



Tender Tidings

A Magazine for INTENTIONAL CATHOLIC PARENTS

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

Private school? Public school?

Homeschool?

What's best for your family?

**Gardening
with Your
Little People**

**LENT:
Family Stations
of the Cross**

**Easy Meals for
Busy
Weeknights**



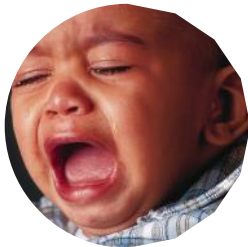
SPRING 2014

Tender Tidings

A Magazine for INTENTIONAL CATHOLIC PARENTS



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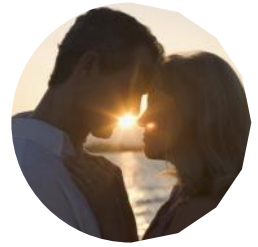
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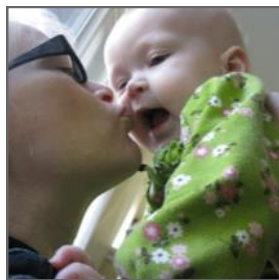
COMING early June!





SPRING GREETINGS from *Kim*

As I write today, spring approaches along with Lent — that time of reflection and new beginnings. I realized recently as I was considering my family’s Lenten plans that I am looking forward to Lent more this year than



I ever have. Though it’s a time of sacrifice and participating as much as we can in the suffering of Jesus, that sacrifice happens in the context of hope — quiet, expectant hope. I’m looking forward to the LESS of this Lent. Less noise, less busy-ness, less spending, even less food. I know that as I turn inward — as I let go of those things that weigh down my mind, my time, my attention — that I’ll rely more on what is essential in my life: the love of God and my family, the strength gained in prayer, the promises of our Faith. Whew, just in time. I really need it!

We have some new beginnings of our own here at **TENDER TIDINGS**. With this issue, we’re test driving a new format for our columns and adding a few new columns. In short:

- Our special topics (the family table, educational options, etc.) will be limited to one section in the magazine rather than across the entire issue.
- I will contribute a brief column that focuses on one of the 7 Building Blocks to a Joyful Catholic Home.
- We have added a special column by **MARCIA MATTERN** on family faith (“Gladstone Light”). She possesses a unique talent for coming up with fun yet meaningful hands-on ways to pass on the faith to our children — I can hardly wait to see what she has up her sleeve!

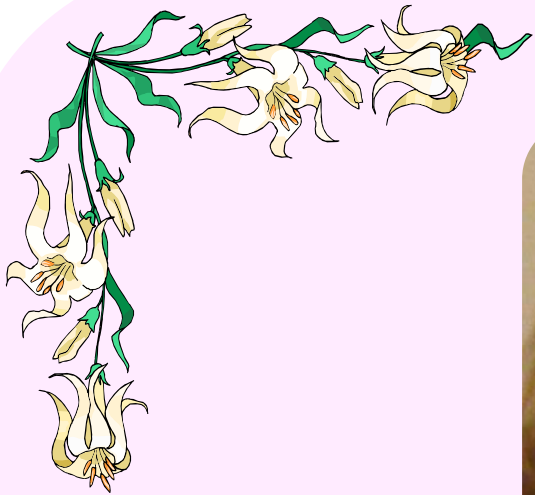
The special topic for this issue is **EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS**, something every parent thinks about especially as our children approach the end of their preschool years. How do we know where and by whom our child should be educated? **MICHAELYN HEIN** presents a superb, well-balanced discussion of this question in “Teach Your Children Well.” No matter what our choice, we must always remember that we’re the first and foremost educators of our children — nobody can replace us in our child’s life in guiding them in understanding their value and purpose.

Have a blessed Lent and Easter with your families, and please visit us at intentionalcatholicparenting.com and catholicap.com!

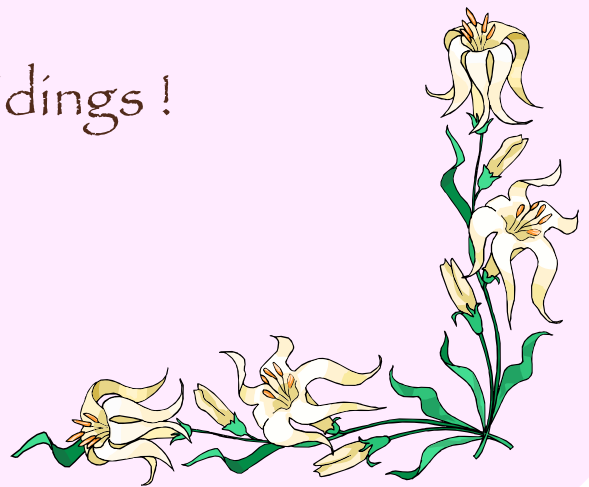
Kim Cameron-Smith



Camellias are blooming in my garden.



Congratulations to
ANGELA PIAZZA
on her appointment
to the position of
COPY EDITOR
at Tender Tidings!



CONTRIBUTORS



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Kim lives in Northern California where she homeschools her 4 children. Kim believes that Catholic theology perfects what is already just and beautiful in secular insights about how children thrive. She is a regular contributor on the topic of “intentional Catholic parenting” on Greg & Lisa Popcak’s radio program *More2Life*. Kim is a licensed attorney and a member of the California State Bar. She holds a B.A. in English from Wellesley College, an M.Phil. in Medieval Literature from Oxford University, a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard University, and a J.D. from U.C. Berkeley.



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Dr. Greg is the author of many books including *Parenting with Grace*. He directs the Pastoral Solutions Institute which conducts Catholic marriage, family, and personal counseling by telephone. With his wife Lisa he hosts the popular radio program *More2Life*, produced by Ave Maria Radio.



Melanie Jean Juneau

Melanie Jean Juneau is a wife, writer and mother of nine children who blogs at *Joy of Nine9* (melaniejeanjuneau.wordpress.com). The very existence of a joyful mother of nine children seems to confound people. Her writing is humorous and heart warming; thoughtful and thought provoking with a strong current of spirituality running through it. Part of her call and her witness is to write the truth about children, family, marriage and the sacredness of life, especially a life lived in God.



Christina Kolb

Christina Kolb lives in Chicago, IL with her wonderful husband, Kevin, and two-year-old son. They are very excited to be expecting another child next May. She holds a degree in English and Sociology from the University of Illinois, and worked for a Catholic organization as a Translation Coordinator before deciding to become a stay-at-home mom. She also trained professionally as a pastry chef, and loves to cook, bake, and write, and combines all of these while blogging at www.butimhungry.com.



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Michaelyn Hein lives in New Jersey with her husband of 8 ½ years, and is a stay-at-home mom to their 4 year-old son. After earning a B.A. in English, and M.A.T. in Secondary Education, she taught high school English for seven years. She left her career when her son was born in order to raise her family. She blogs at www.thepewinback.com.



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Marcia and her husband Steve live in Central Illinois where they homeschool their six children. They first met attachment parenting when teaching and promoting NFP for Couple to Couple League in 1997. Marcia is a Registered Dietitian, a Doula, and Catechist for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. She embraced the Catholic Faith in 1997 after a childhood of Protestantism.

Tender Tidings

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Author submissions: We are delighted to receive proposals for articles and short sidebar pieces. Drop a line with your idea to Kim Cameron-Smith at kim@catholicap.com.



OUR PARENTING MODEL

7 Building Blocks to a Joyful Catholic Home™

1. LOVE

- ♥ Children need unconditional love in order to thrive, but we can send them conflicting signals about how we feel about them. Our words, actions, and countenance can send them the message that they need to do the right thing or achieve the highest awards in order to earn our deepest held love.
- ♥ Loving our children intentionally and unconditionally requires 1) emotional openness, 2) a recognition and affirmation of their unique, unrepeatable value, and 3) our willingness to be changed by our children.

2. EMPATHY

- ♥ Get to know each child as a unique human being.
- ♥ Understand what's behind your child's eyes and in her heart at each developmental stage.
- ♥ Recognize any of your old wounds so that you can parent your child appropriately and with awareness, and not from a place of fear or anger unrelated to your child or her behavior.

3. PLAY

- ♥ All human beings need play in order to thrive, parents and kids alike. Children need plenty of uninterrupted time for free play both alone and with other children.
- ♥ Play is one of the most important ways children connect to us, work through their fears and frustrations, and build their self-confidence.
- ♥ Enter a child's play world on their terms. Be willing to be silly and goofy on occasion!

