



March Newsletter

Saint Joseph Parish School of Religion

Dear Parents,

What is Sunday to you? Is it a day to set aside to be with your family and to attend mass together or is it a day to squeeze God into your schedule. So many times I see families rushing here and there but do they really know where they are going? Do we know why we are going in that direction?

Sometimes God has another plan and we constantly ignore the signs. It may be our children asking to go to mass or to sit in the front of church. This is not just our catechist talking to them but the yearning for their faith. They come to PSR every Sunday during the school year ready to absorb all that we can teach them about the faith. Sure there are days that they don't want to be here, they are children, but it is up to our catechist to feed off those signs to make the best of it. As parents it is your job as well to make sure that you want them to be here as well and the importance of being taught the faith.

My little girl, Bri, is attending the Sunday Preschool program and she always wants to go. Everyday she wakes up she asks me if she is going to Sunday school and boy is she disappointed when I tell her it's not Sunday. Wouldn't it be nice if everyday were Sunday? Everyday we had the opportunity to make sure that God was the central part of our day. Well to be honest that is how it is supposed to be and many times that is our very intention.

We don't go to church and be Catholic just on Sunday – we are Catholic everyday of the week. This is a big responsibility and sometimes the secular world gets in the way. Whether it is our jobs or sports we always seem to have something come up that drives us away from our faith, most importantly our family. Jesus did not say it would be easy to follow him and we will have many crosses to bear and it is up to us to answer his call.

I answered the call this weekend by attending the Catholic's Men's Conference which was presented by the Catholic's Men's Fellowship of Greater Cincinnati. This was an uplifting experience and even though I attended one a while ago it gave me a reality check. That reality check is – am I living my faith to the fullest. Not only am I a husband, father, son, brother, but most importantly I am Catholic and here to serve God.

I have been called to serve our Lord and to be an example to all those in my parish and family on what it means to be Catholic. I am not perfect – we are all sinners, but I make sure that everyday I talk to the God to make sure that I am going in the right direction. I would like to share this short story from the conference.

"There was the man on a train that everyone knew that as soon as he opened up his briefcase that the world would not exist because he gets so caught up in his work. The Conductor was calling for tickets and the

man didn't even hear and when the conductor came up to the man he was startled. The man started searching for his ticket but had no luck. The conductor said don't worry, I know that you have your ticket somewhere, just when you get home and find it mail it to me. The man said no – you don't understand I need my ticket because I have no idea where I am going!"

Do you know where you are going? Let's make sure that during this Lenten season that we renew our faith not only for ourselves but for our family. Everyday that we wake up it is an opportunity to serve the Lord and our children are watching every move we make. Whether it is how we talk to our spouse, parents, or children we are being looked up to and what it means to live our faith in work and deed. Now the question is are we going in the right direction?

If you are not sure and need an uplifting experience I encourage you to make sure that as a family you take time to attend Holy Week Services provided by our parish. This will allow you to put your faith in perspective and realize that love that God has for us and continues to have for us. He loved us so much that he gave his only begotten son to die on that cross. As you attend mass look at the crucifix and take a step back from the secular world.

Realize that our God is an awesome God and no matter what direction we are going he is always going to be there. So let's promise as we finish out this Lenten season to become better Catholics not only for ourselves but for our family and parish. Our children just want to absorb the love of the faith from their parent's everyday of the week as they do with their teachers on Sunday. We are here together molding the youth of our parish to come to know our Lord and Savior. Your families are in my prayers and I hope that you have a wonderful Easter!

Disciple of Christ,
Steven M. Fischer
Coordinator of Religious Education

Important Dates to Remember

March 2	Class
March 4	First Communion Meeting 7:00 PM Church
March 9	Seasonal Celebration (Memorial Hall) 11:30 AM Ministries
March 16	No Class – Spring Break
March 23	No Class – Spring Break
March 30	Class

**Friday Evenings during Lent:
Way of the Cross 7:00 P.M.**

(Confession available on all Fridays after Stations)

Celebrating Saint Joseph

Patron of the universal Church, fathers, carpenters,
and social Justice

Feast Day: March 19th

Everything we know about the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus comes from Scripture and that has seemed too little for those who made up legends about him.

