



Department of Faith Formation
Diocese of Ogdensburg

Passing on the Faith by Teaching in the Home

By: Jessica Hargrave, *Secretary, Department of Faith Formation*

School is back in session both virtually and in-person. Some parents are finding challenges adjusting to the new learning environment facing schools as health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Many parents are choosing to homeschool their children, which includes teaching religion lessons that would primarily be taught by a catechist in a classroom or parish. Joe Paprocki, National Consultant for Faith Formation at Loyola Press and a catechist for over 40 years, offered tips to parents teaching religion at home so the experience can truly be an encounter with Christ. Paprocki reassures parents that they can do this since their children learn from them every day, from walking, speaking to tying their shoes.

“When doing faith formation for your child, strive to make it a priority,” said Paprocki. “While your child has many lessons to keep up on at home, make sure that faith formation doesn’t feel like just another lesson, but instead a very special time together as a family.”

To do this, Paprocki suggests setting aside a separate time and space from other school lessons. Also, parents can add a sense of the sacred by placing a Bible, crucifix, or light a candle on a table. If lighting a candle, ask what or who your child would like to pray for, along with what they are thankful for, then take a moment to pray together. Before starting the faith formation lesson, Paprocki suggests parents first become familiar with the concepts of the lesson before presenting it to their child. What do the concepts mean to you personally, how do they affect your day to day, and what stories or insights from your life can you share to enhance the learning?

“The more you share personally, the more your child will know your faith is important to you,” said Paprocki.

To start, take a few moments to tell them what the focus of their lesson will be and ask them if they know anything about that topic already. Tell them why that topic is important to know and understand. At the end, be sure your child understands the main point of the lesson by reviewing what they’ve learned.

Remember that you are not alone, and your parish is just a phone call if you have questions about a topic you don’t know about or understand.

Right now, parishes within the Diocese of Ogdensburg are crafting a plan to resume in-person faith formation programs. Sister Shirley Anne Brown, SSJ, Catechetical Leader for Our Lady of Grace Church in Morristown tells parents choosing to do at-home catechesis creates special memories that will stick with their children as they grow older.

“Children hopefully will remember the content of the lesson as they grow into their own Faith life, but they will never forget their parents' stories of faith and their praying with their parents.”

To watch the full video of Joe Paprocki’s tips and for faith formation resources go to: <https://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com>.