4. RADIANT FAITH

- ♥ Every family can enjoy a shared faith life that's alive and downright fun! Such faith is a tremendous witness to other families, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.
- ♥ Allow your home to reflect the abundant joy and hope of our Catholic Faith. Explore and celebrate Feast Days and Saints Days with crafts, special parties and teas, and sharing books together. Develop a family prayer plan and pray together regularly.
- ♥ Children, especially young ones, will absorb our attitudes about attending Mass and growing in the Faith. If we're excited and enthusiastic, it'll be contagious! The heart of our Faith is love and hope, and the opportunity for transformation and renewal — not a list of obligations we need to fulfill to be “good”.

5. GENTLE DISCIPLINE

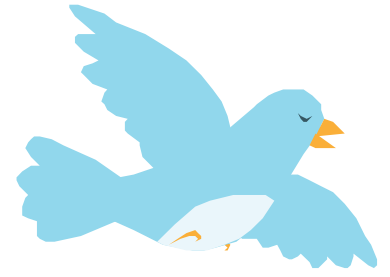
- ♥ The *heart* of gentle discipline is the connection between parent and child. Without a secure connection, discipline will be a frustrating power struggle.
- ♥ The *goal* of gentle discipline is for the child to build a conscience and self-control, not to break the child's will or to coerce obedience through threats. In an empathic, nurturing home a child is never humiliated and parents don't use their superior size and authority to intimidate children into compliance.
- ♥ Growing up can be confusing and frustrating. Try to see situations from your child's perspective, even if it seems irrational to you. We can't expect a 3 year-old to have the self-control of a 6 year-old. Each developmental age comes with its struggles and joys. If we educate ourselves about child development we can understand our child's feelings and needs better, so the balance tips towards joy!

6. BALANCE

- ♥ Balance work, play, and prayer in your home. Do all these things as a family. Each family member contributes to the upkeep of the home as is appropriate for their developmental age. Even very young children enjoy being included in the routine with small jobs, like helping unload the dishwasher, mopping, or dusting.
- ♥ Every parent needs a little time alone to refuel. How much time you can spend alone and how frequently depends on various factors in your home, including the availability of your spouse or a babysitter and how young your children are, but remember that you will be parenting for many years. Don't run out of gas early on!
- ♥ Take time to exercise and eat well. This can involve the kids! Children love to ride their bikes with parents who might be running or biking. Make a hiking plan and explore different hiking trails in your region. Children love to help with food preparations, like making salads and kneading bread dough.

7. A STRONG MARRIAGE

- ♥ If you treat your child with respect and affection, but fail to model such respect and affection with your spouse, your child may still enter adulthood with a relationship handicap. Your marriage models for your children how to treat others in close, intimate relationships. Speak about and to your spouse with deep regard and love; perform little acts of kindness to make his or her life easier. Be willing to *serve* even in small ways.
- ♥ You and your spouse are called to help one another on your paths to heaven. See your spouse the way Christ does, as a precious and priceless soul on a journey to a Divine Destination.



Coming

Late 2014

from Pauline Books

**INTENTIONAL CATHOLIC
PARENTING
*THE BOOK***

by Tender Tidings editor
Kim Cameron-Smith

*“The best gift we can give to any child is to make that child feel wanted, loved, and cared for because that child is the greatest gift of God.”
-Blessed Teresa of Calcutta*



BUILDING BLOCKS *in Focus*



*Kim Cameron-Smith on the
“7 BUILDING BLOCKS TO A
JOYFUL CATHOLIC HOME”*

Empathy

What is it? Why should we care?

One of the “7 Building Blocks” in my Intentional Catholic Parenting model is “empathy.” This is probably the most amorphous of the Building Blocks, maybe the only one leaving you with a sense that you *think* you know what it is, but you’re not entirely sure . . . maybe . . . what? Exactly.

BUILDING BLOCK 2: EMPATHY

- ♥ Get to know each child as a unique human being.
- ♥ Understand what's behind your child's eyes and in her heart at each developmental stage.
- ♥ Recognize any of your old wounds so that you can parent your child appropriately and with awareness, and not from a place of fear or anger unrelated to your child or her behavior.

So, what is empathy and why should we care about it? Empathy is simply the gift we use to know another person — to know them in the reality of their own perspective and experience. To exercise this gift, we must move beyond the limitations of our own assumptions and experiences. When it comes to parenting, exercising this gift allows us to see things from our child's perspective, even when they're wrong on the facts. Given their inexperience and fears, children just don't see things like we do. That doesn't mean we can't empathize with them, that we can't see how terrifying, sad, or infuriating some experience might seem to them, even if we wouldn't personally feel that way in all our awesome grown-upness.

Our sense of empathy requires specific formative experiences in childhood, which can be boiled down to the following four categories:

- ***Responsive Parenting***: nurturing and nourishing the parent-child bond from birth through the teen years
- ***Mirroring***: mirroring our child's feelings and fears, and helping him understand them
- ***Mentoring***: helping our child understand the perspective of others
- ***Modeling***: treating our children and others with empathy and compassion

When we affirm and respect our child, we also strengthen in them their God-given capacity for compassion and empathy.

Human beings were created for community and communion, a potential which can only be realized in the context of real, living, loving relationships. When we move outside ourselves and our own perspective to grasp the reality and experience of another person, God reveals not only more of that person to us but also more of us to ourselves. What's not to like about that?



Live Joyfully

*Joy is a net
of love by which
you can catch
souls.*

— Blessed Teresa of Calcutta





*Dive into the dirt with
your children!*

BY MELANIE JEAN JUNEAU

Ah, spring time. For me springtime means gardening — gardening with little people.

The joy of gardening with children can be experienced in pots on a balcony, in the space the size of a sandbox, in a community patch in the inner city, or in a country garden. Often farmers will rent space to city dwellers to garden. Whether large or small, children will be equally delighted with the joy of raising their own food and tasting delicious fresh vegetables. Gardening is pretty basic. Stick the seed in the dirt, keep the seed moist until it is rooted, regularly water the growing plant in the sunshine, weed it, and sit back to watch nature take over.

Our family lived for 34 years in the country, and our vegetable rows were 75 feet long. The sheer volume of produce we grew was our insurance that the raccoons, groundhogs, rabbits, deer, mice and bears would

I am an avid gardener, but as I had more and more children, I soon realized that if I wanted the kids to enjoy gardening, I had to relax and let the kids help without stealing all their joy away by controlling every little step of the process.

not eat it all. We also grew enough vegetables so we could barter with neighboring farmers, sell some on the road side, or simply give our surplus to our generous family and friends.

The garden was always the *children's domain* as well as mine because I wanted them in the garden, connecting with the earth. Although our gardens were lush and colorful, they were hardly gorgeous show pieces. The toughest perennial flowers were the only ones that survived at our house, ones that could withstand being yanked, stood on, and sat on.

I am an avid gardener, but as I had more and more children, I soon realized that if I wanted the kids to *enjoy* gardening, I had to relax and let the kids help without stealing all their joy away by controlling every little step of the process. That meant crooked rows, unevenly spaced plants, seeds that were planted too deep or too shallow. Children love to dig in the warm earth, especially toddlers

who will dig holes everywhere with a small plastic shovel. One year the dog even joined in, shoving us aside with his front legs digging wildly and dirt spraying everywhere. He actually did save us a lot of work!

When children take part in planting seeds, watering growing plants and picking fruit and vegetables, they become attuned to the rhythms of nature. They marvel at the power packed in a tiny seed because after planting one bean seed, they are soon eating handfuls of green beans they picked themselves. Let your kids pick and eat beans, snow peas, raspberries, strawberries, and carrots straight from the garden as snacks. Actually eating what you have grown is fun. Now, after a lifetime of eating garden ripe tomatoes, corn picked as the water in a pot comes to a boil, and huge plates of fresh green beans with butter and salt and pepper, store-bought garden produce tastes bland to our university kids who live in the dorms.

Let your kids make games out of their jobs, stage



competitions when they pick potato bugs, let them have water play after they help water the garden. Have them help you make rhubarb jam or freeze currants and strawberries. Gardening won't just be a hobby; it can be a large part of their childhood.

One of our favorite family gardening memories was established when I used to recruit the older children to pull vegetables for dinner every afternoon. Of course the toddlers and preschoolers always jumped at the opportunity to tag along. It was an adventure to walk through our jungle of a vegetable garden because a tiny person could lose themselves among the tall plants and weeds. This transformed the daily ritual of picking vegetables into an exciting adventure.