We know he was a carpenter, a working man, for the skeptical Nazarenes ask about Jesus, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55). He wasn't rich for when he took Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised and Mary to be purified he offered the sacrifice of two turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb (Luke 2:24).



Despite his humble work and means, Joseph came from a royal lineage. Luke and Matthew disagree some about the details of Joseph's genealogy but they both mark his descent from David, the greatest king of Israel (Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38). Indeed the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also for Jesus.

We know Joseph was a compassionate, caring man. When he discovered Mary was pregnant after they had been betrothed, he knew the child was not his but was as yet unaware that she was carrying the Son of God. He planned to divorce Mary according to the law but he was concerned for her suffering and safety. He knew that women accused to adultery could be stoned to death, so he decided to divorce her quietly and not expose her to shame or cruelty (Matthew 1:19-25).

We know Joseph was man of faith, obedient to whatever God asked of him without knowing the outcome. When the angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him the truth about the child Mary was carrying, Joseph immediately and without question or concern for gossip, took Mary as his wife. When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. He waited in Egypt without question until the angel told him it was safe to go back (Matthew 2:13-23).

We know Joseph loved Jesus. His one concern was for the safety of this child entrusted to him. Not only did he leave his home to protect Jesus, but upon his return settled in the obscure town of Nazareth out of fear for his life. When Jesus stayed in the Temple we are told Joseph (along with Mary) searched with great anxiety for three days for him (Luke 2:48). We also know that Joseph treated Jesus as his own son for over and over the people of Nazareth say of Jesus, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" (Luke 4:22)

We know Joseph respected God. He followed God's commands in handling the situation with Mary and going to Jerusalem to have Jesus circumcised and Mary purified after Jesus' birth. We are told that he took his family to Jerusalem every year for Passover, something that could not have been easy for a working man.

Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, many historians believe Joseph probably had died before Jesus entered public ministry.

Joseph is the patron of the dying because, assuming he died before Jesus' public life, he died with Jesus and Mary close to him, the way we all would like to leave this earth.

Joseph is also patron of the universal Church, fathers, carpenters, and social justice.

We celebrate two feast days for Joseph: March 19 for Joseph the Husband of Mary and May 1 for Joseph the Worker.

There is much we wish we could know about Joseph -- where and when he was born, how he spent his days, when and how he died. But Scripture has left us with the most important knowledge: who he was -- "a righteous man" (Matthew 1:18).

<http://catholicparenting.com>

Happy Birthday

Philip W	March 5th
Ansley T	March 10th
Eric W	March 15th
Ben T	March 16th
Emily R	March 17th
Stephanie R	March 17th
Erin K	March 20th
Travis S	March 24th
Robby C	March 30th

***"Before I formed you in the
womb I knew you."
(Jeremiah. 1:5)***

Do Your Kids Know Why We Celebrate Easter?

Dennis Rainey

As Grandpa Bob drove into the driveway he could see his 4-year-old granddaughter, Julie, and a couple of her friends playing in the backyard. It was almost Easter and he wanted to know how much these children knew about the Easter story.

Approaching the three little girls he asked, "Who knows why we celebrate Easter every year?"

One friend chirped up first: "Oh, that's when you go sit on the big bunny rabbit's lap and tell him what you want in your Easter basket."

Her second pal's answer was no better: "No, no, no! It's when you get a tree and hang eggs on it—and you wake up on Sunday and there are presents under it and ..."

At this point Grandpa interrupted and gently said, "Those are good guesses. Julie, do you know why we celebrate Easter?"

