

PARENT LINK



**JANUARY
2011**



*St. Alphonsus
Religious Education
Program*

kcody-stals@comcast.net

Make Faith-Friendly Resolutions

The beginning of a new year offers the promise of a fresh start. Many people celebrate by resolving to make changes, often related to how they care for their bodies.

This year, take time to reflect on what you can do differently in your home to strengthen your family—and each member's faith in God. Use these ideas to transform your family in 2011:

Begin the day with music. Mornings are hectic in most houses. Play some soft Christian music to wake everyone up and to set the tone for a calm, God-directed day.

Reclaim mealtime. Eat together as often as possible. Research points to all kinds of child-development benefits from this practice. But family meals also help you get to know one another better—and provide opportunities for faith growth. For example, ask specific, open-ended questions, such as "What's the best thing that happened to you today? the worst?"



Use Your Family Journal. Make a renewed effort to use your family journal to record and reflect on how your family lives out your faith. If you filled up the little pocket journal we provided, start another. All you need is an inexpensive notebook. Setting aside time to use your journal will help you to raise the priority of faith formation in your family.

Develop a family mission statement. As a family, pinpoint your worthy purposes, worthy visions, and worthy values. A mission statement will unite you because everyone gives input into your family's "big picture." And God will be placed at the center of your home on purpose, not by chance.

Start a Parenting Revolution

According to research by the Barna Group, fewer than 10 percent of parents who regularly attend church have consistent family time with God. George Barna's book *Revolutionary Parenting* applies modern-day research to show that parents who faithfully apply God's instructions for family life raise spiritual champions. Unfortunately, most people parent "by default" or use "trial-and-error parenting," according to Barna.

PowerSource



Ask God:

1. To bless and guide your family during the year ahead.
2. To help you all embrace new habits so you grow closer to God and each other.
3. To grow each family member's faith this year.

Parenting Insights

Thom Schultz, president of Group Publishing, offers these tips for helping children's faith take root:

1. **See the sacred in the ordinary.** Attach "God thoughts" to daily activities. Bathing a child can remind you of baptism, and talking with one another can remind you of the gift of prayer.
2. **Be alert to teachable moments.** Put up your "God antennae." For example, use the media as a teaching tool that sparks discussions.
3. **Just "be" with your kids.** Simply be present without an agenda. When you stop trying so hard, it's freeing—and you'll actually relate better.
4. **Realize your family doesn't have to be perfect.** Read the Bible together to see that God's grace was—and still is—sufficient for imperfect people.

OpenTheBook

"Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"
2 Corinthians 5:17

Jesus offers us a fresh start not only on New Year's but each and every day. By paying the price for our sins, Jesus made each of his children a new creation.

Teachable Moments

1. Keep It Short—You can make a big impact even when you're short on time. For example, read aloud one Bible verse at the breakfast table to start the day. At bedtime, tell a Bible story in your own words. Remember: "Short passages for short people."

2. Take a Pause—Your family doesn't always need to be on the go. This year, make it a priority to step away from some commitments and shorten your to-do list. Use the extra time to regroup, reconnect, and recharge.



3. Be Peacemakers—If one of your goals is less sibling conflict, help redirect tension by focusing on positive qualities. Whenever one family member is mean-spirited to another, have the offender say or write three things he or she appreciates about the other person. This will make your family more tenderhearted and thankful for one another.



Fr. Brian Visit's Classrooms

Fr. Brian stopped in at most of the rooms to wish every one a Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year, to hear what the children were learning, and to answer some of their questions. The kids enjoyed the opportunity to talk to their pastor!

Begin a conversation with your children about the new year by asking them these questions:

1. What excites you the most about the new year, and why? What are you the most uncertain about, and why?
2. What are some things you want to do differently or change in the upcoming year?
3. What types of goals do you think our family should set, and how can we work together to meet them?
4. What are your suggestions for a family mission statement? What best describes who we are and what we want to do?

A Picture of Patience

Most of us are not experts in patience; it doesn't come naturally for us. Unfortunately, life requires patience all the time and everywhere we go. Contrary to popular opinion, patience does not equal lethargy. Nor is it indifference. And certainly, it is not that fatalistic attitude toward life that sits back, twiddles its thumbs, and hums, "Whatever will be, will be." Patience is just the opposite. Rather than producing weakness or cowardice, patience releases a lasting force of enormous power and influence that lies embedded in the patient person. The power of patience moves people beyond adversity, through the throes of pain, and beyond difficult situations.

In *A Gardener Looks at the Fruit of the Spirit*, Phillip Keller says that in the New Testament, patience is a picture of a beast of burden remaining steadily under control. It is an ox yoked to a plow breaking up the stiff soil of its owner's field. No matter whether the plow runs into rocks, stumps or heavy sod, the patient beast just pushes steadily on. It is a small donkey bearing enormous burdens of firewood, sacks of grain, or other produce for its owner. It is a camel harnessed to a circular treadmill moving hour after hour, day upon day, to irrigate parched land or thrash wheat to feed a hungry village. There's no haste in patience.

Not everything goes our way. We all face interruptions, irritants, and inconveniences that frustrate us. God doesn't promise to remove the barriers of frustration from our lives, but he does promise to show us how we can bear up patiently against any trial.

The life of a Christian in the hands of God is like an arrow in the hands of a skilled archer. He points us toward something we cannot see, and the pressure mounts as he stretches and strains us to a point where we say, "I can't stand anymore." He goes on stretching until his purpose for us is accomplished.

Patience perfects our Christian character and molds us into Christlikeness. As the irritants come into our lives, they become like sandpaper smoothing us and fashioning us into a life that resembles Christ's--a powerful and effective life.