One particular day, rain had poured down for days, soaking our heavy clay soil. When everyone trooped out into the garden wearing rain or barn boots, they were soon coated with sticky clumps of clay. As one of my boys struggled to pull out a huge carrot, his boots sank so deeply into the mud that he couldn't lift his feet. Everyone began giggling as Matthew struggled to extricate his younger brother. David was finally set free but left a boot behind. As he stood on one foot, attempting to free his boot, he fell, landing in the mud. Matt was laughing too hard to help again. Of course, the next rescuer slipped and landed on his bottom with his feet straight out and his body coated in sticky clumps of clay.

It doesn't take much imagination to figure out what happened next. The result was a bunch of laughing kids, covered from head to toe with mud.

They startled me when they came to the door and even I had to laugh while I shook my head and tried to figure out what to do with all of them. Since it was hot enough, we started the clean-up outside. I peeled off ruined outer clothing, washed feet and legs in buckets of warm water, and then the older kids ran inside, one by one, to shower as I carried a toddler and two preschoolers into the tub to bathe. It took three tubs of bubbly, warm water to cut through all that clay.

Yes, I laughed, but I also added, "Remember, only one mud bath per year!"

And so began a yearly tradition.



Melanie's Top 9 Plants for a Children's Garden

1. Sunflower

A must for a child's garden. Plant just two or three. Sunflowers will sprout in 1 week, become a small seedling in 2 weeks, and should be 2' tall in a month. In 8 weeks, the buds will flower with hundreds of seed kernels. Grow 'confectionery' sunflowers, the type grown for food. They will dry naturally in the late summer sun; the seeds can be roasted for snacks.

2. Lettuce

A quick, easy crop to give kids fast results. Lettuce likes partial shade; keep soil moist especially during the first two weeks. The seeds will germinate in 7-10 days; the leaf varieties will mature sooner, about 30-35 days.

3. Carrots

Although the seeds are tiny and they are a pain to thin to 2" apart, there is nothing quite as fun as pulling your own sweet carrot from the ground, rinsing it in a bucket outside, and chomping on it. Carrots also prefer cooler temperatures. They are slow to germinate, so relax. Carrots will mature in about 60 days. Keep them well-watered.

4. Snow Peas

A quick-growing early crop, and fun for kids to eat right off the vine. They take about 10 days to germinate and mature in about 60 days. Peas prefer partially-shaded locations in the garden; they should be sown closely, about 1" apart at most. The pod is edible and, since it is a dwarf plant, can be grown without support.

5. Cherry Tomatoes

These are fun to grow. Plant in full sun and buy young plants. Put in a 2' stake beside each seedling; they need to be tied loosely to stakes as they get taller. Use lots of compost or manure. When you water, try to keep the leaves dry. Growing season is 50-75 days. Cherry tomatoes can also be grown in containers.

6. Bush Green Beans

Beans are so prolific. From one seed, the kids will pick handfuls of small, tender green beans which taste NOTHING like store-bought beans. They also grow quickly. Bush beans germinate in 4-8 days, and mature in 40-65 days. Select the "low bush" types; these will be easier for children to harvest. Plant closely spaced, about 4" apart. Grow in direct sun; water the soil, but try to keep the leaves dry.

7. Nasturtiums

These flowers are easy to grow and flower quickly, which encourages the young gardener. Nasturtiums bloom about 50 days after the seeds are planted, with orange, yellow, and red flowers. They prefer sunny, dry locations and do well in poor soil. Nasturtiums are pest resistant. The flowers are also edible, and can be used to add color to a fresh garden salad.

8. Potatoes

Potatoes always grow well and children like them. Plant the red kind which mature faster. Cut seed potatoes into chunks with at least two 'eyes' per chunk. Plant in furrows, about 12-15" apart, with eyes pointing upward. Mound soil up around plant as it grows; harvest when plant collapses.

9. Pumpkin

Another must for a child's garden. Plant seeds in a small hill; poke three holes in the hill and put one seed in each hole. Seeds will sprout in about 1 week; after a few days, vine leaves begin to form and creep along the ground. Once there are 3 pumpkins on the vine, pick off any new blossoms so that the pumpkins will grow large. Pumpkins take 80 - 120 days to harvest. These are exciting to watch grow because if you give them a lot of water, you can literally see them grow larger every few days. Nothing like carving your own pumpkin.



Intentional Catholic Parenting

www.intentionalcatholicparenting.com

The home of *Tender Tidings* magazine, ICP explores intentional Catholic parenting through the 7 Building Blocks to a Joyful Catholic Home: love, empathy, play, radiant faith, gentle discipline, balance, and a strong marriage.

Catholic Attachment Parenting Corner

www.catholicap.com

Catholic Attachment Parenting Corner (CAPC) offers resources and support for Catholic parents interested in gentle, intentional, or attachment-based parenting. CAPC hosts a Facebook page and yahoo support group.

Couple to Couple League

www.ccli.org

The Couple to Couple League (CCL) is an international, Catholic, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and teaching fertility awareness (natural family planning) to married and engaged couples.

Positive Discipline

www.positivediscipline.com

Positive Discipline is a program designed to teach young people to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities. Recent research tells us that children are “hardwired” from birth to connect with others, and that children who feel a sense of connection to their community, family, and school are less likely to misbehave. Taking this into account, Positive Discipline has as its core tools mutual respect, identifying the belief behind the behavior, effective communication, discipline that teaches, and encouragement.

Parenting Science

www.parentingscience.com

Founded by a biological anthropologist, Parenting Science “is dedicated to families who want information based on the scientific evidence.” Not Catholic, but important and fascinating as we seek to parent prudently and intentionally.

A photograph of a forest path covered in a dense carpet of bluebells. The path leads into a lush green forest with tall trees and dense foliage. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

For lo!

**The winter is past,
the rain is over and gone;
the flowers appear on the earth;
the time of the singing of birds
is come,
and the voice of the turtle
is heard in our land.**

Song of Soloman 2: 11 & 12



Educational Options

In the work of education, the family forms man in the fullness of his personal dignity according to all his personal dimensions, including the social dimensions. The family in fact constitutes “a community of love and solidarity, which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual, and religious values, essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society.”

— *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 238, citing the “Charter of the Rights of the Family”

How your Catholic faith can help you discern the right educational path for your child

TEACH

Your Children Well



BY MICHAELYN HEIN

My mother always said I wanted to be in two places at once. Every time I had to choose between two (or, God forbid, more) options, I'd be stumped. "I want this, but I also want that," I'd complain. And then I'd proceed to hem and haw until I pretty much drove everyone around me crazy.

I learned early on in life that choices cause me a lot of stress. When my son was born, I found that decisions only cause more tension when they affect the life of your child. Now that he's beginning his school-age years, the stress and choices, I realize, only grow more serious.

Once upon a time, children reached the age of five and, as long as they made the cutoff, they were enrolled in their local public school. When I had my son, I envisioned the same simple experience. But, now that he's about to turn five, I have discovered that the next big choice my husband and I will have to make in his life is a big one: how to approach his academic education.

I didn't expect to have to make this decision. It wasn't until I discovered that our local public school only offers full-day kindergarten that I realized I would have some pondering to do. See, I'm not eager to send my son to school for full days yet. He only started preschool this year, and that's just three brief mornings a week. So, it seemed like quite a jump to throw him into a large public school for six full hours each weekday.

And I had another concern: how would the choice we make influence the Catholic faith we are trying to instill in him? Would a particular academic option pull him from everything we're teaching him? Could we make a "wrong" choice and end up with a grown son who spurns his faith because of what he learned at school?

educational options

I turned to family and friends, who have chosen different paths for their children's education, to settle my nerves. I talked with them about their feelings about their own choices, hoping that hearing them out would help my husband and me make a decision we could feel comfortable, even happy, with.

My husband and I aren't alone in this struggle. Across the nation, more and more parents are facing the same decision: how to give their children the best education possible. And for strong Catholic families beset by increasingly secular public school systems and decreasingly Christian local communities, the choice is all the more weighty. For such families, our question isn't just how to provide our children a solid education, but how to do so while still encouraging and supporting the Catholic values we foster at home.

We wonder, we question, we worry. But, at some point we have to take a leap of faith. At some point we have to think and pray more deeply on each choice, and then we have to make one.

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL OPTION

For a Catholic family concerned about the direction our world is taking our children, Catholic school seems the go-to path.

Jill, a mother of three, explains her and her husband's own experiences in Catholic education. In college, she says, "I loved that religion was part of my everyday life both in and outside of class." Her husband enjoyed more years of formal Catholic education when he attended a Jesuit high school and college. "He felt that his faith was strengthened" in these schools and "wanted the same for our kids."

