

Partners in FAITH™



Helping our children grow in their Catholic faith.

January 2017

Saint Aloysius Religious Education
Caldwell, NJ



Thoughtful Moments

St. Genevieve

St. Genevieve was born in Nanterre, near Paris. According to tradition, as St. Germanus was traveling to Britain, he saw Genevieve—then only seven—and predicted her future holiness. He encouraged her to consecrate herself to God. When she was 15, she became a nun and traveled around Paris, caring for the poor and sick. Her prayers are credited with saving Paris from attack, destruction, and an epidemic in 1129. With St. Denis, she is co-patron of Paris.



Do one thing

Did you know the family is called the "Domestic Church"? What the Church does on a universal scale—bringing others to Christ—families do on a small scale. Make your family New Year resolution to implement one new way to bring Christ to your world. Through prayer, service, or hospitality, spread the love of God.

"For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4).



Connect children to the Church through service

Children who find joy in serving their parish when young feel personally connected to their faith community throughout their lives. This connection makes our children and our Church stronger. Try these ideas to help children serve in your parish:

Children's Mass ministries. Many parishes offer children's choirs that sing during Mass and most give children the chance to serve on the altar. Both of these choices encourage young Catholics not just to observe but to participate in the Eucharist. They learn the order of the Mass, master prayers and hymns, and establish healthy relationships with the clergy.

Ushers and greeters. Encouraging young ones to extend hospitality to Mass goers reminds them that the church is their home. Many parishes allow

youngsters to work alongside adult ushers and greeters, distributing bulletins, finding seats for parishioners, assisting with the collection, and directing lines during Communion.

Service ministries. No hand is too small to extend to someone with a need. Powerful opportunities in which children can serve include

participating in food drives, soup kitchens, work camps, or visiting nursing homes.

Christian witness. Young people who know the traditions, creed, teachings, and history of the Church can serve by sharing their Catholic faith with others. Parents encourage this by taking youngsters to religious education classes faithfully and attending Mass every Sunday and holy day.



Why Do Catholics Do That?

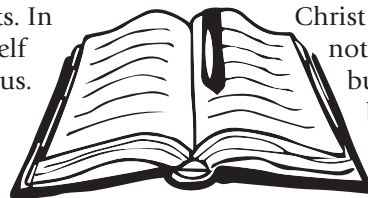
Why does the Bible have two parts?

"All scripture is inspired by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). This includes the Old and New Testaments. In them, God reveals himself and his infinite love for us.

The Old Testament recounts how God formed the Israelites into his chosen people

and promised them a Savior. The New Testament shows how Jesus

Christ fulfilled that promise, not just for the Israelites, but for all humanity. To better understand Jesus, we must view him in light of both the Old and New.



Celebrate your Catholic family

Catholic families have a unique identity, one which not only strengthens our families, but the entire Church. "Christian marriage and family build up the Church" (Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, #15). Celebrate yours.

Catholic parents are instruments of God's love. Children learn about God's love from their parents and we help shape their relationship with him.

Our identities are shaped by Catholic traditions. We are truly Catholic when we attend Sunday and holy day Masses faithfully, work for the poor and vulnerable,



and observe the seasons of the Church year.

Catholic families breed respect. Our children feel valued because we care about their behavior and hold them accountable as Christians. We help them develop good manners and respectful behavior.

Catholic families practice modesty. Catholics are called to control passions and avoid public and private sin. Christian parents encourage children to behave as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Catholic parents model self-sacrifice. We regularly set aside our personal desires for the good of our family, our parish, and our community.

Scripture LESSON

Matthew 5:1-12, Paths to happiness

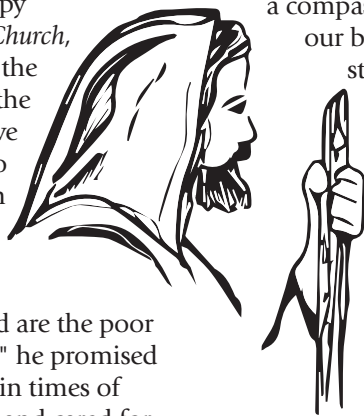
When God created us, he put into our hearts the desire to be happy (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1718). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pointed out the path for happiness and gave us a compass we can use to navigate our way. Our path to happiness lies in surrendering to God's will and trusting in him.

When Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, they who mourn," he promised that when we turn to God in times of trial, we will be comforted and cared for. When he referred to "the meek, the merciful, the pure of heart, the peacemakers, those who hunger and

thirst for righteousness," he gave us a compass. We can measure our behavior against these standards to see if we are on the right path to happiness.

What can a parent do? Read the Sermon on the Mount with your children and help them compare their behavior against its standards. Teach

them to see that Jesus gave us these guidelines to help us be happy on Earth and eventually get to Heaven.



Parent TALK

My New Year's resolutions were not going well. I couldn't go to the gym, attend daily Mass, clean the house daily, and still be patient, loving, and kind! A few weeks after New Year's Day, I realized the rest of my family was struggling, too.

"How about," suggested my husband, "we each pick just one resolution on which to focus."

"Something that's challenging, but doable," Benjamin chimed in.

"One is more doable than five," agreed my daughter, Isabella.

We each declared our resolutions: helping around the house, no TV during the week, no procrastinating, and going to Mass more often. I wrote our names next to our resolutions and taped the list to the refrigerator. Every week, we check in to see how our resolutions are going and offer encouragement when we struggle to keep them.

With God's grace, we are keeping our resolutions, one day at a time.



Feasts & Celebrations

Jan. 8 – Epiphany of the Lord.

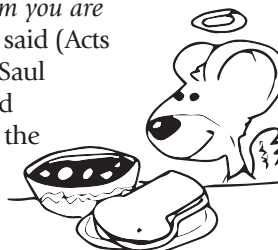
"Epiphany" is Greek for "manifestation." When they honored the infant Jesus, the three wise men bore witness to the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior.

Jan. 9 – St. Adrian of Canterbury (710). Although he turned down a papal request to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, England, St. Adrian did much of his work there. He was born in Africa and served as an abbot in Naples, Italy. When his friend St. Theodore became the Archbishop of Canterbury,

he appointed St. Adrian as abbot of the nearby monastery of SS. Peter and Paul. Under his leadership, the monastery became an important center of learning.

Jan. 25 – Conversion of St. Paul. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read about how Saul persecuted the Christians until Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting," he said (Acts 9:5). After that, Saul became Paul and traveled around the known world, preaching the faith.



Our Mission

To help parents raise faithful Catholic children
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