



Thoughtful Moments

St. Angela Merici

Born in Italy, St. Angela and her sister were raised by an uncle after the death of their parents. When her sister died without the Sacraments, Angela became a Third Order Franciscan to pray for her. She was inspired by a vision to found a teaching order. Initially, she was met with opposition; the pope wanted her to remain in Rome with a nursing order, but she refused and went on to found the Ursulines in Brescia.



Mary points to her Son

Contrary to its title, the Hail Mary is actually a Scriptural prayer to God about Jesus. In it, we profess our firm belief that God became man and was born of Mary: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." As a family, pray a Hail Mary and ask for the grace to know Jesus better.

"Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching;" (Proverbs 1:8).



Parent like the Holy Family

The Bible doesn't tell us much about the parenting styles of Mary and Joseph, but we can guess by what we know of the adult Jesus. Learn from the Holy Family how to raise one, too.

Nurture virtue. While interacting with people during his public ministry, Jesus demonstrated the virtues of patience, persistence, hard work, self control, and compassion. Encouraging these virtues in children will help prepare them for their own unique vocations.

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

he created something amazing.

Sometimes children need a nudge to demonstrate their God-given talents.

Trust God's plan. When the angel revealed the plan God had for her life, Mary gave God her whole self to his purposes. Following her example, Jesus did the same. Teach children, through modelling, prayer and sacrifice, to let God control the direction of their lives.

Tend to your own faith. When Jesus was young, how his parents lived, how they practiced their faith, and how they answered his questions helped to form Jesus' early understanding of God. Be sure your own

knowledge and practice of your faith is strong so you can properly influence that of your children.



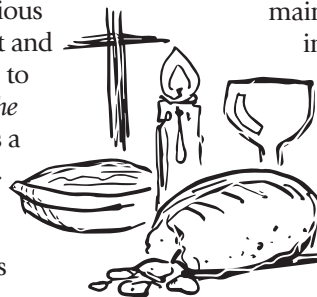
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics celebrate Sacraments?

Sacraments are "efficacious signs, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church" to give grace (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*). Grace is a share in God's divine life.

As food, rest, and medicine maintain our bodies, so the Sacraments

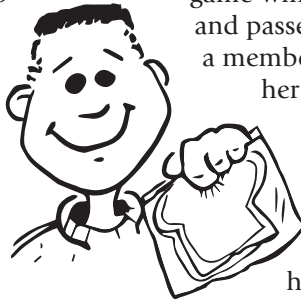
maintain our souls. Our life of grace in Baptism is deepened by Confirmation. The Eucharist nourishes us and Confession heals us. Holy Orders and Matrimony sustain the Church. Finally, our souls are prepared for eternity by the Anointing of the Sick.



Simple acts of kindness

Jesus was clear that he wants us to be kind to everyone. In the famous parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus told of a man who was robbed and left for dead. The man was passed by a priest and a Levite before a Samaritan man helped him. The Samaritan – supposedly an enemy – demonstrated true kindness. Jesus told us to do the same (Luke 10:37).

Teach children to value people first. When Ashley tripped playing basketball and missed the



game-winning basket, her teammates gave her dirty looks and passed as she lay on the floor holding her ankle. It was a member of the other team who was kind enough to help her up.

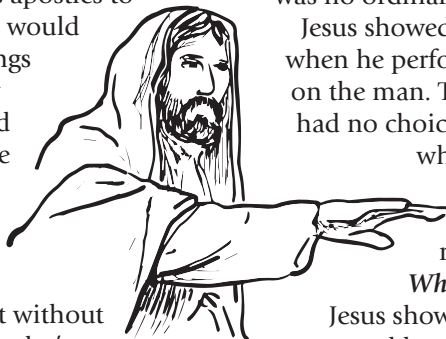
Encourage acts of kindness. Gerry noticed that the new boy at school seemed sad. It turned out that Sammy's dad lost his job and money was tight. Gerry began packing an extra sandwich in his lunch for Sammy, sat next to him in the cafeteria, and played together at recess. Both boys made a good friend.

Scripture LESSON

Mark 1:21-28, More than just a teacher

In this Gospel reading, we read that Jesus entered the synagogue at Capernaum with his apostles to teach. Most teachers would draw from the writings of other scholars for authority, and would begin, "Thus says the Lord..." but Jesus said, "I tell you..." As God, he already knew what the Scriptures meant without leaning on someone else's teaching.

Jesus taught as one who had the authority of God and that astonished his listeners. Even the unclean spirits who were torturing a man at the



synagogue recognized Jesus as "the Holy One of Israel." Clearly, this was no ordinary teacher!

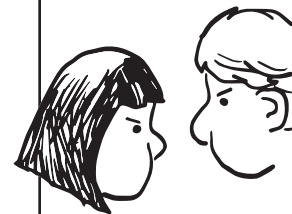
Jesus showed his authority again when he performed an exorcism on the man. The unclean spirits had no choice but to obey him when he commanded them to depart, despite their reluctance.

What can a parent do?

Jesus shows us that God's power and love are greater than any evil. Teach children that they can talk to Jesus about anything that happens, good or bad. At the same time, stress that Jesus is God and deserves to be worshipped and obeyed.

Parent TALK

I was mad! I emailed Kara's teacher asking that he move her away from Joey, a boy who was distracting her. A week with no response and I was sure he was ignoring my request.



I wanted to fire off an angry email, but instead waited for a reply. When Mr.

Heinz finally phoned, I explained my concern. He explained that he has educational reasons for assigning seats and, while he tries to accommodate parent requests, his goals must take priority.

Still, he had taken a few days to observe Kara and Joey and found they worked well together. He paired them for a geography activity and they did A-quality work. More importantly, he asked Kara if she wanted to move and she didn't. She liked working with Joey.

Clearly this was a thoughtful teacher. I hung up the phone and decided I would trust him to run his own classroom.

Feasts & Celebrations

Jan. 7 – Epiphany of Our Lord (1st Century). Epiphany is Greek for manifestation. When they honored the infant Jesus with gold, frankincense and myrrh, the three wise men bore witness to the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior.

Jan. 8 – Baptism of the Lord (1st Century). Jesus began his public ministry by getting baptized by St. John the Baptist. Jesus was free of sin, but he allowed himself to be baptized in order to "fulfill all righteousness"

(Matthew 3:15). By his baptism, Jesus declared his willingness to fulfill God's saving plan. It is also at this time when God revealed Jesus as his "beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17).

Jan. 17 – St. Anthony of Egypt (356). Born to a rich family around 250 A.D. in Egypt, St. Anthony gave up his riches to live a life of simplicity in the desert. Eventually, other monks seeking the same lifestyle followed him into the desert and he founded a community of hermits. He is the founder of monasticism.



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