

Necessary
Conversations

Prepare Them
First



Teaching the Way of Love

because humanity passes by way of the family . . .

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Preparing for Another School Year

Ready or not, here it comes. School is back in session!

So much changes with the start of a school year. Some families look at the return to set schedules, planned activities and earlier bedtimes with delight while other families loathe the loss of spontaneity and impulsivity. The personality of your family certainly colors how you will embrace the start of the academic year.

When the school bell rings, it is easy for all families to focus on the logistics of daily planning (you know – Are the backpacks ready? Does everyone have socks and shoes? Is homework complete? Who's taking cold lunch?) The need to prepare for each day's classes and activities can certainly become priority #1 for everyone. Being prepared can become the **most important** motto for daily family life.

As a parent, it is easy to get lost in the details of having *everything* ready each day. But, is that truly what is most important? Which is more worthy - making sure that every **person** is ready or having every **thing** in order? Clearly, preparing a child for school is much more important than preparing a backpack.

Can you guess who is the best person to prep a child for the ups and downs of this year's learning? It is the parent. It is not the teacher, the para-educator, the school counselor, the coach or after school liaison. It is you: the mom or the dad.

Parents are best suited for this role precisely because they know their child better than anyone else. By example, a parent knows that a child who needs more sleep must have an earlier bedtime. A parent with a forgetful child knows how to allow extra time to pack their backpack. A parent with an anxious child know how to put a note of encouragement in a lunch sack.

Here's reality; parents have the easiest access to what is going on inside their child. Parents are designed by God to know what their children need from the inside out. Parents are given the capacity to release and guide the emotions, thoughts and tendencies of the child. They are like a tap on a maple tree that coaxes the flow of sap from within to the outside world.



PLEASE PRAY
THAT:

- **Moms and Dads find time to converse daily with their children.**
- **Parents will embrace their role as primary educators for their kids.**
- **Parents will love their children in the same way that God does; selflessly, consistently, unconditionally.**
- **Parents will love their children for who they are rather than for what they do.**
- **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.**

Because humanity passes by way of the family...

Having the easiest access does not imply that drawing out a child's inner self is effortless. Nothing like stating the obvious, right? Staying connected to your child (and keeping your child connected to you) requires time, attention and patience. Fortunately, there is one action that you can develop and use each day that literally enhances your ability to stay connected. It's your capacity to talk with your child. Meaningful conversation between a child and his or her parents is the way to make the invisible world that is within your child become visible to you.

Perhaps that is why conversation with a family meal or dialogue just before bedtime is considered so powerful and effective by researchers. Parents who are adept at conversation with their children plan for a daily exchange. They make it a priority to talk every day. They know that the daily face-to-face exchange is critical to family unity and fosters readiness for life.

Research also reveals that the strongest bonds of love and respect are created through expressed care and loving support. Parents also learn that the daily conversation focuses first on *how* the child is doing and then on *what* the child is doing. They strive to make themselves available and approachable. And, they do their best to give their child the benefit of the doubt.

How prepared are you to engage your child this year and learn about their thoughts, emotions and tendencies?

Preparing Yourself for Necessary Conversations

If you really want to see your child exceed and succeed this school year, begin by preparing yourself to guide them through the best school year yet. Check your readiness for this school year by asking the following questions of yourself.

- Am I ready and able to prepare my child for another school year?
- How confident am I in my capacity to hold a daily discussion with my child about school and related life issues?
- Do I think that I have what it takes to express what I think and what I believe to my child?
- Am I ready to listen what my child has to say and keep him or her engaged in conversation?
- Do I know how to use conversation to guide my child towards the best in every situation?

If your answers to these questions is less than a definite YES, let TWL help you become confident in your capacity to talk with your children. Learn how to engage children in conversation and guide them towards the best in every situation during the 5 part "Necessary Conversations" webinar series. Register for the series today at twl4parents.com/necessary-conversations-webinar/. The first session is free.

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.