



How Does Faith Begin in Families First?

Long before your children are old enough for school or any formal religion program, they are already beginning to grow in faith. They are already living and growing in the midst of a community of faith — their family.

What does it say to your children that one of the most important occasions of their lives was the day of their Baptism? Even though they have no conscious recollection of that day, they have seen photographs, they have heard stories, and they know their godparents. When these family stories are told and retold, your children recognize the importance of those events, and they begin to gather impressions about faith and about religion.

What does it say to children that your family prays at mealtime? At bedtime? While you may not think of this as “teaching,” your children are learning much about faith lived in the care of God who loves them and hears their prayers. And when a loved one is ill and your family prays for recovery, your children learn that God is with us even in the most sad and frightening moments of life.

From the earliest experiences children come to know God through creation. Gradually, even the youngest child is introduced to the stories of Jesus. This is the beginning of readiness to hear and embrace the Gospel.

As your children attend Mass throughout early childhood, they come to know that there is something special about the place where they gather with you and other members of the parish. Even as little children they recognize that special actions and events happen there. Soon they want to participate in Holy Communion.

Faith-filled moments permeate all of family life. It is true: faith happens in families first. And you as parents are blessed with love and grace to foster your children’s spiritual growth. Indeed, as parents you are uniquely able to teach your children —first because you yourselves are persons of faith and second because you are parents.