Though Jill spent years as a public school teacher prior to being a stay-at-home mom, when it came to her children's education, Catholic school was a natural fit. Now, she and her husband see the rewards of the choice they made.

"I love that our boys go to Mass every week as a school community, that they begin and end their school days in prayer, and that our values are reinforced at school and at home. I enjoy going to church on the weekends where the boys see their classmates doing with their families what we do with our family."



“Across the nation, more and more parents are facing the same decision: how to give their children the best education possible. And for strong Catholic families beset by increasingly secular public school systems and decreasingly Christian local communities, the choice is all the more weighty.”



Families' motives for choosing a Catholic education vary widely, however, and some of those motives offer some insight into why some children leave Catholic education less grounded in their faith than when they began. Indeed, Jill states she was surprised that some families chose this path so that their religion would be "taken care of at school."

It's a point to consider. While Catholic education offers us the opportunity to interweave our faith in all aspects of our children's lives, it also offers us a temptation to let ourselves slip at home. While it might inspire us as parents to grow stronger in our faith, it also gives us excuses to pray less, or to miss an obligatory Mass now and then. After all, it's easy to think, my child already went to Mass at school today, so do we really need to go again as a family?

Choosing Catholic school, then, can present an unrealized challenge to us parents to stay strong in our faith; however, it is a challenge that we should recognize and rise to, and one that we could look forward to benefiting from in our own faith journey. The example we set for our children in doing so might be the spark that ignites a religious flame in them.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL OPTION

For many families, Catholic education, while appealing, just isn't feasible. Indeed many families express a desire to send their children to Catholic school, but admit that the financial burden would be too great.

Shannon, a mother of three, is one such mom. She admits that while it was important to her and her husband to have their children in a school setting outside the home, they were torn between Catholic and public education.

When it came time to enroll their eldest, she says, "my husband and I wanted her in a place that would complement the religious foundations and principals we are trying to instill in her at home." But the cost of putting three children through school was a concern that ultimately led them to choose public school.

Their worries about whether the school environment would support their religious values, however, were lessened thanks to their community. "We are in a rural, mostly Christian area. So while our children may not be getting a Catholic education, they are getting exposure to Christian values," Shannon says.

Despite this, she recognizes it is still a public school that follows a secular curriculum. As such, she realizes the need to remain vigi-



educational options

lant. "A Catholic family that chooses public school," she says, "must continuously monitor what is being taught." When something is presented that goes against Church teaching, she explains, she is fully prepared to take action by pulling her children out for such lessons, addressing her concerns with the teacher, or going to the school board, if necessary.



And if she doesn't catch such lessons ahead of time in order to properly protect her children? Well, such experiences offer teachable moments. Our children, she says, must learn to live in the world, but not be of it. A public school education offers our children the chance to learn how to do that while still nestled securely under the wing of a strong Catholic family for guidance.

Additionally, Shannon finds that because she knows her children aren't having their faith routinely reinforced in school, it has caused her and her husband to live their faith more actively in other ways. Her children attend CCD regularly and participate in their parish Bible school every summer. She also recently involved her daughters in Little Flowers, a Catholic girls' club.

Public school doesn't mean parents must compromise their values; rather, it invites us to work a little harder as a family at making sure our faith is a very vivid, daily part of our children's lives.

THE HOMESCHOOLING OPTION

An increasingly popular educational option is one that doesn't involve an outside school setting at all. In a world that tries daily to steal our children's minds, bodies, and souls at shockingly

Why We Homeschool

My family started homeschooling for two reasons:

- 1) My oldest son had a lot of health problems as a preschooler. My husband and I felt he needed a year to rest and gain strength before entering a traditional school environment.
- 2) We didn't feel any school, public or private, could offer our children the quality of education we were looking for.

Eleven years later, we continue to homeschool for very different reasons.

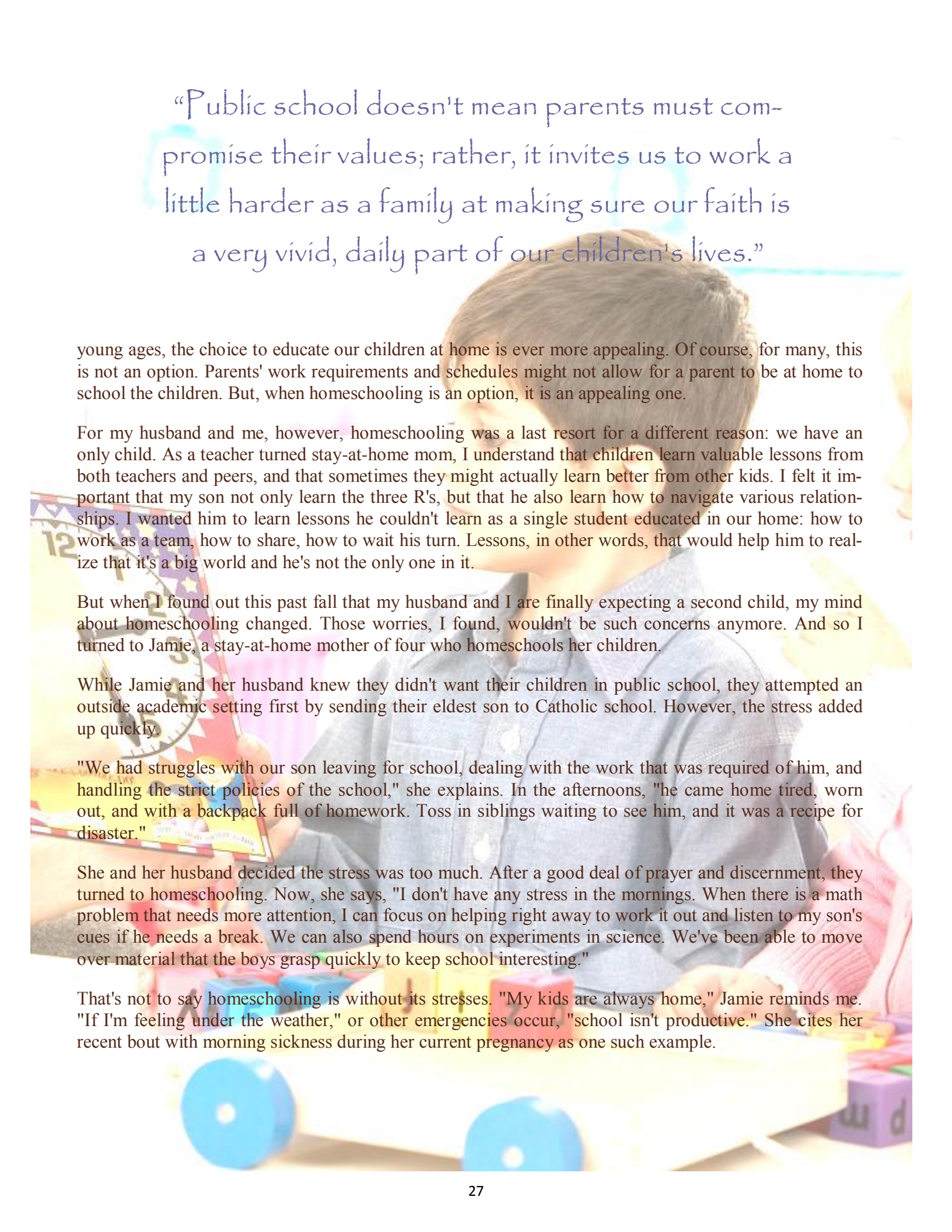
- 1) We love the lifestyle. We have a very relaxed, family-centered existence.
- 2) We are able to teach our children our deepest held values in the context of real relationships rather than as a lesson in "character development."
- 3) It's fun!

— *Kim Cameron-Smith*

Why We Chose Catholic School Education

We have a wonderful Catholic school in our community. Not only are the precepts of our faith, daily Mass, and the Sacraments a way of life there, but the principal, teachers, staff, and students are all living examples of the beauty of the Catholic faith. The values we teach at home are reinforced at school, and this has made a huge impression on my children. I love a school where I can walk in at any moment and hear a prayer being said, the Rosary being recited, and a standard of behavior being taught from the Catholic point of view. And the fact that they can start their day by receiving Jesus at the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass? That is the best source of wisdom they will ever encounter at any educational institution.

— *Charisse Tierney*



“Public school doesn't mean parents must compromise their values; rather, it invites us to work a little harder as a family at making sure our faith is a very vivid, daily part of our children's lives.”

young ages, the choice to educate our children at home is ever more appealing. Of course, for many, this is not an option. Parents' work requirements and schedules might not allow for a parent to be at home to school the children. But, when homeschooling is an option, it is an appealing one.

