



Please Pray That

- God will put an end to the pandemic and lay His healing hands on His people.
- We may be able to come back to the Sacraments soon with a renewed love and respect for these fountains of grace.
- Families will make the most out of their time together to grow closer to each other and to grow in holiness together.
- Parents will have the support of the Holy Spirit as they hold “necessary conversations” with their children.
- Young people will embrace the truth of God’s plan for our happiness.

Necessary Conversations About the Art of Sacred Silence

My world is so quiet right now. As I sit at my keyboard writing this article, my children are sitting in the living room quietly working on their schoolwork. I just finished Morning Prayer, and my heart is filled with gratitude for this moment of serenity. Now, don’t get the idea that this peacefulness is normal for us. With two early teenagers in the house, even in times of forced solitude, our family life is noisy, chaotic, and quarrelous. But rare moments like these remind me of another **necessary conversation** to have with my children. I want to teach my children the value of using “sacred silence” to grow in holiness.

The time of forced quarantine we are experiencing right now has been a golden opportunity for silent reflection. Our days aren’t filled with the usual running around. We have fewer distractions in general. This is a great time to exercise the “art of sacred silence.” But opportunity only becomes advantage with conscious effort. So we need to seize this opportunity for ourselves, and teach our children to seize it as well.

The Art of Sacred Silence

Of course, the goal isn’t just to be quiet. Catholic tradition gives us four ways to practice the art of sacred silence in order to develop what we call our “interior life.”

Thinking/reflecting: It is good just to stop and think about our lives and the world around us. It’s important to especially consider the meaning and purpose of things in your life.

Introspection: Thinking about your own life is an extremely important part of growing in holiness. Again, the focus of introspection is meaning and purpose. Why do I feel this way? Why do these thoughts go through my head? Why do I desire these things?



Teach Your Children the Value of
Silent Reflection & Discernment

Prayer: Lifting our hearts and minds to God in order to grow in intimacy with the Holy Trinity is one of the keys of Catholic life.

Discernment: Discernment is the culmination and combination of introspection and prayer. It means listening to the various “voices,” desires, drives, and motivations in your life, discerning where they’re coming from (God, Satan, your best self, your sinful self), and seeking God’s path for you.

Having Necessary Conversations About Discernment

So how exactly do we exercise the art of silence and teach our children to do the same? What exactly do we think about? Here is an exercise in discernment to give you and your children a start:

1. We are created VERY good

The first chapter of Genesis tells us that when God created humanity, He declared it VERY good. This isn’t only true of humanity, it’s true of every single person. Reflect on what is **good** in you. What strengths do you have in your personality and character? What natural talents did God create you with? What spiritual gifts has the Holy Spirit blessed you with? How has grace worked in your life?

2. We are fallen

While we are created good - and retain that goodness - we are also fallen. Original Sin has damaged our personalities, made us more prone to sin, and disordered us in various ways. It can be especially difficult to reflect on our fallenness. It’s so negative! But it is necessary for us to know how we are fallen in order to take the next step - answering Jesus’ call to healing and conversion. What sins do you commit? Which sins have become habitual (i.e. turned into vices)? Which of your vices might be your root sin? Your root sin is the main disordered desire that tends to shape your life and your choices. We all have disordered hearts. Specifically, we each have an “Original Wound.” What is your Original Wound - what are you actually seeking in most of your sins? It could be something like fear of rejection (not feeling worthy), feeling of abandonment (not feeling loved), helplessness, fear, or distrust.

3. We are called

Exploring how we are wounded and how we sin is an important exercise of the interior life. That’s why the Church gives us the examination of conscience and the deeper “Examen” of Saint Ignatius. But as Catholics we know that our fallenness is not the end of the story. We know that while we are still sinners, Jesus calls us to healing, redemption, transformation, and holiness. That call is our next area of reflection. How is God calling you to cooperate with grace in order to heal and transform your heart? What kind of person do you think God is calling you to become? Realizing that Jesus’ main call to us is to follow Him in radical love, in what ways might He be calling you to grow in selflessness, self-sacrifice, and care for others? More specifically, Jesus calls each of us to a specific vocation as our particular “school of love.” Young people need to spend time praying about and pondering how they are called to love and to serve. Adults need to do the same, but thinking about how they are called to take their vocation to the next level - to love even more deeply and radically.

That’s a lot to think about! But if you’re having regular “necessary conversations” with your children, you’ve already been preparing them for this kind of reflection and discernment. Each topic that we’ve covered this year is something that leads us away from God’s plan for our lives. Talking about these issues leads us all to stop and think about our lives. That’s the goal of these “necessary conversations.” So keep talking with your children. Keep encouraging them to reflect and discern God’s will for their lives. And keep leading them to become holy and happy adults, living in God’s loving plan.

This article tells 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.

