

## Helping Grow Your Teen's Faith

### *Be a Model*

- † Remember what your mother told you, "Monkey see, monkey do!"
- † "The religion of U.S. teenagers often follows and looks a lot like the religion of their parents." [1]

### *Be informed*

- † Know what is happening at Church and at Youth Ministry.  
The web makes it easy: [www.ourladyofgracechurch.org](http://www.ourladyofgracechurch.org).
- † know what your teen watches on TV, listens to on their Ipod, does on the computer, and who they talk to in and out of school.
- † Do you know what "smh" or "lol" means? Know teen culture. A great resource is [www.urbandictionary.com](http://www.urbandictionary.com)
- † If you know what is happening in the life of your teen and their culture you open up opportunities for conversations about faith. Can you find religion in an Andy Grammer Song?

### *Attend the Sacraments Together*

- † Teens learn the importance of the Sacraments by seeing their parents make it a priority. If you as the parent choose a Steelers game over attending Mass, what message will your teen receive?

### *Send Your Teens to Youth Ministry*

- † Youth who participate in youth ministry are more likely to say religion or faith is extremely or very important in shaping daily life and are also more likely to report that they see their parish as a welcoming place. [2]
- † Participation in youth ministry related activities decreases significantly alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. [3]

### *Practice Religious Rituals and Devotions*

- † Light an advent wreath.
- † Read the Bible together.
- † Attend Stations of the Cross during Lent.
- † Pray the Rosary, even just one decade!

### *Talk*

- † Tell family stories about religion, faith, and religious practices.
- † Do not allow "religion" to be a taboo topic - be open.
- † While driving home from Mass talk about the readings or the homily.

### ***Listen***

- † Sometimes teens just need someone to listen without giving answers/advice.

### ***Answer faith questions honestly***

- † Learn how to say “I don’t know”: teens want honest, truthful answers.  
Pretending to know an answer causes lost credibility and mixed messages.  
Also, you’ve just modeled lying!
- † Help teens see that faith is a lifelong learning process and that it is OK not to have all of the answers.

### ***Participate in Service as a Family***

- † Serve at the Food Bank.
- † Before Christmas and birthdays go on a cleaning spree. Take unused items to a charity.
- † Visit shut-ins at the nursing home.
- † Help with the parish Pack-a-Bag.
- † Shop **together as a family** for your family Pack-a-Bag.
- † Buy a gift for a child on the Giving Tree.

### ***Pray as a Family***

- † Say grace before meals.
- † Attend parish prayer services.
- † 90% of parents say that they pray for their teens once a week or more, but only 46% of teens report that their families pray at meal times. [4]

### ***Create Quiet Time***

- † Create mandated quiet time - no electronics of any kind - **including for ADULTS!**
- † To know God we must listen. Did you know that if you rearrange the letters in the word listen they spell “silent”

### ***Make faith fun, not a chore***

- † Find interactive ways to pray, share the faith, and learn about the faith - the web is full of exciting and fun things.
- † Use their favorite TV shows, movies, music, and videos games as a springboard for conversation. They will be excited that you are interested in what they like in a positive way.
- † Teens often feel that the faith is not applicable to their lives; the more you help them see the relevance of faith in their lives the more “fun” it will appear.
- † Attend a Christian concert - maybe not David Haas, but try Skillet, David Crowder, Righteous B (Catholic Hip Hop) or Fr. Stan Fortuna, the rapping priest, just to name a few!

### ***Allow Teens to Struggle***

- † Try not to yell at your teen if they question the Church, their faith, or any of the like.
- † Try not to force your beliefs on them.
- † Help your teen with their struggles by asking thought-provoking questions, providing resources for learning, and by being a listening ear.

### ***Pray for Your Teen***

- † Follow the example of Saint Monica.
- † Teens need “behind the scenes” support for their faith lives. Pray for them always!

[1] Smith, Christian “Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers”

[2] McCorquodale, Shepp, Sterten “National Study of Youth and Religion: Analysis of Population of Catholic Teenagers and Their Parents”; NFCYM 2004

[3] McCorquodale, Shepp, Sterten “National Study of Youth and Religion: Analysis of Population of Catholic Teenagers and Their Parents”; NFCYM 2004

[4] McCorquodale, Shepp, Sterten “National Study of Youth and Religion: Analysis of Population of Catholic Teenagers and Their Parents”; NFCYM 2004