For my husband and me, however, homeschooling was a last resort for a different reason: we have an only child. As a teacher turned stay-at-home mom, I understand that children learn valuable lessons from both teachers and peers, and that sometimes they might actually learn better from other kids. I felt it important that my son not only learn the three R's, but that he also learn how to navigate various relationships. I wanted him to learn lessons he couldn't learn as a single student educated in our home: how to work as a team, how to share, how to wait his turn. Lessons, in other words, that would help him to realize that it's a big world and he's not the only one in it.

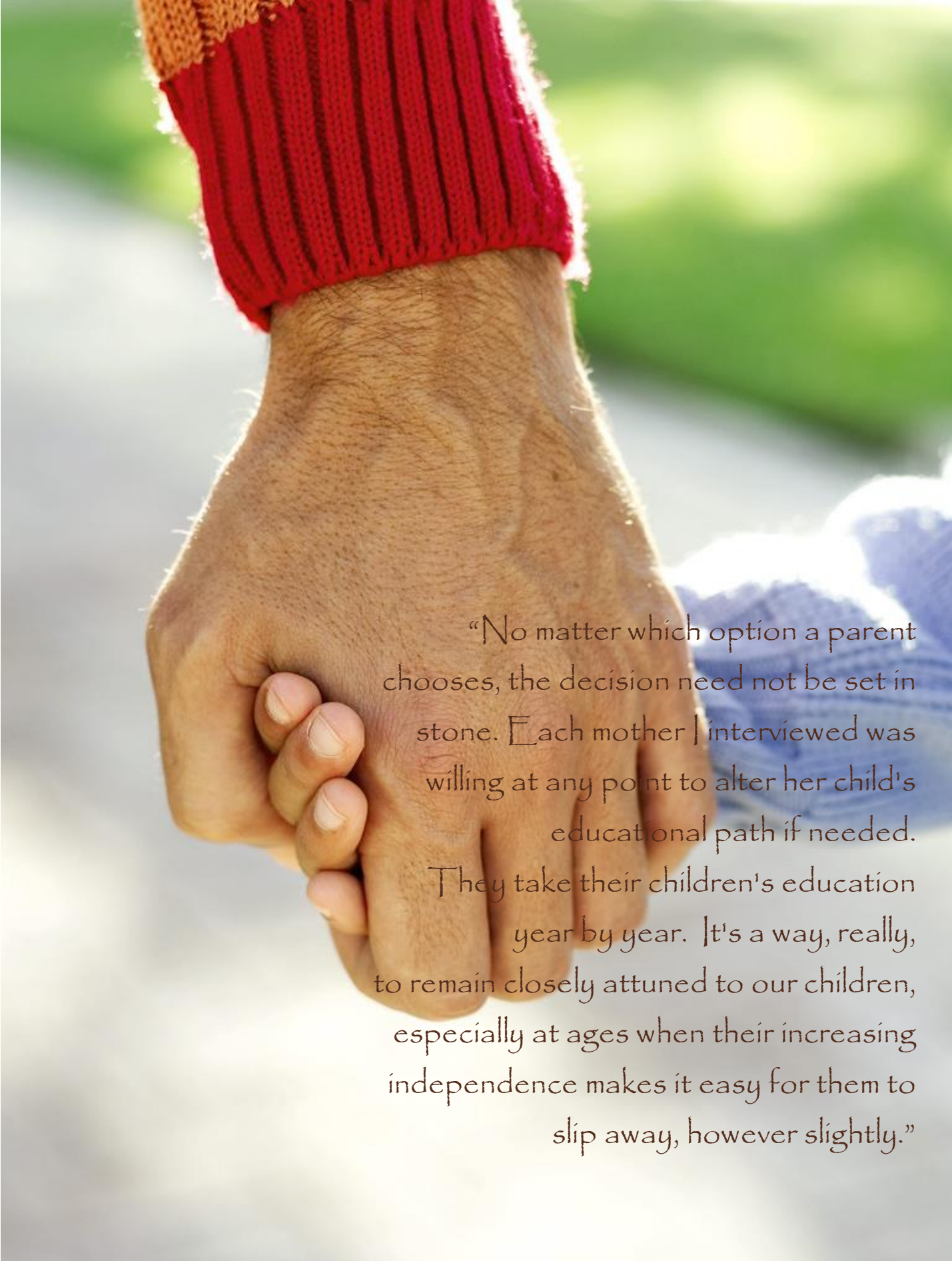
But when I found out this past fall that my husband and I are finally expecting a second child, my mind about homeschooling changed. Those worries, I found, wouldn't be such concerns anymore. And so I turned to Jamie, a stay-at-home mother of four who homeschools her children.

While Jamie and her husband knew they didn't want their children in public school, they attempted an outside academic setting first by sending their eldest son to Catholic school. However, the stress added up quickly.

"We had struggles with our son leaving for school, dealing with the work that was required of him, and handling the strict policies of the school," she explains. In the afternoons, "he came home tired, worn out, and with a backpack full of homework. Toss in siblings waiting to see him, and it was a recipe for disaster."

She and her husband decided the stress was too much. After a good deal of prayer and discernment, they turned to homeschooling. Now, she says, "I don't have any stress in the mornings. When there is a math problem that needs more attention, I can focus on helping right away to work it out and listen to my son's cues if he needs a break. We can also spend hours on experiments in science. We've been able to move over material that the boys grasp quickly to keep school interesting."

That's not to say homeschooling is without its stresses. "My kids are always home," Jamie reminds me. "If I'm feeling under the weather," or other emergencies occur, "school isn't productive." She cites her recent bout with morning sickness during her current pregnancy as one such example.



“No matter which option a parent chooses, the decision need not be set in stone. Each mother I interviewed was willing at any point to alter her child's educational path if needed. They take their children's education year by year. It's a way, really, to remain closely attuned to our children, especially at ages when their increasing independence makes it easy for them to slip away, however slightly.”

“As with Catholic and public school, homeschooling parents who hope to raise children to be strong in the Catholic faith are equally challenged.”

And what about juggling a toddler, a preschooler, and two school-aged boys? It's a challenge, she admits, but one that can be overcome. Jamie explains the importance of being able to keep to a basic daily schedule but also being comfortable with changing it up should things go awry.

As with Catholic and public school, homeschooling parents who hope to raise children to be strong in the Catholic faith are equally challenged. Even if a Catholic curriculum is chosen, parents need to take extra steps to ensure that the Catholic lessons being taught are also being lived on a daily basis.

And what of my worries about homeschooling an only child? Jamie put those to rest, too, explaining it's possible to over-socialize your homeschooled child. "Between co-ops, sports, and other community activities," she explains, you might find you actually need to rein your children in a bit. Though perhaps it requires more active searching of your local community for such resources (or starting some yourself), homeschooling an only child can be just as successful as homeschooling half a dozen.

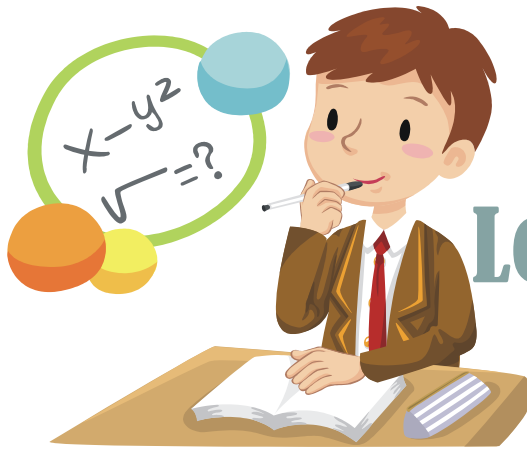
WHAT TO DO?

Though all three options have their distinct differences, every mother I interviewed offers a common thread of advice. Each child is unique; what is best for one might not be best for another. As such, they stress the importance in considering each child's individual personality, needs and desires, and being willing to tailor their education accordingly, even if that means that each child follows a different educational path.

From my end, I noticed another common thread. No matter which option a parent chooses, the decision need not be set in stone. Each mother I interviewed was willing at any point to alter her child's educational path if needed. They take their children's education year by year. It's a way, really, to remain closely attuned to our children, especially at ages when their increasing independence makes it easy for them to slip away, however slightly.

In the end, I'm not sure my interviews helped me move closer to a decision just yet, but they did something better. They helped me reach an encouraging realization: our educational choices are not going to make or break our children's steadfastness in their religion. What's more important in keeping our children steeped in their Catholic faith is a strong Catholic family. And that is knowledge that in the midst of this decision-making storm offers great peace.





