

Grade 2



PARENT PAGE

Parents have the unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators or catechists. They teach by their witness of the faith, through their values and attitudes, by their Christian example of love for Christ and his church. When children are baptized, parents accept the responsibility to raise their children in the practice of the faith...(National Directory for Catechesis 234-235)

Dear Parents,

In a special document entitled *Letter to Families*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area; they are educators because they are parents" (16). You are the first and best role model for your child in these growing years. Your role as parent to love, teach, and lead your child to Jesus is a remarkable and noble vocation.

At this particular stage of development second graders can begin to project themselves imaginatively into the position/situation of others. They begin to see how their actions and the way they act in the world affects others. They admire their parents and trust other adults with authority. Your second grader has a strong desire to be part of the church community through the Mass and the sacraments of Eucharist and Penance. Your witness to faith and Catholic practices are vital because your child trusts you and wants to follow your lead. Remember, there is no greater influence on your child's faith development than you.

Your Child's Faith Development

Like other stages of development, your second grader's faith development is important. Keep in mind that your child will come to know and understand the faith at his or her own rate of development. Here are some general points to remember.

Children at this age:

- ✠ Grow in their relationship with God particularly through prayer based on life experience
- ✠ Vest great authority in parents and other trusted adults
- ✠ Desire to join in the ritual of the parish community as seen in the desire to participate in penance and Eucharist
- ✠ Need help in formation of conscience
- ✠ Begin to sort out reality from imagination based on practical experience
- ✠ Need concrete experiences to understand concepts and religious truths
- ✠ Use classes and categories to order actions around them
- ✠ Can begin to project themselves imaginatively into the position/situation of others
- ✠ Begin to order the religious world
- ✠ View rules as inflexible
- ✠ Understand reality best in story form
- ✠ Identify with heroes and heroines of the Bible
- ✠ Identify with the stories of the Church (lives of saints for example)
- ✠ Desire to learn about people and their differences
- ✠ Accept attitudes of parents, teachers, the Church, and other social institutions toward differences in people

How You Can Help Your Child Grow in Faith

This year your child will continue to learn more about the Church and the importance of belonging, participating, and sharing in the faith community—the life of the Church. Through preparation for the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, your child will begin to experience the saving presence of Christ in his/her life. Your child will learn the importance of the Eucharist as the center of our life and the source of spiritual nourishment and strength for the body and soul. He/she will come to realize that the sacrament of Penance is a celebration of God's love and forgiveness that gives us grace and helps us to become more Christ-like.

Here are several points that will aid you over the course of this year, in helping your child grow in his/her faith.

- Attend and participate in Sunday Mass as a family. Afterward, talk about some of the things that occurred during Mass—mention especially the Eucharist (Holy Communion). Remind your child that this is the year he/she will make first Holy Communion. Share some of your memories about the sacrament with your child.
- Use everyday opportunities and interactions to help your child experience forgiveness and the importance of forgiving others who hurt us. When helping to prepare your child for the sacrament of Penance (Confession) allow him/her to express any concerns or fears he/she might have. Be sure to attend the parent meetings offered for the sacraments.
- Learn all you can about our Catholic beliefs. Obtain a copy of the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* from the diocesan Learning Media Center at (412) 456-3120 or e-mail jhirst@diopitt.org.
- Talk with your child about what we believe and why we believe it. If you don't know an answer to a question, ask your catechetical administrator or your pastor.
- Share your experiences of faith and talk about how you see God working in your life.
- Be open to your child's questions, and as a family work together to experience our Catholic faith. Take advantage of parish events, show that as Catholics we are part of a community.
- Follow Jesus' example and his teachings, truly do your best to live a good Christian life.
- Pray the following prayers with your child: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Apostles Creed, Grace before and after meals, Prayer after Communion, Prayers and responses of the Mass (if necessary, get the prayers from your child's parish catechist).

Our diocese provides many resources and materials that will help you better understand the faith and work with your child at home. Among the resources is the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, an adaptation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For more information contact the Department for Educational Media at (412) 456-3120 or e-mail jhirst@diopitt.org.