What's Playing at the Movies

Movie: *Gulliver's Travels* (Dec. 22)

Genre: Adventure, comedy

Rating: PG (brief rude humor, mild language, action)

Cast: Jack Black, Emily Blunt, Jason Segel

Synopsis: In this twist on the Jonathan Swift tale, mail clerk Lemuel Gulliver talks his way into a travel-writing assignment. He ends up in magical Lilliput, where he's larger than life. Gulliver tells tall tales about himself and leads his new friends in battle. But when he's discovered, he must fix the damage and show that what's inside makes him a true "giant."

Discussion Questions: When have you fibbed to make yourself seem bigger or better than you really are? What consequences do people face when they stretch or ignore the truth? Read aloud Acts 5:1-11. What impact do you suppose these deaths had on others? Read aloud Luke 16:10. How do you try to be trustworthy in both big and little things?



What Music Is Releasing

Artist: Brandon Heath

Album: *Leaving Eden*

Artist Info: Heath, 31, is an award-winning contemporary Christian musician known for his rich voice and deep lyrics. Heath is also involved with overseas Christian missions.

Summary: In "Your Love," Heath sings that God's love is "the only thing that matters" and "all I ever needed." Heath says, "I just want to tell people that they are loved by God. My life's been an unbelievable journey, and it's all been because of God."

Discussion Questions: What things matter most to you, and why? How would your life be different if you didn't know about God or his love? Read aloud John 15:9-13. What are some ways you feel God's love? How do you share God's love with other people, including those who don't know God?



What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Disney Epic Mickey</i>	Mickey Mouse becomes a hero in this "darkly inventive" new game. Using a magic paintbrush, he must save a fantasy realm. Contains cartoon violence.	E; Wii
<i>Pac-Man Championship Edition DX</i>	This deluxe edition featuring "gaming's oldest mascot" has nine new mazes with many game options, plus more ghosts.	E; Xbox, PS3
<i>Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit</i>	As cops or racers, players feel the thrill of the chase and can compare racing stats with friends. Contains some violence.	E10+; PS3, Wii, Xbox

GAME RATINGS KEY: EC=Early Childhood, E=Everyone (ages 6+), E10+ (ages 10+), T=Teen (ages 13+)



Culture & Trends

What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- Families are more diverse than ever, with people designing family structures that work for them. Almost 40% of people say marriage is becoming obsolete. (Pew Research Center)
- "Cyber-bullying" causes more depression than physical bullying, with victims feeling isolated and helpless. Parents say they're stepping up online monitoring. (Nat'l Institutes of Health)

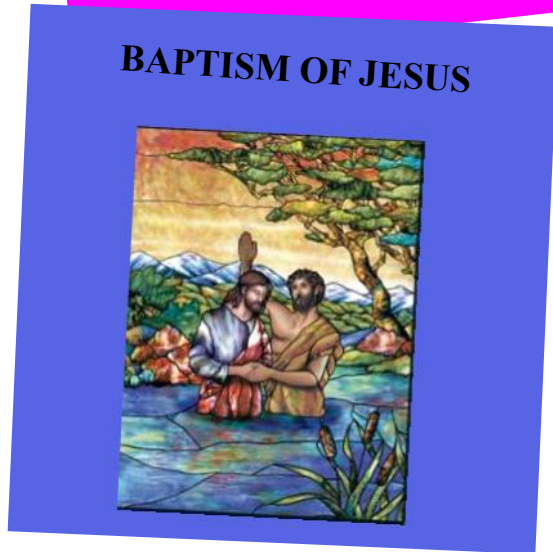
Quick Stats

- Parents' interest in their child's education is six times more important for a student's eventual grades than are the child's own efforts. (telegraph.co.uk)



- When preteens were asked what they'd like to do someday, 54% said travel the world, 46% said speak another language, and 40% said invent something. (Harris Interactive)

LTC REGISTRATION FORM



Sunday, Jan 9th
12:45 in the
RE Building
Special activities for
Pre-K children related
to the coming and
baptism of Jesus

Cost per family: \$5 - Please submit registration form by dropping it in the collection basket, mailing it to Parish Office 210 E. Logan Street or e-mailing your information kcody-stals@comcast.net.
If you have any questions, call the RE Office (630)257-2371

YES, we want to attend the Little Tykes Epiphany/Baptism Program!

Family Name: _____

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Attending: _____

Name(s)/Age(s) of Child(ren) Attending: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Home Phone No.: _____ Cell Phone No.: _____

Allergies/Medical Conditions: _____

In the event that the undersigned, or our authorized physician cannot be reached and in the judgment of the Director of Religious Education, or other staff member, there is necessity for immediate examination and/or medical treatment of our child, we hereby request and authorize any of the aforesaid personnel to obtain for our child such medical services as are deemed necessary. I agree to assume the financial responsibility for any diagnosis/treatment and for any medication deemed necessary.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

January 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						1
						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
						“Dancing Under the Stars” Men’s & Women’s Club.. 6pm
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Tr. A Classes 9:45-11:15am LTC Event 12:45 Deaf RE 3:00	Tr. B Classes 4:30-6:00		Tr. C Classes 6:00-7:30pm			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Confirmation Retreat at SAP School 1:00-4:30 pm			Tr. 6:00- 7:30pm C Classes			First Reconciliation 10:00 & 12:30
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Tr. A Classes 9:45-11:15am Confirmation Rite 8:30, 10 Deaf RE 3:00	Tr. B Classes 4:30-6:00		Tr. C Classes 6:00-7:30pm			
30	31					
Donut Sunday Young People’s Mass - 4th Grade 8:30			23rd - NFL Conference Championship Party - Men’s & Women’s Cl			