



St. Helen Catholic School

Educating the whole person to see with Christ's eyes.

Raising good decision makers

At the root of every sin is a bad decision. Children's inexperience and lack of perspective often leads to bad choices that get them into trouble. A well-formed conscience, accountability, and learning to make good choices are powerful ways to raise happy, healthy and holy decision makers.

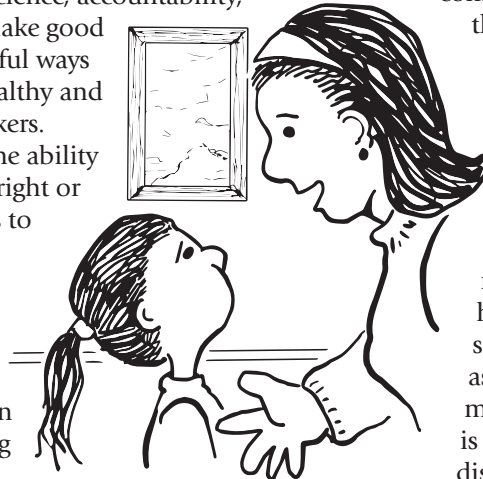
Conscience is the ability to decide what is right or wrong. Basic ways to form a Catholic conscience include taking families to weekly Mass, regular Confession to a priest, making parish religious education classes a priority, and expecting and modeling Gospel-centered behavior at home.

Accountability is loving parents holding children responsible their own decisions. When confronted by their

bad behavior, youngsters may try to shift blame, refuse to acknowledge or follow rules, or attempt to avoid consequences. Set standards, give consequences, and follow through.

Good decision-making begins in childhood. The first step is to encourage children to stop and think before acting. A moment or two of hesitation can prevent sin. Next, teach them to ask "why am I about to make this choice?" Sin is a deliberate choice to disobey God. Choosing

right takes practice and awareness. Finally, asking "**If I do this, what will happen?**," can be a deterrent to sin. Even simpler, "Will this get me into trouble?" If the answer is "yes," or even, "maybe," don't do it.



Thoughtful Moments

St. Gianna Beretta Molla

Born into a large Catholic family in Italy, St. Gianna studied medicine and became a physician. She married Pietro Molla and they had three children: two girls and a boy. Their fourth pregnancy was so risky, an abortion was recommended. St. Gianna refused; she was willing even to die if her child could live. St. Gianna gave birth to a girl and died a week later. She is the patroness of mothers, physicians, and unborn children.



Choose forgiveness

When we have been hurt, forgiveness is the right choice we can make in response. It may not be the choice we want to make but the "Our Father" prayer Jesus gave us asks God to "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Forgiving our wrongs is how we want God to treat us.

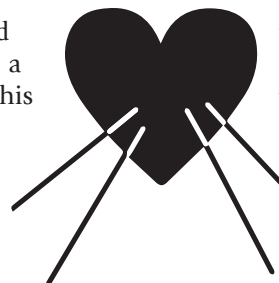
"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord"
(Colossians 3:20).



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday?

In 1931, Jesus appeared to St. Faustina Kowalska, a simple Polish nun, with his hand raised in blessing and two rays of light radiating from his heart – a red and a pale one. He told her to paint the



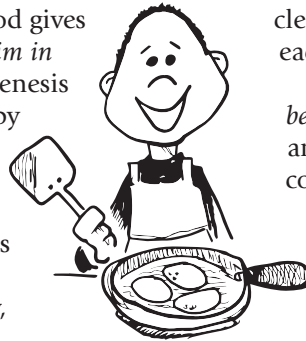
vision with the words, "Jesus, I trust in you." He also asked that the Sunday after Easter become the "Feast of Mercy," and promised that anyone who approaches him as the King of Mercy would receive special graces and great mercy.

Making chores into holy work

Giving children chores helps them to contribute to the family and become good stewards over what God gives us. *"The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it"* (Genesis 2:15). When they contribute to the household by doing chores, they are contributing in an important way to the family.

Make it a family affair. Assign chores to everyone in the family. Let them see that parents have chores, too.

Give choices. Children can help with laundry,



meal preparation, caring for pets, yard work, or house cleaning. Identify a few jobs to be done and let each person pick which one he or she wants to do.

Connect chores with privileges. *"For each will bear his own load"* (Galatians 6:5). Set deadlines and offer rewards if chores are done or consequences if they aren't. Playtime can only happen if chores are done well, for example.

Show appreciation. Earning compliments for a job well done is a great self-esteem builder.

Scripture LESSON

John 15:1-8, Remain in Christ's love

This Gospel comes from Jesus' Last Supper Discourse, a kind of farewell speech for his disciples. Jesus told his disciples – and us – that without him, we can do nothing. He compared our relationship to him to the branches on a grapevine. Just as the main stem is the source of life for the branches, so Jesus is the source of spiritual life for us.

We first received this spiritual life in Baptism. We preserve this life by staying close to Jesus and listening to his words. If we remain with Jesus, we will experience peace,



joy, and hope. More importantly, we will be able to fulfill our mission. Our goal is to remain in God's love and to share that love with others. We can only do this with Jesus' help.

What should a parent do? Jesus told all his disciples that without his help, they could do nothing. Remind children that when it's difficult to make the right decisions to ask God for help. With Jesus, we have everything we need to become the saints we're called to be.

Parent TALK

My son's teacher suggested that we make Easter baskets for nursing home residents who had no one to



visit them. At first, neither of my kids liked the idea. Abby was wondering how she would talk to people with memory problems, and Dakota was

worried he would catch their illnesses. I reminded them that Jesus said when we show compassion to the sick, lonely, or the forgotten, we serve him.

We made up ten Easter baskets, each filled with a prayer card, a stuffed animal, and some candy, and brought them to the local nursing home. After checking with the nurse, we handed out the baskets. The kids were shy at first, but that changed when they saw the residents' faces light up with joy. We visited with the residents for an hour and the children were reluctant to leave. I promised them we would come back to visit again.

Feasts & Celebrations

April 5 – St. Vincent Ferrer (1419). Against his parents' wishes, St. Vincent Ferrer joined the Order of St. Dominic. He became a famous preacher around Europe and aimed to prepare his listeners for judgment. During the "Great Western Schism," three men claimed to be pope. St. Vincent's efforts at unity caused the most stubborn candidate to be dethroned, ending the schism.

April 7 – St. John Baptist de la Salle (1719). St. John was born at Rheims, France, to a noble family, and was

ordained a priest in 1678. St. John taught groups of poor children together, which was very unusual for his time. He formed the Brothers of the Christian School, a successful community of educators.

April 9 – Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord (1st Century). The angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary with the extraordinary news of her role as the mother of God. Even at her young age, she had complete confidence in God's grace and trusted in his wisdom.



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