

*Raise Them
Well*

*Spiritual
Maturity*



Teaching the Way of Love

because humanity passes by way of the family . . .

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Spiritual Maturity Know, Love and Serve God

PLEASE PRAY
THAT

- Parents will love their children in the same way that God does; selflessly, consistently, unconditionally.
- Parents will show their children the joy they experience by knowing, loving and serving God.
- Moms and Dads will waste time with their children.
- Parents will surround their children with safety, security and joy.
- Families will cultivate deep friendships within their extended family.
- Parents will make time to pray daily with and for their children.
- No child (or parent) will ever find themselves beyond God's love and mercy.
- Families will desire to have holy homes.

Did you know that God created us with a purpose and end in mind? In fact, our greatest flourishing and joy on this earth will be found when we work toward the purpose and end that God gave us. What is that end? To know, love and serve God in this world and to spend eternity with Him in heaven.

As Catholic parents, we want our children to flourish and find joy. That is why we are called to guide our children toward a true relationship with God. The development of a true relationship with God is called spiritual maturity.

Here's the kicker; a relationship with God develops differently than a relationship with a human person because God is invisible. He is present, yet we can't see him. He exists, yet we can't hear him. He is always there, even though we can't touch him.

That's why leading our children to spiritual maturity requires a multi-faceted approach that shows others who God is. Of course, this starts with our own relationship with God. When our children see us actively and joyfully engaged in our spiritual life, motivated by love for God to go above-and-beyond religious duty, they are more likely to catch that relationship themselves. We have to confidently show our children that we know God exists, that we acknowledge His goodness and that we want to follow Him.



And, we have to express the love of God through our actions. Children will know God's love through our love. When we love as God does (selflessly, unconditionally, constantly), our children gain trust that God loves the same way. This will deepen their desire to want to love Him in return.

It is also necessary for us to develop a relational environment within our home so that God's presence can be easily felt. What does this include? Homes should be

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known for their security, safety and joy. When these are present, parents and children help each other, interact regularly rather than isolate and deal with conflict calmly. They develop a sense of belonging and are okay with quiet and silence. They aren't stressed or overburdened with multiple activities and deadlines. Secure, safe and joyful homes provide a foretaste of heaven for parents and children.

There is one final element that is helpful in the development of spiritual maturity. Consider filling your home with physical reminders of God. We are not suggesting that you attempt to make your home into a basilica. We don't expect you to fill your walls with religious imagery. But, we do suggest that your home communicates warmth, family love, and faith with tastefully placed religious art, articles and Scripture verses. People who enter your home (most importantly your children) should always know they are surrounded by God in your home. Praise God that our rich Catholic tradition gives us a lot to choose from!

Cultivating your own relationship with God, expressing love selflessly, unconditionally and consistently, and creating a home environment that is safe, secure and joyful all set the stage for spiritual maturity. These essentials provide the foundation for a deep and intimate relationship with God.

Fill Your Home with the God's Spirit

Spiritual maturity is a lifelong journey for each of us. We know that the family plays a pivotal role in the development of spiritual maturity because it is the first and most intimate community of love. The family is designed by God to be the center of radiant faith in God. Let's take a look at seven key ways that a family can become what God intends it to be—the seedbed for faith and divine love.

1. Pray together each and every day. This can be done formally or informally.
2. Eat meals together and interact in ways that ensure everyone knows they belong to the family.
3. Celebrate rituals and holy days. Always rejoice in the good news from God and from each other.
4. Enter into family discussions about what matters to you. Invite God's wisdom into each discussion.
5. Nurture the personal prayer life of each family member. Encourage and value each person's time alone with God in prayer.
6. Worship together with other families each week by attending Mass and regular reception of the Sacraments. Draw your family close to the Universal Church.
7. Serve others in need as a family. Make this a mission of your entire family.

This challenge is 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.