Julie nodded her head. "It's when Jesus was crucified. He died, and His disciples put His body in the grave. Then, on the third day, the stone rolled away ..."

Grandpa was really encouraged that Julie knew so many details.

"... And then the entire town would come out by the grave," Julie continued. *"And if Jesus came out and saw his shadow, they knew there would be six more weeks of winter!"*

Understanding the Message

Well, at least little Julie had a portion of the message right! Yet my experience tells me that, when told the story in a way they can understand, children are capable of understanding the message of Easter. This holiday presents a great opportunity to tell children of their need for salvation.

Many children are able to comprehend and experience the grace of God at a very early age. In fact, many of the great leaders of the church became Christians when they were young. It was said of Polycarp, a first century church leader that he walked with God for 86 years before he died at the age of 95. Isaac Watts, the great hymn writer, came to saving faith in Christ at 9 years of age.

How old must a child be before he or she can place saving faith in Jesus Christ? C. H. Spurgeon, the great English preacher, said, "A child who knowingly sins can savingly believe."

I was six when I began to understand my need for forgiveness. I recall becoming so aware of my sin that I would lay in bed and shudder—afraid to go to sleep at night for fear that I'd die and spend eternity in hell.

So one Sunday evening I told my mom that I felt it was time for me to give my life to Christ. And that night, with a huge lump in my throat, I walked down the church aisle in a public confession of my desire to make Jesus Christ my Savior and Lord. I look back on that commitment as the most important decision in my life and am thankful to my parents for their faithful instruction that led me to that point.

What does a child, or any person, need to know to become a Christian? Following are the basics of what your children need to know:

Children need to be taught who God is and how He loves them.

God is holy. He is perfect. We are not perfect.

God is just. He is always fair. We are not just in all our decisions.

God is omnipotent. He knows all there is to know. We are not all-knowing.

God is sovereign. He is in control. We are not in control.

God is love. He desires a relationship with us; that's why He sent His Son. We do not love others perfectly.

Will they fully understand? No. But children do not need to fully comprehend God's character to be able to believe. They need to understand that He is the Creator, unlike man, and that we are accountable to Him for our lives.

Children need to be taught about sin.

I don't think we talk enough today about sin and the penalty that accompanies it—hell. These are not popular concepts in our culture of tolerance. Hell isn't in style today because it represents a couple of things that are repugnant to many people. It represents accountability to someone in authority—and we want to avoid authority. It also represents absolute eternal judgment. Many people have a difficult time believing in everlasting punishment because they prefer to think that God only as a loving father.

God is loving, but He is not tolerant. He is holy. His justice calls for an atonement (a payment, a penalty) for man's sins. Our children must have some understanding that their sins can keep them out of heaven. Their sins must be paid for. And that is what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross.

Children need to know that they can receive God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.

They need to agree with God that they are sinners, that they cannot reach Him by their own efforts, turn to Him in faith, and trust Jesus Christ to be Savior and Lord (Ephesians 2:8-9).

I remember the night years ago when I was putting my daughter Ashley, then seven years old, to bed. We started talking about the second coming of Christ—how all Christians would be caught up with Him in the air. Ashley frowned and asked about her younger brothers. "What about Benjamin and Samuel—would they go, too? They aren't Christians yet!"

Well, Benjamin was in the upper bunk and his head popped out with a worried look on his face. "Dad, I want to talk to you about how I can become a Christian!" Within 24 hours, Benjamin asked Christ to be His Savior and Master.

It's interesting that all six of our children indicated a desire to come to Christ before the age of eight. As you approach this Easter season, may I encourage you to prayerfully think about your children or loved ones in your family who do not know God's love and forgiveness? What better time to proclaim the good news?

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Holy Week

Palm Sunday, March 16th

Beginning of the Holiest Week of the Year

Tuesday, March 18th

Chrism Mass at the Cathedral 7:00 PM
(Oils are Blesses by Bishop to be used at Baptism, Confirmation & Anointing of the sick.)

