

# Really, the question is: How do WE do it??

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We're in a bit of a predicament: We want to pass on the faith to our little ones. But how do we talk to someone who doesn't sit still? And are they even understanding what I'm saying? Sometimes it can even feel a little fake bringing up the saints, or the liturgical season out of the blue. Firstly, I want to say that, for your little kids, it doesn't feel that way.

It's not awkward when you randomly say: "Did you know the color for Lent is purple?" and they say: "Why?" and then you say: "umm I don't know. I have to look it up...". Even if you feel kind of silly, stumbling through an explanation of what martyrdom, or lent is (we've all been there, trust me) your kids still love you and think you're the BEST! And the best part is that you can look up the answers to their questions and randomly bring them up tomorrow and they won't think its weird then too :)

Making use of the tools at our disposal (art, stories, movies and videos, picture books, music, etc.) is not some half-hearted attempt to teach theology to our smallest children, it's the foundation that their understanding and experiences of God further down the road will be built upon.

Here are the main ways that you pass on the faith to your kids especially when they are little.

## **#1 Through your example.**



I don't know about you, but this one always hits home for me. I forget ALL THE TIME that my girls are watching everything I do. The good and the bad. Then one of them genuflects without being asked before going into the pew at church or uses some crabby tone (that matches my crabby tone) at their sister and... well I'm either beaming or hiding my face with shame.

## **#2 Through our conversations.**

These could be conversations that we have with them, or conversations that we have with others when they are in earshot. But speaking age-appropriately and honestly to them when they have questions or when there is something that you want to share with them is so important. I find that books and art are really great ways to open up conversations with your kids as well as their friends, or your friends who don't know much about the faith!



## **#3 Through our relationships.**

The relationship that you have with your kids is important! I know you know that :) Our kids will always have questions, and right now they sometimes seem silly. But by creating and maintaining a relationship with them we create a space of trust where they can feel comfortable to ask questions as they grow. My experience has shown me that for as often as I'm trying to help them understand something they're revealing something wonderful and new to me.

They also learn about faith from the relationships they have with others. This could be a relationship with their godparents, grandparents, your parish priest, a nun/sister from your parish, their teachers etc. It goes a long way for us to encourage their relationships with role models we know and trust.

## **#4 Through actual teaching.**

As your kids get older (i.e. they can talk ☺) teaching them their prayers and certain truths of the faith gets easier. But we don't have to wait for their first communion teachers to prompt us to teach them the Hail Mary and that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist! We can point out the Eucharist at Mass when the priest holds it up and tell them “That is Jesus! He loves you so much!” We can do the same with prayers by praying with our kids on the daily, and by reading a children's bible or books about the saints with them.

