

Partners in FAITH™

Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

November 2021

St. Helen Catholic School

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



Thoughtful Moments

Good questions

Before you ask your child a question, think about why you are asking. Are you looking for information or does a statement work better? "Why don't you ever remember to feed the dog?" serves no constructive purpose. Instead, think about saying, "You haven't fed the dog and he looks pretty hungry." A statement of the problem gives your child the chance to come up with his own solution.



Judge not

Help children to remember that criticizing others is a serious business. "Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). Better to worry about our own behavior and let others do the same.

Happy New Year!

The first Sunday of Advent (November 28) is also the first day of our new liturgical year. We begin Sunday Cycle C this year. Advent is the first season of the Church year.



Cultivate thankful hearts

A recent study found that gratitude is connected to happiness in children as young as five years old. Thanksgiving provides an opportunity to nurture gratitude and create awareness of the source of our blessings. "Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose love endures forever" (1 Chronicles 16:34).

Show children your thankful heart. Be a role model of gratitude by thanking God for His blessings. Enumerate your favorite gifts out loud, and encourage children to count their own: God's love, your family, your parish, your health.

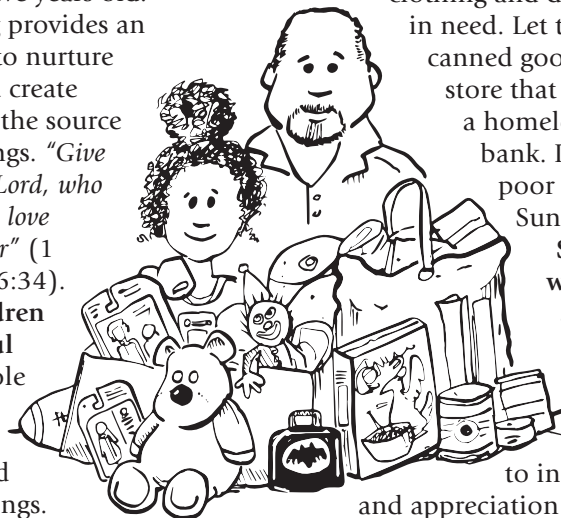
Serve the poor. When children are given the opportunity to help others, they become aware of the abundance

in their own lives. During Advent, collect gently used toys and clothing and donate to children in need. Let them choose canned goods at the grocery store that you can donate to a homeless shelter or food bank. Put money in the poor box at church on Sunday.

Schedule a "go without" day. Pick an item to eliminate for a day – screens, sweets, soft drinks, bread – to increase awareness

and appreciation when it is reintroduced. Remind youngsters that many around the world go without each day.

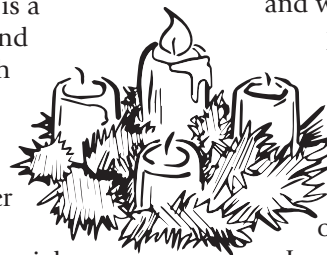
Make it a habit. At dinnertime or bedtime, take turns sharing one reason each of you felt gratitude that day. Be sure to thank God after every one.



Why Do Catholics Do That ?

Why do Catholics celebrate Advent?

The season of Advent is a time of joyful waiting and preparation for the birth of Christ. We are encouraged to meditate on Mary's humble and trustful "Yes" to God, her joy at the fulfillment of God's promise of the Messiah,



and what must have been a joyful-but-busy time preparing for the birth of Jesus. As we spiritually accompany Mary in preparing for the Christ Child, we can prepare our own hearts and homes for Jesus' coming at Christmas.

Minimize holiday stress

As we emerge from the pandemic, we may feel pressure to return to “normal” during the holidays. Yet, taking on too much can lead to stress and burnout. Try these strategies to savor joyful family moments.

Avoid multi-tasking. A busy pace during Advent will keep us from enjoying precious moments with our children. When involved in a family activity – baking cookies, stringing popcorn, wrapping gifts, singing carols – turn off phones and screens, and focus on the moment.

Make a family holiday calendar. Make or buy



a wall calendar dating from Thanksgiving through the first week of the New Year. Hang it in a high traffic area. List all invitations, announcements, and other events you will attend as a family. Watch for and eliminate overscheduling.

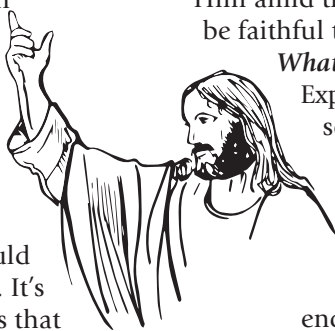
Steal away. Take a few moments to visit with Jesus during the season. Attend extra Masses, steal away to pray before Him in the Blessed Sacrament in church. The peace you receive from being in the Real Presence will keep you going through a busy time.

Scripture LESSON

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36, Do not fear, but prepare!

In this Scripture passage, Jesus tells His listeners that His return at the end of time will be accompanied by catastrophic events. If we are faithful to Him, we have nothing to fear. Still, we should be prepared.

First, when the signs happen, Jesus said we should stand straight and look up. It's when things seem hopeless that God, the source of hope, draws closest to us. We will be strengthened by hope, because “*salvation is at hand*” (21:28). Second, He tells us to be alert for His coming. Lastly, Jesus tells us to



pray for the grace to be faithful to Him amid the tribulations – to be faithful to Him to the end.

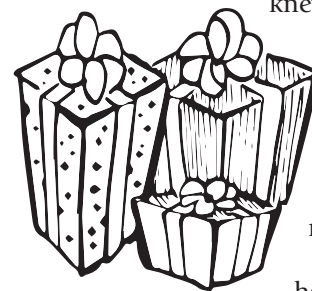
What can a parent do?

Explain to children that sometimes life can be hard and bring challenges. This is when we can lean on God for strength, hope, and encouragement.

Encourage them to ask God for help with whatever is on their mind, even if it's little. God truly does know what is best for us and will always take care of us.

Parent TALK

Mom was tight with money when I was young. When I asked for the latest toys or cool clothes, she usually said, “We don't have money for that.” I



knew we weren't poor; I figured she just didn't want to spend money on me.

Instead, I have showered

my children with gifts – they get things before they know they want them. A few years ago, we were packing for a move and I saw boxes of unopened games and clothing with price tags still on them in Kara's closet. She said, “Mom, I don't want to hurt your feelings but I don't need all this stuff.” So rather than move it, we gave it away.

Now I buy three gifts that the kids really want for Christmas and birthdays, and only what they need in between. They value what I give, and I realize my mother really did know best.

Feasts & Celebrations

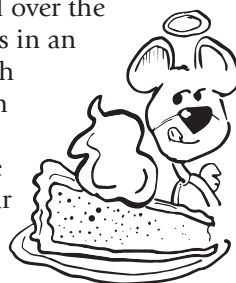
November 14 – St. Lawrence O'Toole (1180). As archbishop of Dublin, he was known for his role as a mediator and peacekeeper in English-Irish relations and for his charity to the poor.

November 15 - St. Albert the Great (1280). Born in Germany, St. Albert joined the Dominican Order against the wishes of his family. He is called the Father of Natural Sciences and mentored St. Thomas Aquinas.

November 17 – St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1231). The daughter of the

King of Hungary, she was only married for just six years. She joined the Secular Franciscan Order after her beloved husband's death and spent the last years of her life caring for the poor. She is the patron of Catholic charities.

November 28 - First Sunday of Advent. During this four-week season, we anticipate the Messiah's birth. Catholics all over the world light candles in an Advent wreath each night of the season to signal the coming of the true light of Christ. Year C begins.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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(540)662-7844 (540)662-7847 fax
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