Holy Thursday, March 20th

Parish Dinner (Seder Meal) 6:00 PM
Mass of the Lord's Supper 7:30 PM

Good Friday, March 21st

Good Friday Service 12:00 Noon
Stations of the Cross 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 22nd

Confessions 3-4:00 PM
Easter Vigil Service 8:00 PM

Easter Sunday Mass Times:

8:00 AM, 9:30 AM & 11:30 AM

**(There will not be a 7:00 PM evening Mass
on Easter Sunday)**

*There is no doubt that the most evident dimension of the Eucharist is that it is a meal. The Eucharist was born, on the evening of Holy Thursday, in the setting of the Passover meal. Being a meal is part of its very structure. "Take, eat... Then he took a cup and... gave it to them, saying: Drink from it, all of you" (Mt 26:26, 27). As such, it expresses the fellowship which God wishes to establish with us and which we ourselves must build with one another. (*Mane nobiscum Domine*, Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II for the Year of the Eucharist, 2004-2005.)*

Holy Thursday celebrates the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The Eucharist was established within the Passover meal by Jesus with His Apostles. As members of our parish we have a wonderful opportunity to participate in the richness of this feast here by attending a Seder Meal and a foot washing ceremony with your Parish Family.

This is a wonderful tradition which is held at our Parish and it is a time to bring not only our families together but our parish family as a community together. I hope that you find time for your whole family to participate in imitating the apostles at the Last Supper as our Lord and Savior did the night before he died.

The idea is serving foods reminiscent of the Passover meal as the Jews did in Egypt. Elements of the Mass of the Lord's Supper are included to prepare us for participation at the Mass that evening. Incorporating the various senses in this meal really helps active participation, particularly for children.

Holy Thursday is one of the biggest feasts in the Church year, since it commemorates the institution of Holy Orders and of the Holy Eucharist. So for those that have never attended this is what to expect. Sunday best will be worn by participants and the table will be beautifully decorated, with a white tablecloth (in imitation of the white vestments used at Mass) and even the good china and silver will be out. For dessert (since this is a special feast day, no Lenten abstaining here), a cake in the shape of a lamb will be on the table. Father along with a family will sit at the table and before or during the dinner, Exodus 12:1-20 is read —the story of the first Passover. Then the New Testament reading about the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist is read from either Matt 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26 or Luke 22:7-20.

The children need to be reminded that this meal is different than what the Jews celebrate because Christ already died and saved us, so we are not still awaiting a Messiah. We are not obliged to follow the directives for the Passover meal, we are merely doing it in imitation of Christ, so we can use all of our senses to know, love and serve Christ.

The Seder Meal starts at 6PM sharp so don't be late if you want to enjoy this experience. Following the Seder Meal there will be an actual dinner and after the meal, we will attend mass for the **Washing of the Feet**. Members from different organizations within our Parish will participate in this service along with a student from the PSR. The initial reaction is like Peter's, "You shall never wash my feet!" (John 13:8) If we remember the King of Kings, the Son of God knelt before sinful men to wash their very dirty feet (they wore sandals, and there was no carpeting or pavement in that time), how could we put ourselves up as better than the Son of God? Father will go around with a bowl, a pitcher of water and a towel. The account from the Gospel of John 13:1-17 is read and then Christ is imitated by washing the feet of the parish members. Although Christ probably had to scrub, just a little bit of water (even on just one foot) will suffice.

It is a sign of the Sacrament of penance, showing repentance and forgiveness, of rebirth in grace. This activity brings home the teaching of humility and charity when we later witness the Washing of the Feet at Mass. This should begin a discussion on how this was a little act of charity with our family members, imitating Christ. He has given the commandment to love one another as He loves us. Each of us should now make resolutions to show for others in specific actions throughout the year.

Don't forget to RSVP by MARCH 14th – see Church bulletin or visit the parish website under events for more information!