



## Thoughtful Moments

### Love like God

God allows us to make choices. The reward for choosing to obey him is Heaven. The consequence of disobeying is punishment. Parents show God's love when they allow children to experience the consequence of their choices. *"For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives"* (Hebrews 12:6).



### We're not alone

Although parenting can be tough, we don't have to go it alone. *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not; In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths"* (Proverbs 3:5).

### Gossip

Teach children the harmful nature of gossip. Gossip is talking about other people, either saying mean things, spreading stories you're not sure are true, or repeating information you have been asked to keep private. No one has a right to know someone else's business. If in doubt, don't let it out.



## Make Easter last throughout the year

Catholics don't just celebrate Easter once a year. Every Sunday we celebrate the Easter mystery. Try these ideas for spreading Easter joy throughout the year.

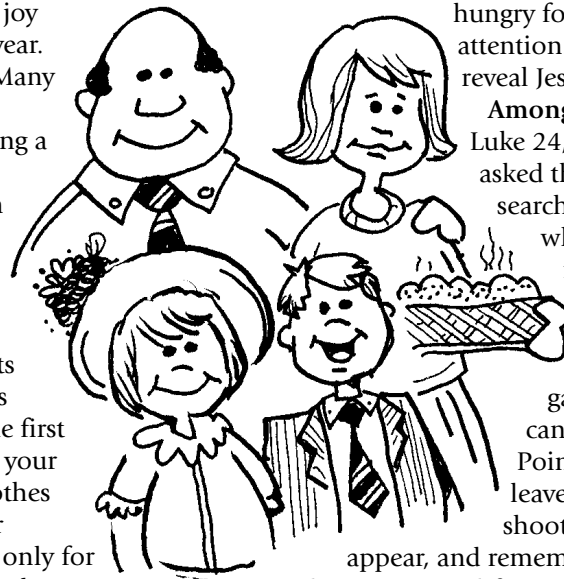
**New clothes.** Many families have a tradition of buying a new article of clothing for each child to wear on Easter Sunday, such as a hat, dress, slacks, or shirt. It represents the new life Jesus won for us on the first Easter. Whatever your special Easter clothes may be, consider saving it to wear only for Mass throughout the year.

**On the road.** Jesus revealed himself to his disciples on the road to Emmaus after his Resurrection. Take Jesus on the road and perform an act of kindness

every Sunday. Visit a lonely relative, perform someone else's chore, cook a meal and deliver it to someone hungry for food or attention. That's how we reveal Jesus to others.

**Among the living.** In Luke 24, the angels asked the women searching for Jesus why they looked for the living among the dead. Plant an indoor Easter garden that you can tend all year. Point out new leaves, blossoms, or shoots when they appear, and remember that Easter brings us new life.

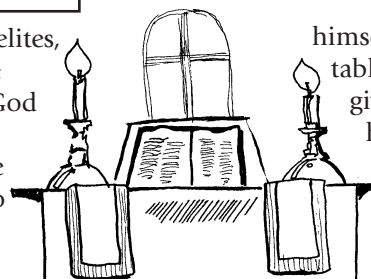
**Every seven days.** The Mass is our opportunity to meet Jesus and to receive him. Don't miss a chance to celebrate Easter every week.



## Why Do Catholics Do That?

Among ancient Israelites, the altar was a place where sacrifices to God were offered. In the Catholic church, the altar "represents two aspects of the mystery of the Eucharist, as the altar of sacrifice where Christ as the sacrificial victim offers

## Why do Catholic churches have altars?



himself for our sins and as the table of the Lord where Christ gives himself to us as food from heaven" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1182, #1383).

The altar is where our attention is focused during Mass. It becomes the table around which God gathers his family and feeds us the Bread of Life.

## Raise a team player

Playing on a baseball or soccer team, for example, may teach children how to be good soccer or baseball team players, but few adults still play baseball or soccer. Children need life-team skills that are best taught in the family. For example:

**Team players work for a common goal.** One way to teach this is to give children chores and let them know that their contribution is important and necessary to the wellbeing of the family.

**Team players obey the rules.** Build these skills by setting family rules for behavior and



performance, and enforcing them.

**Team players follow instructions.** Give children age-appropriate instructions for doing homework, helping around the house, or working on extra projects to help.

**Team players share resources.** Cheerfully sharing common resources like those in the kitchen or bathroom, for example, help youngsters learn planning and cooperation.

**Skilled team members know that the team works best when everyone plays their part.** After all, the most important team is God's team where everyone works together to win.

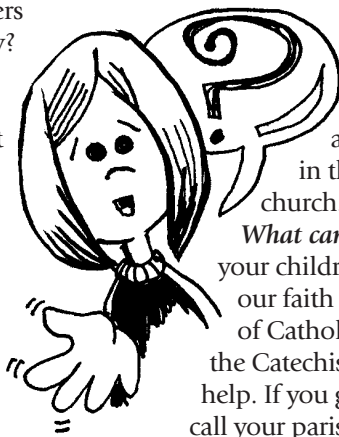
## Scripture LESSON

### John 20:19-31, "Doubting Thomas"

Do you worry when your children ask tough questions about our faith? Are you afraid that the answers may cause them to turn away?

Even though St. Thomas was with Jesus for three years and witnessed the great miracles first hand, he still needed time, evidence, and personal observation before he could accept the truth of the Resurrection. Far from rebuking him, Jesus invited Thomas to do whatever was necessary to convince himself of the truth.

It might also be comforting to note



that in spite of his misgivings, Thomas had not left the group, nor was he excluded by them despite his doubts. As a result, he was able to find the answers in the context of the church.

*What can a parent do?* Welcome your children's questions about our faith but be sure to have lots of Catholic resources (the Bible, the Catechism, etc.) on hand to help. If you get stuck for an answer, call your parish priest. He'll be happy to help.

## Parent TALK

At first we thought the video game system my parents bought the kids was fun. Then I noticed that my ten-year-old, Harry, was becoming tense and aggressive.



When he wasn't playing, he was rushing to get back to playing.

I limited gaming to the weekends and Harry had a fit. When I found that he snuck down at 1:00 am in the morning to play, I realized it was becoming an addiction.

After the kids left for school, I took the whole system to a consignment store. When he came home, Harry went ballistic. He cried, threatened to run away, and locked himself in his room refusing to speak to anyone.

After a few days, he started interacting again. He looked calmer, more relaxed. At dinner, Harry told us that he was relieved not to be playing video games anymore. It was painful, but I know we did the right thing.

## Feasts & Celebrations

**Easter (March 23rd)** is the greatest and oldest Christian feast. Easter celebrates Christ's Resurrection from the dead. We prepare for it during Lent and Holy Week.

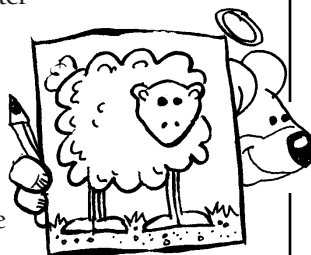
**March 3 – St. Katharine Drexel (1955).** A Philadelphia heiress, St. Katharine Drexel gave up her fortune to become a nun. She established 50 missions for Native Americans in 16 states and founded Xavier University in New Orleans, the first university for African-Americans in the United States.

**March 4 – St. Casimir (1483).** Born a prince of Poland, St. Casimir had a

very strong conscience. When his father sent him to take over Hungary, fifteen-year-old Casimir assessed the odds against winning the war and turned back out of concern for his troops. He resolved never to be involved in war again.

**March 17 – St. Patrick (493).** Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave. He escaped but later

returned to become the bishop of Ireland and is credited for having established the Church there.



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