Learning Theories *at a Glance*

by Kim Cameron-Smith

Whether you're leaning toward a traditional school environment, homeschooling, or somewhere in between, it's helpful to know a little about the differences between leading educational theories. Here's a look at five of them.

::Montessori::

::Waldorf::

::Charlotte Mason::

::Classical::

::Interest-Initiated or Unschooling::

::Montessori::



Maria Montessori

Built upon the educational philosophy of the Catholic Italian physician Maria Montessori. Child-led learning with structure and limitations. Children choose what they want to learn, but from a range of choices given to them by a qualified teacher.

Main Components or Trademarks

Children learn in multi-age groups. Play is seen as the child's work.

Allows freedom for self-directed learning under the guidance of a teacher or parent.

Significant assumptions about learning:

- Children have an inherent inner guidance that allows their natural development.
- The right conditions around children will encourage their true natural development. For young children, the environment must be prepared by providing a range of physical objects that are organized and made available for free, independent use, to stimulate their natural instincts and interests.
- The teacher's role is to observe children engaged in activities that follow their own natural interests. The teacher's role is to control the environment, not the child.

Three Phases ("Planes") of Development:

- **The first plane** (ages 0–6): basic personality formation and learning through physical senses. A sensitive development period for acquiring language skills.
- **The second plane** (ages 6–12): child begins to learn through abstract reasoning, which develops through a sensitivity for imagination and social interaction with others.
- **The third plane** (ages 12–18): child begins to value experiences in his community.



Resources for Parents

Teaching Montessori in the Home: The Preschool Years by Elizabeth G. Hainstock

Teaching Montessori in the Home: The School Years by Elizabeth G. Haintstock

Teach Me to Do It Myself by Maja Pitamic

How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way by Tim Seldin



Rudolf Steiner

Built upon the educational principles outlined by Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian social reformer and cultural philosopher who sought to improve the lives of the poor through education. Divides childhood into three stages, each having its own learning requirements. Learning is interdisciplinary; art is not a separate subject in Waldorf, but is integrated into the entire curriculum. Great emphasis on compassion for others.

Main Components or Trademarks

Learning in the early years is focused on creative play and artistic expression. The child's imagination plays a central role in learning. Attempts to integrate academic, practical (knitting, baking), and artistic pursuits.

Three stages of learning:

- **Early childhood** (birth to age 7): learning largely experiential, imitative and sensory-based. Learning achieved through practical and productive activities in which the child takes part. Emphasis on outdoor exploration, natural materials. Discourages exposure to television and computer media at this stage.
- **Elementary** (ages 7-14): learning is guided and stimulated by a teacher utilizing a multi-disciplinary arts-based curriculum that includes visual arts, drama, artistic movement, music, and crafts. Students usually learn two foreign languages.
- **Secondary education** (ages 14-18): focus shifts to traditional academic subjects, though students may continue to take courses in art, music, and crafts. Emphasis on developing independence and creative thinking, and a sense of competence and purpose.

Caution: Steiner's educational theory is based on anthroposophy, which isn't consistent with Church teachings. Anthroposophy proposes reincarnation and a view of the nature of man that is a little strange. However, the degree to which Waldorf schools rely on anthroposophy varies greatly, so if you're checking out a Waldorf school ask about this issue. For some children, a Waldorf curriculum is a perfect fit because it delays intense academic studies until the child is 7 or so, and the integration of the arts into all areas of study is wonderful for highly creative children.

Resources for Parents

Waldorf Education: A Family Guide by Pamela J. Fenner

Oak Meadow's curriculum seems pretty tame on the Steiner front: www.oakmeadow.com

Christopherus offers a Christian Waldorf-inspired curriculum: www.christopherushomeschool.org

::Charlotte Mason::



Charlotte Mason

Charlotte Mason was a British educator who believed that all children deserved a high quality, “living” education.. She believed that children were born persons and should be respected as such. Focus on high quality literature and nature walks.

Main Components or Trademarks

The teacher “spreads a feast” before the child, meaning only the best quality literature and materials rather than “twaddle” (dumbed-down books).

Unique aspects of teaching:

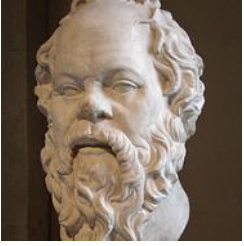
- **Short lessons** done well are preferred to longer lessons resulting in “sloppy work.”
- **Nature walks and nature notebooks:** Spending time outdoors and developing the child’s skill at observation are central to the approach.
- **Living books** (often classical literature) are used rather than textbooks. Literature and history are studied together using living books.
- **Daily narration:** Child listens to or reads a piece of literature, then tells story back to teacher. Encourages strong reading and listening skills. Notably, children do not begin writing down their own narrations (basically written summaries) until age 10.
- **Copywork:** careful and accurate copying of good writing. Serves as handwriting practice and instills an instinct for good writing.



Resources for Parents

For the Children’s Sake by Susan Schaeffer Macauley
When Children Love to Learn by Elaine Cooper (editor)
Real Learning by Elizabeth Foss (Catholic)

::Classical::



Socrates

A structured style based on the trivium, a three-part process of training the child to think rationally and eventually to articulate her thoughts and opinions with force and originality. Grounded in the study of Latin and history. Very rigorous.

Main Components or Trademarks

Study of literature, poetry, drama, history, art, and languages, especially Greek and Latin, in addition to the formation of virtue or character in the child.

Language-rich learning:

- Learning is accomplished through words (reading and listening) rather than images.
- Language-rich learning is thought to require the mind to work harder than image-based learning.

Child's education is divided roughly into three phases:

- **Grammar:** Early elementary students learn the basic building blocks of knowledge; involves memorization
- **Logic:** Student has developed the ability for abstract thought; studies algebra and logic; applies logic cross-curriculum
- **Rhetoric:** Student applies the rules of logic learned in middle school to the foundational information learned in the early grades and expresses his conclusions in clear, forceful, elegant language. Begins to specialize in a branch of knowledge.



Resources for Parents

Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum: A Guide to a Catholic Home Education by Laura Berquist

The Well-Trained Mind by Susan Wise Bauer

The Latin-Centered Curriculum by Drew Campbell

Climbing Parnassus by Tracy Lee Simmons

::Interest-Initiated or Unschooling::



John Holt

A learning lifestyle championed by educational theorist John Holt in response to what he saw wrong with traditional schools. He proposed child-led learning without external expectations. Children learn through their natural life experiences and not traditional school curriculum. Radically child-led.

Main Components or Trademarks

This is primarily a homeschool movement, though an increasing number of private schools respect and incorporate John Holt's concept of interest-initiated learning.

- Traditional schools are seen as antithetical to real learning because they instill fear in children: children fear they will get the wrong answer or displease the teacher.
- No teachers; parent/adult “facilitates” what the child wants to learn or do.
- Radically child-led; no external expectations; learning is completely child-driven.
- The only structure is the structure the child chooses himself; the parent does not impose any structure.

Significant assumptions about learning:

- "The human animal is a learning animal; we like to learn; we are good at it; we don't need to be shown how or made to do it. What kills the processes are the people interfering with it or trying to regulate it or control it." -John Holt
- Children will naturally learn everything they need to know to thrive in adulthood if allowed to follow their interests without “manipulation” or “coercion.”



Resources for Parents

Teach Your Own by John Holt

The Unschooling Handbook: How to Use the Whole World As Your Child's Classroom by Mary Griffith

Homeschooling With Gentleness: A Catholic Discovers Unschooling by Suzie Andrez



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS (AND DUTIES)

The right and duty of parents
to give education is essential,
since it is connected with the transmission of human life;
it is original and primary
with regard to the educational role of others,
on account of the uniqueness of
the loving relationship between parents and children;
and it is irreplaceable and inalienable,
and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated
to others or usurped by others.

