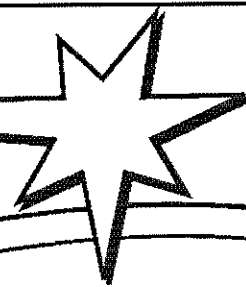


Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

September 2023

St. Matthew Religious Education



Thoughtful Moments

St. Padre Pio

Born to farmers in 1887 in Italy, Francesco Forgione joined the Capuchin Friars. In 1918, Fr. "Pio" received the five wounds of Our Lord's Passion (stigmata) in his body. Renowned for his preaching, holiness, and charity, thousands sought him for Confession and spiritual guidance. His famous advice, "Pray, hope, and don't worry," consoles and inspires many today. Even in his sufferings, he cared for others' spiritual and physical well-being, founding a hospital that continues to operate today.



Raising good stewards

Stewardship means demonstrating that all we have and all we are belong to God. Children can be given opportunities to practice stewardship by participating in service projects, giving away excess possessions, and especially by giving to the Church. Our offerings enable our parishes to provide ministry to us and our communities.

"I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you"
(Psalm 32:8).



Four healthy habits for a new school year

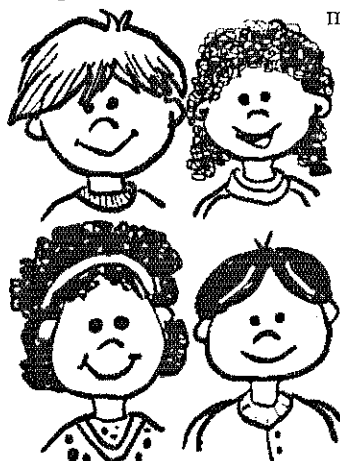
As people of faith, we know that our lasting happiness is found in a relationship with God. Help children develop these four soul-healthy habits in the new school year as a key to finding lifelong joy and lasting fulfillment in God-filled lives:

Prudence is a virtue that helps us consider decisions from a practical and Catholic viewpoint – choosing friendships, activities, and entertainment that flow from our Catholic values.

Justice encourages us to give others what they're owed. Attending Sunday Mass is just because we owe God our worship. Others deserve respect because all are made in God's image. Treat everyone with respect, honor, and charity, and children will follow your example.

Fortitude strengthens us to follow Christ faithfully. Model fortitude for your children by offering many saints as role models, helping children spot how God works in your lives, praying aloud together in good times and bad, consulting Scripture prior to acting.

Temperance properly prioritizes our desires. Good food, fashionable clothes, the latest technology are all blessings, but can't be a focus. As an antidote, reserve a day each week for penance – Fridays, from tradition – to help increase appreciation for those blessings. Spend extra time in family prayer, set limits for screens, abstain from meat or favorite foods. We deny ourselves small pleasures so we can appreciate the greatest Gift.



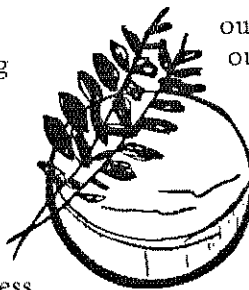
Why Do Catholics Do That?

Blessing ourselves with holy water before entering a Catholic church recalls the washing rituals of the Old Testament Jews who cleansed themselves by bathing before entering the holy temple.

In addition, when we bless

Why do Catholics bless themselves with holy water?

ourselves with holy water, we recall our baptism and renew our promises to God to live our faith. Because holy water is a sacramental, we receive graces when we use it with the right disposition, such as strengthening us against temptation and removing venial (small) sins.



Good sports – big and small

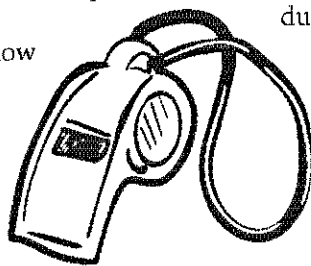
Children learn the basics of sportsmanship from adults, especially parents and coaches. By learning to develop good sportsmanship, children also learn that success in sports comes to those who know how to persevere and respect others – win or lose.

