

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

March 2020

St. Helen Catholic School

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



Thoughtful Moments

St. Toribio of Mogrovejo

Born in Mayorga, Spain, Toribio was a Professor of Law at Salamanca University when the king, noting his integrity, named him the next Archbishop of Lima, even though Toribio wasn't a priest! He was ordained, consecrated, and sent to Peru. He visited every parish in his diocese and learned the native languages so he could preach without an interpreter and they could more easily learn their faith. He also founded schools, churches, hospitals, and a seminary.



Servanthood

According to Jesus, the greatest are those who give themselves to God and others. Teach children to serve by assigning age-appropriate chores, asking them for help, or encouraging thoughtful acts. Children learn from doing.

"So, no matter how much time you spend fasting, no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor and eat ashes and sigh continually, if you do no good to others, you do nothing great" (St. John Chrysostom).



Plant the seeds of faith

Helping children to grow in faith is like tending a garden. To become healthy, plants need regular attention, the right ingredients and help from an expert gardener. To be strong, children's faith needs regular attention, the right ingredients, and God's continual help.

Cultivate the soil. Before planting, the soil must be prepared. It has to be made moist, perhaps have fertilizer mixed in, be positioned to get lots of sunlight, and any weeds must be cleared. Baptism cultivates our children's souls in a similar way. The weeds of original sin are removed, hearts are turned toward God, and the conditions are made right for God's

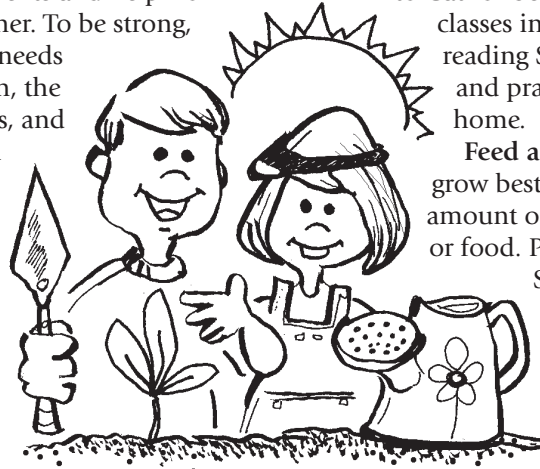
planting.

Plant the seed. Some ways to plant seeds of faith include sending children to Catholic school or religion classes in your parish, reading Scripture together, and practicing faith at home.

Feed and water. Plants grow best with the right amount of water and fertilizer or food. Prayer, weekly Mass, Sacraments, and religious study give our children's souls the food they need to grow a healthy faith.

Constant tending. Weeds can

steal the food and resources plants need to grow. Sin can also choke our faith so that it becomes thin or weak. Taking our children to the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly is a great way to keep weeds of sin out of their gardens.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics genuflect during the Creed on March 25?

On March 25th, the Church celebrates the Annunciation of the Lord – when the angel appeared to Mary. He asked if she would be the Mother of God and she said, "Yes."

Usually at Mass, we bow when we



proclaim our belief that God's Son was "born of the virgin Mary and became man."

However, for the Annunciation and Christmas, we genuflect in deep reverence and gratitude for the mystery that made our salvation possible (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #461).

Consecrating daily life to God

Blessing objects and items that we use each day turns ordinary items into holy objects dedicated to God. Such blessings can help children see that pets, homes, cars, and bedrooms can become holy things and holy places that remind us God's love is all around.

Why bless? Dedicating everyday things to God's use is one way to teach children that they themselves have the power to bless. Then they can make their own little corners of the world holy.



What to bless? Bless people, events, places, and objects – and especially that which is important to you and your family. For example, a new car, a favorite toy, a family pet, or even special rooms in your home can be blessed and dedicated to God's use.

Prayers to use. A blessing does not have to involve books or formula prayers. In fact, families can design their own blessings using intentions or prayers that are special to them. For ideas and guidance, refer to *Catholic*

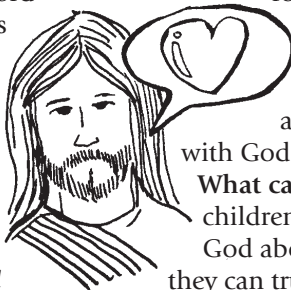
Household Blessings and Prayers (store.usccb.org, 800-235-8722).

Scripture LESSON

John 11:1-45, Great faith, marvelous answers

God always answers prayer, sometimes in unexpected ways. Martha and Mary had sent word to Jesus that their brother was dying, believing he could help. They may have been disappointed when he took his time coming to them and Lazarus died. Still, Martha demonstrated great faith: "Even now I know that whatever you ask of God he will give you."

Jesus intentionally delayed so that rather than just heal Lazarus, he gave him new life. Martha didn't know what would happen, but she knew



Jesus and she trusted his wisdom. His response was a marvelous one: for her faith, he worked his greatest miracle yet. Martha was right: Jesus cared, he could help, and all things are possible with God.

What can a parent do? Tell children that they can talk to God about anything and that they can trust him completely. He always hears our prayers. Sometimes God doesn't give us what we want but he always gives us what we need, right when we need it. We can trust that his answer to us will be marvelous, too.

Feasts & Celebrations

March 7 – Sts. Perpetua and Felicity (203). Perpetua was a young mother and Carthaginian noblewoman who refused to renounce her faith. Felicity was a slave and expectant mother who also refused to deny her Christianity. Both were martyred.

March 17 – St. Patrick of Ireland (c. 461). Born in Scotland, St. Patrick was kidnapped by pirates and brought to Ireland as a slave. He escaped several years later and became a priest. Ordained the bishop of Ireland, he is credited for having established the Church there.

March 20 – St. Cuthbert (687). St. Cuthbert joined the Benedictines at the Melrose Abbey. For his holiness, fervor and charity, he was made abbot of the Lindisfarne Abbey. He retired to be a hermit.

March 25 – 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.



Parent TALK

Our children were often so disruptive during Mass that my husband and I attended separate Masses to avoid bringing them. After a while, I missed attending Mass as a family. So I asked our pastor for suggestions.

The first thing Fr. Stan said was to sit up front. He said children pay closer attention when they can see what is happening.

Then he suggested arriving 15 minutes early to pray a decade of the Rosary as a family. When children pray in a quiet church, they understand that church is for prayer and not for play.

And lastly, Father suggested we go out for a treat, like ice cream or donuts, after Mass. Not only was it a reward for good behavior, it helped to make Sunday feel special.

His advice worked better than I could have hoped. I still have to issue the occasional "shush," but now we get to attend Mass together as a family. And that's the most important benefit of all.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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