– BLESSED JOHN PAUL II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 36



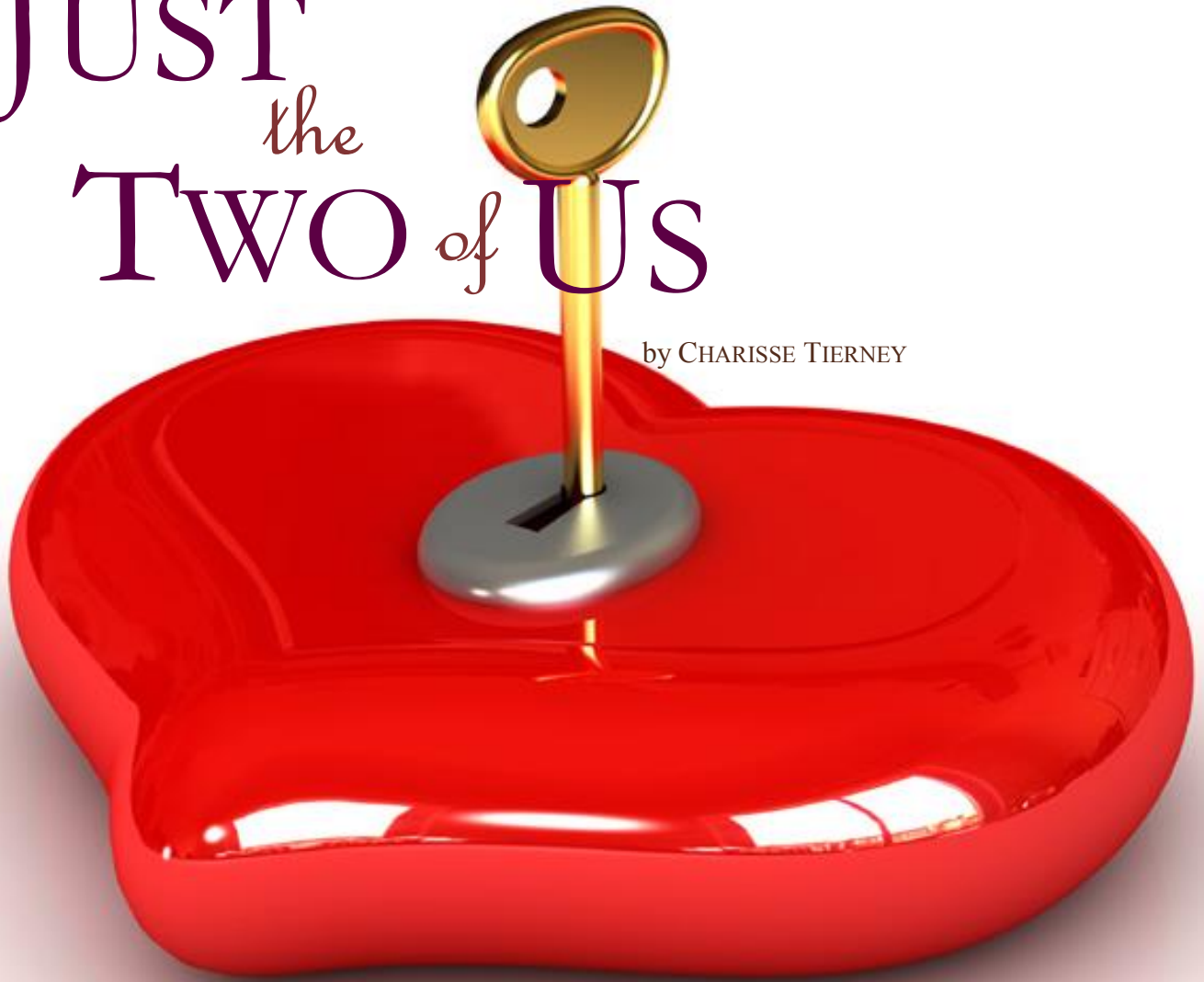
- Over 2 million students were enrolled in Catholic schools in 2013.
- Between 2000 and 2013, the number of students enrolled in Catholic schools declined by 25 percent.
- Between 2000 and 2013, 25 percent of Catholic schools were closed or consolidated.

Source: National Catholic Education Association



JUST *the* TWO of US

by CHARISSE TIERNEY



A wife rediscovers the space in her heart for her husband when she creates a pretty, little spot in her home for the two of them.

“It has been said that great artists begin to think in music, or think in colors, and so it is with great and holy lovers . . . they begin to think in love. If you pray and if you internalize your spouse in your heart, you will become one who thinks in love, and to become such a person is to live in reality.”

Deacon James Keating, PhD, *Spousal Prayer*

There are times when I struggle to “think in love” for my spouse. It’s as if the diapers, the housework, the laundry, the tantrums, and the homework all start to crowd out the simplicity and the joy of being a wife--of loving and being loved in return.

I recently converted a spare bedroom in our home into a bed and breakfast like get away for my husband and myself. No toys, no kids, no muddy shoes, no piles of laundry--just him and me, our memories of our past, and our dreams for our future.

I added decor to the room that would remind us of places we’d been and things we’d seen together, and as I created “our space” in our home, I rediscovered “our space” in my heart. That special place reserved just for him--that place filled with butterflies and warmth; that place where love of God and love of spouse collide and glimpses of heaven become a part of our reality.

Live in the reality of God’s love by thinking in love for your spouse. This is the sacramental grace of marriage--the journeying to the gates of heaven in the physical and emotional embrace of the one God gave us to take us there.



“Live in the reality of God’s love by thinking in love for your spouse.”



Love is never something ready made, something merely “given” to man and woman, it is always at the same time a task they are set. Love should be seen as something which in a sense never “is” but which is always only “becoming” and what it becomes depends on the contribution of both persons and the depth of their commitment.

Blessed John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility*

Need marriage support? Trained counselors sensitive to our Faith are available for phone counseling through *Pastoral Solutions Institute*: www.exceptionalmarriages.com or 740-266-6461.





“A child's first religious understanding is simply the warmth of a parent's arms during Mass — the love, care, and sense of security.”

Sophie Koulomzin, *Our Children and Our Church*



MARCIA MATTERN on
growing in faith as a family

MAKING A PILGRIMAGE



Are you familiar with the tradition of doing the Stations of the Cross during the Fridays of Lent? This practice of meditating on the events that happened during Jesus' passion is a great way to pray as a family.

Originating in the 3rd century, the Stations of the Cross was a way for Christians to participate more fully in the events that transpired on the Via Dolorosa (Way of Sorrows) by making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Stops were made along the way where Jesus' passion and death took place.

A diary from the 400's called *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* recounts a woman's spiritual experience in visiting the holy places of the Bible. It gives the reader a glimpse at the liturgical year practiced in Jerusalem. I was amazed at the prayerfulness of her pilgrimage!

But at some point in history, people began to try and recreate this holy pilgrimage in churches away from the Holy Land. This is especially helpful for those of us who can't travel with our families!

As most Catholic churches today hang the "stations" in the church, you are free to practice this prayerful pilgrimage any time of the year. Many churches offer a group-style Stations of the Cross prayer time during Lent. Look for a church in your area that is offering Stations during Lent.

Sometimes this practice is held late on Friday evenings, which can be tricky with young children. Sometimes it is held out of doors and requires much walking. If, by all means, you can attend Stations as a family at your church, then please do! But, if you need options or wish to practice the stations every day during Lent, here are some ideas for you!

Home Stations of the Cross

Collect your own pictures of the fourteen stations of the cross. Look for them at your local Catholic book store, purchase online, or even Google and print at home!

Laminate these images to protect them from dear, greasy fingers and make them last for years!

Hang these photos around the house — either in a straight line or in an organized pattern of places throughout the house.

Visit each of these pictures in order.

To encourage young child participation, instead of praying the *modern* (Liguori's method from the 1700's) meditation, begin the prayer time with "Thank you, Jesus". Small children, when given



family of faith

the chance, will surprise you with their grateful hearts. Encourage each family member to find something they want to thank Jesus for out loud.

As you visit each picture, perhaps you'd like to kneel and say, "We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you." Then stand to say, "Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world."

When walking between stations, you could sing a Marian hymn or the Hail Mary.

End the stations by praying a Glory Be or Our Father as the children are able.

Stations of the Cross for Children

Another prayer experience you could search out is a children's way of the cross in your area. I've taken my children to stations at a local grade school. The school children acted out each station. This required my children to sit for the 30 minutes or so, but they were captivated by the "show".

One Lent, we visited a parish for an interactive Stations of the Cross. Children aged 2 to 10 visited each station in the church as a group. At each station, a parent led the children in a short (1 minute) meditation and gave them a small item. My young children have found the movable, touchable items for each station to aid in their ability to comprehend and prayerfully participate.

You can find affordable Stations of the Cross prints at your local Catholic bookstore. *Left:* 8x10 prints by Vincenti, \$21, available at EWTN, www.ewtn.com.



