



Diocese of
Green Bay



"Follow Jesus" Resource for Parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Do you realize the tremendous impact that you have on your child's faith? Maybe you haven't thought about this before from the perspective of faith.

According to Dr. Christian Smith, author of *Soul Searching* and the National Study on Youth and Religion, after studying thousands of young people, it is clear that when it comes to faith, hands down, parents have the most significant influence on their own children. This journey of faith began in Baptism; each one of us became a new creation in Christ. For Catholics, the Sacrament of Baptism is the first step in a lifelong journey of commitment and discipleship. Whether we are baptized as infants or adults, Baptism is the Church's way of celebrating and enacting the embrace of God. As parents, in the Sacrament of Baptism, you affirmed your support for your child to be formed in faith.

Five Tips to Help You as a Parent:

1. Be a disciple.

Children want well-reasoned answers to the questions that are on their heart. Figure out what you believe and why so that you can have growing and honest conversations with your children. Keep growing, learning, and sharing your faith with your children. Do not let the faith be like a puzzle piece in your life that could be plucked out and tossed aside. The faith should be so interwoven into your life that if you tried to remove it, you wouldn't even know where to start, and if you succeeded in removing it, the whole masterpiece would be destroyed. Growing in your faith as a family happens at the parish, but also in your home!

2. Don't be afraid to talk about Jesus and share your story of faith.

Naturally talk about Jesus and what is going on in your own life. Share how important your faith is to you and how God is working in your life. This will help your children to see how natural and normal it is to be a person of faith. Children have to see you practicing their faith for it to become real. Do you know that you have a story of faith? Each one of us does. Sit down and think about what your story of faith is or what pieces are significant that you would like to share with your children.

A Disciple's Prayer:

Jesus,

**Help me to love you and know you more.
Help me to reflect your love to my friends,
family, and the world,
Help me to love with your heart,
to carry out my work with your hands,
to be a voice for Jesus in all that I say and do.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit!
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.**

Amen.

Reflection Questions:

Who do you know that is a disciple of Jesus?

Write their names here: _____

How can they help you to be a better disciple?

Name three ways that you can grow in your love for Jesus:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What promise can you make to Jesus about being his disciple?

Write that promise here: _____

3. Weave faith into the home.

Create a space for prayer in your home. Set aside a place for the family Bible and read from it. Display your favorite statues, pictures, and medals. Celebrate the feast days of patron saints that are important to your family. These can't just exist at the church; they need to be in the home.

4. Do what a disciple does.

Be rooted in the simple disciplines of a disciple such as daily prayer, going to Mass at least once a week, frequenting the Sacrament of Reconciliation, sharing your faith with others, serving others, etc.

5. Pray for, with and over your children.

Do not be afraid to pray with your children out loud, for example, as they leave the house or go on a car journey. Pray over your children, for example, make the sign of the cross over them. Pray for your children constantly. Set aside regular time for prayer, help them read Scripture, and ask them what they are hearing as God speaks to them.

Thank you for your desire to inspire and equip your children and your family with the tools to live out the Catholic faith.

What is a Disciple?

Did you know that when you were baptized, you began your journey as a disciple?

The word “disciple” comes from the Greek word “*mathetes*,” meaning “pupil/student” of the master. The Master is Jesus and we are his students.

Jesus invites each one of us to be his disciple, to follow him, to worship him, and to share him with our friends, family, and the world.

A disciple is a friend and follower of Jesus, who introduces others to Jesus and lives out the Good News.

A disciple of Jesus is someone who:

- Discovers Jesus
- Follows Jesus
- Worships Jesus
- Shares Jesus

Ten Ways to Grow as a Disciple:

- Talk to Jesus and his Father, God, in prayer.
- Open your heart up to the Holy Spirit and ask him to guide your life.
- Read the Bible as often as you can.
- Tell others about Jesus and the Catholic Church.
- Study and learn as much as you can about your Catholic faith.
- Share your gifts with the Catholic Church — your time, your money, and your talents.
- Spend time with people who love Jesus and the Catholic Church. Learn from them, ask them questions, and ask them to pray for you.
- Help those who are suffering and in need.
- Make an effort to love all people as Jesus did, especially those who are hurting and angry.
- Go to Mass and participate in the Sacraments of the Catholic Church, especially Reconciliation.



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