



the Parent LINK

Religious Education

February 2012



St. Alphonsus Parish



POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To protect your children from harmful messages about physical attributes.
2. To help your children view themselves as God's creation.
3. To heal any body-image struggles you've been facing.

Promote Positive Body Image

The topic of body image is usually associated with teenagers, but it's becoming an issue for younger children now, too. Media and advertising, toys, and peer pressure are among the many factors that make kids question their appearance and build.

But what's said and seen at home matters, too. Often parents inadvertently contribute to their child's body-image issues with their comments or through their own weight issues. A parent's focus on body image can make a child think his or her value is based solely on appearance. Here are tips for promoting healthy body image in your children:

- Emphasize that God created our bodies, which he calls "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- Model healthy eating. Show children how to make wise food choices, and don't require them to always clean their plates.
- Accept yourself. Resist an obsession with calories and pounds.

INSIGHTS

- 80% of girls in third- through sixth-grade report displeasure with their bodies. Young girls say they're more afraid of becoming fat than they are of cancer, nuclear war, or losing their parents. (U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services)
- 36% of third-grade boys have tried to lose weight, and "muscle dysmorphia," an obsession with body size and shape, is on the rise among young males. (Time)



A CATHOLIC WAY TO PRAY

One form of prayer that is very common for Catholics is reflective prayer, or, prayer that looks back in order to recognize the presence of God in our everyday experiences because we may have missed him the 1st time around.. St. Ignatius of Loyola suggests the following steps:

1. Quiet yourself & recall God's presence, thanking God for his love & asking the Spirit for guidance.
2. Review your day, thanking God for the various blessings you experienced.
3. Review your day again thinking about the opportunities you had to use the gifts God has given you, identifying the times you either did or or didn't.
4. Thank God for the ways you grew closer to him.
5. Resolve to cooperate with God's grace in the days to come.

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

If you have children you are sure to have heard, "Why do we have to go to Mass? It's boring!"

Your response to this whine was very likely the response that parents have given throughout the ages, "Because I said so." That was my response when my children made the same complaint, but I wasn't happy with it. I wanted and needed something better.

This question of "Why do we have to go to Mass?" is ancient. Even the great Hebrew leader Joshua had to deal with such whining. On his deathbed he answered once and for all: "If it does not please you to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will serve . . . As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Dr. Tim Hogan, a Catholic psychologist who serves as consultant on family life matters, suggests that parents provide their children with a similar answer: "We've thought this over and have decided that attending Mass as a family is what we will do. Our family will worship the Lord." Now that's a better answer than "Because I said so," don't you think?

Being a parent today is hard work because of all of the financial pressures and the expectations of society. It isn't enough to raise healthy, happy, and holy children; now they all must be junior Einsteins, pint-sized Peles, and bodacious Biebers. Children hardly have time to play or parents to parent.

This is especially true when it comes to raising faith-filled children. Children look to their parents for signs of what it means to be a person of faith. As parents, we are living examples (witnesses) of how a person of faith lives, acts, and prays. While we, as parents, are the most important witnesses for our children, it is essential that our children also experience the living example of other adult members of the faith community, and it is important that that living example be one of joy and celebration.

Most parents today face the unenviable task of raising their children without the support of the extended family. Few parents live in close proximity to their own parents or relatives. This means that they are trying to raise their children on their own, and that's very difficult to do. That's why here at St. Al's we are committed to supporting parents in their important role. Feel free to contact the RE Office with questions and concerns.



MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

Movie: *Big Miracle*

Genre: Drama, Romance

Rating: PG (for language)

Cast: Drew Barrymore, John Krasinski, Kristen Bell

Synopsis: This film is based on the 1989 book *Freeing the Whales*. An Alaskan reporter and a Greenpeace volunteer work to save a family of gray whales trapped in ice in the Arctic Circle.

Our Take: Nature lovers and fans of *Dolphin Tale* will likely enjoy this movie. It can spark discussion about people's responsibilities to care for God's creation.



MUSIC

Artist: Kari Jobe

Album: *Where I Find You*

Artist Info: Jobe, a 30-year-old worship leader in Texas, knew her career path by age 10. Her self-titled debut album from 2009 was accompanied by a Spanish-language version, *Le Canto*.

Summary: Jobe uses music to bring people to Jesus, where they find peace, life, and healing. In her hit single "We Are," she reminds Christians that we "impact people's lives in everything we do."

