

*Raise
Them Well
Intellectual
Maturity*



Teaching the Way of Love

because humanity passes by way of the family . . .

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Please Pray That

- Parents will make lively learning part of their family life.
- Families will work together to embrace what is true, good and beautiful.
- Parents will spend the time to dialogue with their children.
- Parents will have the fortitude to seek and accept truth as models for their children.
- Families will joyfully work to put God at the center of all they do.
- Families will cultivate a sense of awe and wonder for the true, good, and beautiful.
- Children will grow into adults who respect and love the truth.
- The heresy of Modernism will be defeated in the Church and in the culture.
- Parents will lead their children in seeking the help of the Holy Spirit to strive for excellence and holiness.
- Families will desire to have holy homes.

Intellectual Maturity: How Do We Know What Is True?

Many times my middle school daughter has come home saying that a teacher or a friend challenged a truth of the Faith. My daughter gets the impression that truth is a matter of opinion. This really concerns me. I think it's dangerous to my daughter's fulfillment and happiness. Here's why.

My daughter is being exposed to the belief that we can never know truth with certainty. Our perception of truth is always colored by our experience and our biases. This belief is called Modernism. The philosophy of Modernism (not to be confused with being simply "modern") is the dominant heresy (a false idea that opposes the inspired teaching of the Holy Spirit revealed through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition). According to Modernism, no claim to truth is valid, and any truth claim is open to amendment, change or rejection. As a father, it is important to me to defend my daughter's mind from the error of modernism.

One of my primary tasks of Catholic father who wants to lead my children to **intellectual maturity** is to connect them to God and to teach her that **He has a plan for her that immerses her in what is true, good and beautiful**. I want my children to learn to appreciate the true, good and beautiful precisely because these things **lead them to God**, who is Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

Specifically, the heresy (error) of Modernism stands in contrast to the Catholic understanding that God tells us that truth is knowable. God is the author of all truth. He gives it to us as a gift. Truth is part of God's love for us. We grow in intimacy with God as we come to know truth about Creation. We grow in intimacy with God as we learn more about who God is and who we are as His children. God intended learning truth to be a delightful experience. He intended it to be fun and fruitful. **God intended learning to be an act of love!**

Of course, we and our children don't always find learning delightful, fun or fruitful. Our attempts to lead our children to intellectual maturity run into some obstacles.

- Original sin has damaged the human intellect. Because of Original Sin, learning (like work) becomes toil among the thorns. It takes much more effort and perseverance.
- Thanks to the error of Modernism, the culture we and our children are immersed in challenges the very existence of truth.



Because humanity passes by way of the family...

- Our children don't necessarily enjoy learning (especially in school). This makes it difficult to teach them the delight of learning.
- As parents, we may not see ourselves as particularly intellectual. We don't feel qualified to lead our children to truth.
- Learning can be difficult for us too! We can lose the sense of fun and fruitfulness that God intended.

How do we overcome these obstacles and lead our children to intellectual maturity? There are many intellectual virtues meant to help us embrace the truth. But the virtue to start with is the virtue of **curiosity**.

It might seem strange to consider curiosity a virtue. Didn't curiosity kill the cat? But if we break it down, you'll see that curiosity is the antidote to Modernism and to the toil of learning. Here are the steps of the virtue of curiosity:

Step 1: Recognize that truth exists and that it comes from God as a gift of love.

Step 2: Come to view learning as an **adventure** of discovering the truth.

Step 3: Respect opinions as **theories** that we need to prove or disprove based on truth.

Step 4: Embrace the adventure of proving or disproving your theories with the truth. Being right is not the goal. Instead, make your goal to discover the truth, wherever it may lead you.

Step 5: Make your findings the subject of group discovery. Let other people debate your findings and back up their theories. Help each other discover the truth.

Step 5: Pray for God's help along the way. Then praise God for the truth when you learn it. Remember that learning truth is an act of love!

Steps three, four and five of this process for the virtue of curiosity may sound familiar to you. These are the same steps for the scientific method. Observe, form a theory around your observations, test your theory, share your results. What you may not realize is that philosophy and theology use these same steps. The difference between science, philosophy and theology is the source of truth each uses to test the theory. Science uses observations and measurements of the physical world. Philosophy uses reason and clear thinking. Theology uses divine revelation. Get to know these sources of truth, and make them the standards you use for testing your theories!

Promote the virtue of curiosity in your family.

1. Use dinner conversation to encourage curiosity. Pose theories you can test as a family through discussion and research. Leave the door open for your children to pose their own questions.
2. Make one exception to the "no technology" rule during dinner. Use one device to research things that come up during dinner. Look up the origins of words or the answers to quick questions. This can enhance dinner conversation rather than interfere with it.
3. Become a champion of truth. Counter claims from our culture that truth is a matter of opinion. Do this especially in the area of Divine Revelation. If you don't understand why the Church teaches something, research it. Learn your faith!
4. Be aware of where Modernism may have already influenced you. What areas of Church teaching do you struggle to accept? What cultural claims about gender, sex, the purpose of life, etc. have you accepted? Compare these cultural claims to the sources of truth. Seek the truth rather than the cultural or political rhetoric we often consume.
5. Have a couple of times planned for each day when you can talk about what happened during the day. Family dinner and bedtime prayers are two great opportunities. Listen for opportunities to discuss how the Commandments and the teachings of Jesus could be exercised in particular situations.
6. Ask your children what virtues **you** need to work on. You might be surprised what they tell you! Then decide together what virtues they should work on. Make a plan to talk regularly about the progress each family member is making in the virtues. Teach your children that conscience formation is an ongoing process.

This article teaches about just a small part of good Catholic parenting. Visit www.twl4parents.com for more strategies that will help you become the best parent you can be. And for the best systematic approach to parenting, consider purchasing the [Teaching the Way of Love](#) program, which can be found at the same website.

This article series is brought to you by Alice Heinzen and Jeff Arrowood, authors of the [Teaching the Way of Love](#) home study series for parents. Find out more at www.twl4parents.com/teaching-the-way-of-love.