Focus on lessons learned. Winning is just one lesson learned from playing sports. Youngsters also learn to take pride in their efforts, their improving skills, and in their accomplishments, even if the ending score doesn't favor them. Encourage young athletes to play fair, to have fun, and to concentrate on helping

the team while improving their own skills.

Remember, you are the parent. How you behave during practices and games will teach your children more than what you say. Unless you are coaching your child's team, stay on the sidelines. Shout only encouragement – not directions or criticism – to the players. Praise sincere effort and congratulate winners, even if they're on the other team.

Stay positive. Express only support for coaches, officials, or other players. Any concern you have should be addressed privately.



Scripture LESSON

Matthew 20:1-16a, God's ways are not our ways

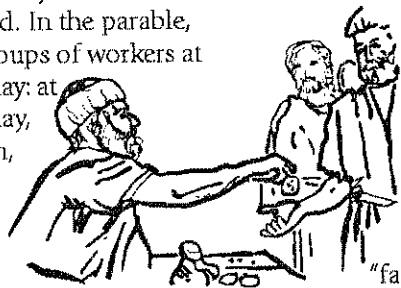
In this Gospel reading, Jesus compared God's kingdom to a vineyard and God to a generous landlord. In the parable, the landlord hired groups of workers at different times of the day: at the start of the workday, at midmorning, noon, midafternoon, and finally, at five o'clock in the evening. All the workers agreed on a "fair wage."

Jesus' listeners must have been shocked to hear the landlord paid all the workers equally, regardless of how long they worked. In fact, he paid the workers who came the latest, first. Understandably, the full-day workers

were frustrated. They complained to the landowner, who reminded them that he paid them the agreed-upon sum; the rest was sheer generosity.

What can a parent do? The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard shows that God judges "fairness" differently from

us. The last people we expect to see in Heaven might be the first people to greet us in Paradise. This parable reminds us not to assume we know the state of someone's soul. We may judge actions, but only God can judge hearts.



Parent TALK

When my daughter was invited to a professional soccer match by a friend, she was thrilled. She had been

playing soccer for few years and was excited to see how the professionals play it.

Before she left, I

reminded her of the behavior I expected from her. I stressed the importance of saying, "thank you," and I urged her to be polite and use her manners.

Anne came home beaming. It had been a great game and her team had won. Later, she told me that only one thing had marred the experience for her. She said that a man who was sitting in front of her yelled insults at the opposing team through the entire game and even used bad language. Anne was shocked to see an adult behave that way and remembered my lecture about manners. She said someone should have reminded the man to use his manners.



Feasts & Celebrations

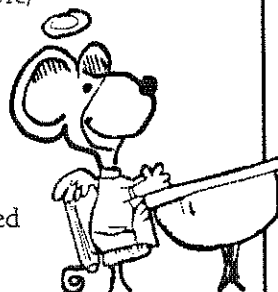
September 12 – The Most Holy Name of Mary. We honor Mary's name out of respect for her relationship to Jesus. One of Mary's titles is "Help of Christians." We can always look to Mary to lead us back to her Son.

September 13 - St. John Chrysostom (407). Born in Antioch around AD 349, St. John was called "Golden-mouthed" for his eloquent homilies. As Bishop of Constantinople, his concern for the poor led to criticizing the opulence of the royal courts. He died in exile.

September 22 – St. Thomas of Villanova (1555). Born in Spain, St.

Thomas studied theology at the University of Alcalá, before becoming a priest. Named Bishop of Valencia by Emperor Charles V, he fostered Catholic spirituality in his diocese, and provided for the poor.

September 29 – Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Rafael. Today, we remember the three archangels named in the Bible, who were entrusted with important missions to mankind, such as St. Gabriel's visit to the Blessed Mother at the Annunciation.



Our Mission

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