶ **Adolescent:** “May we appreciate God’s blessings in the people we meet.”
- Set up a regular time for family prayer. Ask your child to help plan and lead prayer.
- Create a prayer intention space (bulletin board, notebook, or basket) and invite family members to post prayer intentions.
- Post a key Scripture passage on the refrigerator each week as a family spiritual focus. Here is an example:
  - ▶ “I will be with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).



## ***Family Outreach and Service***

Helping people in need is part of human nature and a primary message of the Gospel. Find ways to engage in service as a family and talk about the experience together.

- Allow your adolescent to choose an activity. Ideas include delivering food to people in need, cleaning out closets and donating items, and promoting recycling.
- Combine service with a fun event and join with other families. Ideas include cleaning up a park and celebrating with a picnic, and hosting a “Baking Showdown” by making favorite cookies and donating them to a soup kitchen.
- Learn about the principles of Catholic social teaching. Highlight one each month and find ways to practice it as a family.
- Talk about stewardship and the family budget. Discuss how family members use their time, talents, and treasures.
- Perform random acts of kindness and talk about the experiences together.