Stations of the Cross Box

In our home, I keep a box available for the children to do the Stations on their own. Our images are often placed near our prayer table. You may wish to use a purple cloth on your table to connect with the Liturgical color of preparation. I keep a box labeled "stations of the cross" near by which contains:

- a small rope and a Roman centurion figure for **Jesus is condemned to die** (station 1)
- a small Popsicle stick cross for **Jesus carries his cross** (station 2)
- band aids for **Jesus' three falls** (stations 3, 7 and 9)
- a small statue of Mary and a rosary for **Jesus meets his mother** (station 4)
- a choice of two different hearts for **Simon helps Jesus carry his cross** (station 5)
- a cloth with the outline of a face for **Veronica wipes the face of Jesus** (station 6)
- a cloth handkerchief for **Jesus meets the women crying** (station 8)
- a purple cloth for **Jesus is stripped of his garments** (station 9)
- a nail for **Jesus is nailed to the cross** (station 11)
- an old family crucifix from hubby's side of the family for **Jesus dies** (station 12)
- a small Pieta statue for **Jesus is taken down from the cross** (station 13)
- a rock for **Jesus is placed in the tomb** (station 14)



As your family embarks on their pilgrimage through Lent, including the practice of the Stations of the Cross, may the Holy Spirit enlighten your hearts. May God draw your family closer to Himself and bless you as, together, you grow your faith!



Spring SAINTS

BY ANGELA PIAZZA

SAINT MARGARET CLITHEROW, 1556-1586

Patron saint of businesswomen, converts, and martyrs

Feast Day: March 25

Four hundred years ago, in the Shambles of York, England, there lived a beautiful, courageous young Catholic wife and mother. Her name was Margaret Clitherow, and while her daily life appeared quite ordinary to outside observers, she was an extraordinary woman of faith. Married to a local butcher, Margaret was popular with shop customers, and regarded as a competent, fair business woman. Also known for her wit and charity, she regularly visited the imprisoned, working cheerfully to alleviate the spiritual and material needs of the prisoners. Above all, Margaret possessed remarkable moral conviction and inner strength. Her story is a vivid example of being in this world, but not of it.

Despite fines, imprisonment, and the threat of capital offense, Margaret remained devoted to her faith. She raised her children Catholic, secretly began a school in her home, and provided hidden rooms where priests celebrated Mass. In 1586, the Clitherow's home was raided by authorities; accoutrements for Mass were discovered, and Margaret was taken to prison.

Charged with harboring priests, Margaret refused to plead the case, choosing instead to protect her family and friends from possible trial and testimony. Declining to plea, however, resulted in the sanction of *peine forte et dure* -- an agonizing torture imposed on those who resisted standing trial; she was to be outstretched, bound, and pressed under tremendous weight until she relented or died. Undeterred, Margaret of York prayed for those who persecuted her, and peacefully accepted her martyrdom.

Family Story Hour

We couldn't find any books devoted entirely to St. Margaret Clitherow, but you can read about her in many saints collections. Angela recommends *Voices of the Saints* by Bert Ghezzi.



More Saints in the House:

- March 17 St. Patrick
- March 19 St. Joseph
- April 23 St. George
- April 25 St. Mark
- April 30 St. Pius V
- May 25 St. Gregory VII
- May 27 St. Augustine of Canterbury
- June 1 St. Justin
- June 5 St. Boniface



NOURISH



Did You Know?

Blessed John Paul II ate a buttered roll with goats milk for breakfast each morning.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI enjoys chocolate from Aachen and good German beer.

Pope Francis, as befits his life of simplicity, eats mostly bread, skinless chicken, vegetables, and fruit.

Easy Meals *for* Busy Weeknights

Quick and simple family dinners
to bring everyone to the table

by Christina Kolb

Photos by Christina Kolb. All rights reserved.

On busy weeknights, when you're rushing to volunteer meetings at church *and* picking up kids from music lessons *and* sports practice, getting dinner on the table can seem like an impossible feat. But with a few quick and easy recipes up your sleeve, you can have a healthy meal that everyone will love.

Easy Korean Beef

Serves 4

This super easy dish uses a freezer staple- ground beef- but the results are out of this world special. It's everyone's favorite. You can also feel free to substitute ground chicken or turkey. Served with rice and a side of steamed broccoli, it's way better than take out any night of the week!



Ingredients

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
- salt and pepper
- 1 teaspoon crushed red peppers
- 1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced

Heat a large skillet over medium heat and brown hamburger. Add the garlic and sesame oil and cook for another minute or so, until you can smell the garlic. Add brown sugar, soy sauce, ginger, salt and pepper and red peppers. Simmer for 5-10 minutes.

Serve over steamed rice and top with green onions.

Mango and Roasted Pepper Quesadillas

Serves 4

Quesadillas are always a family favorite, but they're not exactly a quick meal when you have to stand over a pan cooking them one at a time, especially when you're preparing dinner for the whole family. Moving the whole process to the oven lets you cook an entire meal's worth at once, while still being able to customize some for those picky eaters in your family. The below recipe is one of our favorite quesadilla combos, but this method works just as well with any filling combination that your family likes. The possibilities are endless!



Ingredients

12 6-inch corn tortillas
2-3 cups shredded Chihuahua or Monterey Jack cheese
1 Mango, peeled, sliced thinly
2-3 peppers (Anchos or Poblanos if you like a bit of heat, Bell if you don't like spicy at all)
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
Chopped cilantro, avocado, and/or queso fresco to top them off

Begin by charring your peppers. Using a pair of long metal tongs, hold each pepper by its stem over an open stove flame. If your stove grates are conducive to it, you can rest the peppers on them over the flame and let them char. As each side turns black and burned, turn them. Once all sides are blackened and charred, immediately place peppers in a paper bag. (A plastic bag or container with a lid should work well, too.) After five minutes, remove cooled peppers from bag and use your fingers to rub off the charred, blackened skin. No need to worry about getting all the black specks off, they add flavor! Remove the stem and seeds, and slice into thin strips.

Preheat oven to 400° F. To assemble quesadillas, top each of 6 tortillas with 1/3 cup shredded cheese. On top of the cheese, lay a few slices each of mango and peppers. Top with another sprinkle of cheese, and finally another tortilla.

Prepare a sheet pan (or two, depending on how many quesadillas you're making) by brushing 2 tablespoons of oil on the bottom of the pan. Arrange filled quesadillas on the sheet pan(s), and brush the tops with remaining oil. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until both top and bottom tortillas are golden and crisp, and cheese is melted throughout.

Slice quesadillas into quarters, top with cilantro, and serve immediately.

Tuna Melts

Serves 4

A fresh version of a classic that will still be everyone's favorite! These are great for nights when someone isn't able to sit down with the family, because you can assemble their portion with the others, and warm it in the oven for them separately when they are ready to eat. With a side salad, it's the perfect quick, hearty meal.



Ingredients

2 (5 oz) cans of wild albacore tuna
¼ cup diced red onion
¼ cup diced red pepper
1 tablespoon capers
3 tablespoons mayo
juice of ½ a lemon
freshly ground black pepper
salt to taste
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
4 large, thick slices of your favorite crusty bread

Preheat oven to 375° F.

Drain tuna and in a medium-sized bowl, break it up into small chunks. Add the red onion, red pepper, capers, mayo, lemon juice, and black pepper to the tuna, and stir until just combined. Add salt to taste. Set aside.

On a baking sheet lined with foil or parchment paper, arrange slices of bread. Top each piece with an equal amount of tuna salad, spreading it out over the entire slice. Bake in the oven for about 5-6 minutes, or until the edges of the bread are crispy and the tuna is warm.

Remove the tuna toasts from the oven and turn your broiler to high. Top each piece of bread with shredded cheese, spreading it over the tuna. Put them back in the oven, under the broiler for about 2-3 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly. Remove from oven and serve right away.

Honey Mustard Baked Chicken

Serves 4

This simple baked chicken has long been a family favorite; I've never met anyone who doesn't love it. Serve it with rice, noodles, or your favorite vegetable to soak up all the tasty sauce that it bakes in.



Ingredients

6 tablespoons butter, melted

½ cup honey

¼ cup mustard (yellow, Dijon, whatever you like)

¼ teaspoon curry powder

¼ teaspoon paprika

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Combine all ingredients except chicken in a small bowl and mix well. Place chicken in a baking dish and then pour over the honey-mustard mixture, making sure all the chicken has some sauce on it.

Bake for 30-40 minutes, depending on the size of the chicken breasts. Serve over rice, noodles, or pasta, making sure to scoop up lots of yummy sauce, too.



GIVE THEM A LOVE FOR HOME ...

“Try to put in the hearts of your children
a love for home.

Make them long to be with their families.

So much sin could be avoided
if our people really loved their homes.”

-Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

ICP

Intentional Catholic Parenting

Finding Joy in the Sacredness of Family

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