

Role of Parents

First Teachers of the Faith

Brandon Kraft — October 8, 2025

Introduction

Teachers Aren't Teachers



Introducing the role of parents as the “first teachers of the faith”. To start off, we hear “first teachers of the faith” which can take us to picture institutional teachers in front of a classroom, imparting knowledge (like the picture).

Teachers into Witnesses

A Story of Liturgical Texts

- Rite of Baptism (1970): God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless the father of this child. He and his wife will be the **first teachers of their child** in the ways of faith. May they be also the **best of teachers**, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Order of Baptism of Children (2020): May the Lord God Almighty, the giver of life both in heaven and on earth, bless the fathers of this child, so that, together with his wife, they may, by word and example, **prove to be the first witnesses of the faith to their child**, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pointing out the language of “first teachers of the faith” come from the Rite of Baptism that many of us may have baptized our children using from 1970. Similar to the change in translation of the Mass ~2011, Baptism has a new translation/revision from 2020 with the language moving to “witnesses”

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First Witnesses of the Faith

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“Okay, with that said, let’s restart this conversation”

Biblical Background

Old Testament

And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Revised Standard Version; Second Catholic Edition, Dt 6:6–7.

Preceding text: Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

This is a restatement of the first commandment and these lines form part of the Shema, a centerpiece of Jewish morning/evening prayer. Observant Jews will still recite this twice a day as a religious requirement. A bedtime prayer and last words before death. It is also part of the Catholic Night Prayer (After I Sundays)

Key point: Parents are called to teach and live the faith in daily life.

Biblical Background

Old Testament

Train the young in the way they should go; even when old,
they will not swerve from it.

New American Bible, Revised Edition, Pr 22:6.

Key point: Start young.

Side note: Intentionally using different translations to show some of the language diversity in a subtle way.

Biblical Background

Old Testament

God made a decree in Jacob, established a law in Israel:
Which he commanded our ancestors, they were to teach their children;
That the next generation might come to know, children yet to be born.

In turn they were to recount them to their children, that they too might put their confidence in God, And not forget God's deeds, but keep his commandments.

New American Bible, Revised Edition, Ps 78:5–7.

Key Point: Parents pass the faith down through generations by teaching and living it.

Psalm 78 is a recitation of sacred history with an emphasis on screw ups.

Biblical Background

New Testament

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord.

New American Bible, Revised Edition, Eph 6:4.

Key Point: A reminder for parents to guide with patience and love.

Side note: This section of Eph is the “household code” that starts in the previous chapter with the fun “Wives should be subordinate...” phrase. What’s interesting here is that, while that was expected in that time, the counter of husbands loving their wives and a longer exultation about a husband’s requirement to love is a major challenge and modification of the common order of the time.

Doctrinal Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery—the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the “material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.” Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd Ed., CCC 2223

Key Point: Parents are to create the environment.

This entire section is really interesting, CCC 2221-2231. Full text on the website that'll be published by the time y'all leave.

Can I Get A Witness?

- Lived Witness
 - Parents do not need to have all the answers, but they should model a living, authentic relationship with God.
 - Be willing to say, “I don’t know, but let’s find out together.”

Can I Get A Witness?

- Integrating Faith into Daily Life
 - Praying together as a family (e.g., before meals, bedtime)
 - Discussing the Gospel after Mass
 - Involving children in service projects or acts of kindness

How

- Creating a Faith-Filled Environment
 - Prayer Corners: Set up a small prayer space at home.



Our home altar/ofrenda.

How

- Creating a Faith-Filled Environment
 - Prayer Corners: Set up a small prayer space at home.
 - Sacramentals: Use holy water, crucifixes, or other religious symbols to remind children of God's presence.

How

- Teaching the Basics
 - Prayers: Help children memorize foundational prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.).
 - Bible Stories: Read Bible stories and discuss their meanings >>> Mass Readings

How

- Modeling Faith in Action
 - Lead by example in kindness, charity, and moral decisions.
 - Share personal stories of faith and challenges.

How

- Learning Together
 - Attend Mass as a family.
 - Engage in religious education programs as a family.
 - Make learning about saints and feast days part of family life.

How

- Technology Tools
 - Catholic apps e.g., “Hallow”
 - bible.usccb.org

Conclusion

Not Perfection, But The Journey



Novena to St. Ignatius

Almighty ever-living God,
you gave St. Ignatius Martyr, Bishop of Antioch,
the courage to witness to the Gospel of Christ
even to the point of giving his life for it.

Novena to St. Ignatius

By his prayers, help us to endure all suffering for
love of you

and to seek you with all our hearts,
for you alone are the source of life.

Novena to St. Ignatius

Through the intercession of St. Ignatius,
we pray for our parish community:
help us be bridge builders in a divided world,
bringing the hope and love of Jesus Christ
into our families, workplaces, and communities.

Novena to St. Ignatius

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your
Son,

Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit,

for ever and ever. Amen.