Our Take: Jobe's voice and message shine in her pop tunes and acoustic ballads.



CULTURE & TRENDS

- More new moms are getting inked to honor their offspring. Mothers say tattoos bearing their children's names leave little room for regret, unlike other types of tattoos. Tats also remind moms they're still "cool," even though they're parents. ([babycenter.com](#))

- Last year at ClubPenguin.com, children adopted more than 25 million Puffles, or virtual pets. The *Club Penguin Times* is read as much as *The New York Times*. ([Mashable.com](#))

QUICK STATS

- One-quarter of America's 16 million Latino children live in poverty. ([pewhispanic.org](#))
- 80% of a person's brain develops by age 3. The intellectual, social, and spiritual information you instill early on sets an important foundation. ([firststeps.us](#))
- 52% of families have been members of their current church for 10 years or more. ([Children's Ministry](#))



GAMES

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
National Geographic Challenge	Players can brush up on geography, science, and history as they answer questions and complete puzzles. Best for kids ages 8 and up.	E; Xbox 360, Wii, PS3
YourSphere	This kids-only social-networking site offers blogging, games, social interaction, and more. Parents can view all their children's online activity.	YourSphere.com is appropriate for preteens.
iSock	A sock puppet's mouth mimics your speech as you talk. Young children—and their parents—will have fun being creative with this app.	Requires a smart phone with sound; 99 cents at iTunes.

This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, listen to, and wear.



Getting Ready

The days of Lent prepare us to celebrate Easter and welcome new members into the Church. The rites and observances of Lent invite us to strengthen our union with Jesus Christ and to join with him on his journey to Jerusalem, where he was crucified. Throughout Lent the Church constantly proclaims that by dying Jesus brought us new life and taught us how to live as People of God. Through the cross of Christ new life was given to the world.

During Lent we are invited to undertake this journey wholeheartedly through the works of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. We pray for others and ourselves. We give something up. We share our time and ourselves more generously with other people. These traditional Lenten works remind us that denial and struggle—taking up our cross each day—are essential dimensions of living as disciples of Jesus, ultimately bring

new life, and help us prepare for the greatest celebration of the liturgical year, Easter.

Looking for More?

- **Faith First Legacy Edition**
Additional Activities booklet for appropriate age level
- **Faith First Legacy Edition**
Called to Prayer booklet for appropriate age level
- *Garden of Virtues* by Christina Keffler, and Rebecca Donnelly, and illustrated by Suzanne Etman (Ave Maria Press). This trio of moms offers 52 ways of teaching children values that will delight you.
- *Spiritual Intelligence* by Marsha Sinetar (Orbis Books). Helps parents discover, appreciate, and learn from the inner wisdom of their children and the way children bring to life what is best and most fully human in their hearts.

Faith First.com

For more ideas on how your family can live your faith, visit the "Faith First for Families" page at www.FaithFirst.com. Click on "Family Meal Prayer." This week, pray this prayer together before family meals.



Catholic Family Traditions

This is an appropriate time to review the Beatitudes together as a family. You can find this prayer in the "Prayers and Practices" section in the back of your child's book. Choose a time when you can pray this prayer together each day this week.

FIRST RECONCILIATION



CONFIRMATION RETREAT



February



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
CLOW 11:00 5 RE Sessions 8:45-10:15 RE for Deaf 3:15-4:45 	6 RE Sessions 4:30 - 6:00 Tri-Parish Lenten Reflection 7:00	7 1st Communion Parent Mtg 7:00 - 8:00 	8 RE Sessions 6:00 - 7:30	9	10	11
12 RE Sessions 8:45-10:15 RE for Deaf 3:15-4:45 Conf Rite 5:00 7:30 & 9:00 Confirmation Penitential Rite	13 RE Sessions 4:30 - 6:00	14 Valentine's Day 	15 RE Sessions 6:00 - 7:30	16	17	18
19 No Sessions CLOW 11:00	20 Presidents' Day 	21  Palm Burning 8:00am	22  ASH WEDNESDAY No Sessions	LENT BEGINS		25 Young People's Mass - 4th Grade 5:00 
26 RE Sessions 8:45-10:15 Confirmation Rite 11:00 Practice 12:00 Spirit Day 12:45 - 3:30	27 RE Sessions 4:30 - 6:00	28	29 RE Sessions 6:00 - 7:30 Lent Bible Study 7:00			

