

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF CHILDREN & TEENS

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for that is what is expected of you.
‘Honor your father and mother’ is the first commandment to carry a promise with it:
‘that it may go well with you, and that you may have long life on the earth.’”

- *Ephesians 6:1-3*

- I. **Realize that you** are a child of God, made in His image and likeness; you are fearfully and wonderfully made, created in God’s image and likeness for a distinct purpose here on earth – a purpose that He has in mind *specifically* and *especially* for you. As a human person made in the image and likeness of God, you are unique, precious and unrepeatable. Given all these wonderful Truths, prayer – that is, communication with God – must be an important part of your *daily* life.
- II. **Realize that Jesus** lives in your heart. He is there to inspire you, console you and guide you each step of the way. Try to receive Him in Holy Communion at Mass every Sunday and to go to the Sacrament of Confession at least once a month. Remind your parents of the importance of these two Sacraments in the life of a committed Catholic Christian. Also, never underestimate the importance of sacramentals in your life. Sacramentals are “sacred signs which bear a certain resemblance to the Sacraments and by means of which spiritual effects are signified and obtained through the prayers of the Church” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, Glossary*). Examples of sacramentals include the Sign of the Cross, holy water, enrollment in the Brown Scapular, religious medals, blessings, pilgrimages, processions, the Stations of the Cross, sacred art, rosaries and the veneration of relics. While sacramentals do differ from the seven Sacraments, they are still very important in the life of a Catholic Christian.
- III. **Be open to** the Holy Spirit, especially as He guides you through the lives and work of your parents, your parish priest(s) and your teachers. These people in your life are God’s instruments of love, direction and protection for you. Thank God daily for the role they play in your life.
- IV. **Be careful of** the TV programs you watch, the internet sites you access and the kind of music you listen to. So much of it today is filled with violence, sexual immorality, arrogance and selfishness. As one young person has said, “Garbage in, garbage out. Jesus in, Jesus out.”
- V. **Realize that your** body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and that your sexuality is a great gift from Almighty God. Pray *daily* to our Blessed Mother and to St. Joseph to help you keep yourself pure and loving in the sight of Almighty God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Be modest in the way you dress and thus in the way you act. “Modesty” and “chastity” are two interrelated moral virtues that demand practice by one who strives to live virtuously. Watch out for the language you use: do not get into the habit of cursing or using slang.
- VI. **Often tell your** mother and your father how much you love and appreciate them. Try not to take them for granted. As you grow older, you will greatly appreciate how much they sacrificed for you, to raise you in a loving, Christian home.
- VII. **Be loving and** kind to your parents and to your brothers and sisters. Children actually contribute to the *growth in holiness of their parents*: “Each and everyone should be generous and tireless in forgiving one another for offenses, quarrels, injustices and neglect. Mutual affection suggests this. The charity of Christ demands it” (cf. Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:4; *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2227*). Remember how sensitive *you* become when someone hurts *your* feelings. Treat your siblings in the same way you would like them to treat you. This same rule applies to your friends as well: treat them in the same way that you would like them to treat you.

- VIII. **While being kind** to everyone, do be selective of your friends: “Birds of a feather flock together.” Choose friends wisely. It is true: “Show me your friends and I’ll show you your life.” Remember, too, that St. Paul states: “Bad company corrupts good morals” (1 Corinthians 15:33). Choose friends who possess good character and high morals.
- IX. **Set aside an** hour or so for study each evening and enlist the aid of your parents and older brothers and sisters to help you. Education is a lifelong process. We are always learning. In this sense, every family is a “home school.” Home schooling, by the way, is a wonderful thing, if it is carried out in a balanced manner and if at least one parent is truly *called* and *capable* to oversee, in a special way, the academic training of the children.
- X. **Ask God to** show you what He wants you to be as you grow older. Ask Him and trust Him to put His plans for you in your mind and heart. This is often the way God works. It says in Sacred Scripture (the Bible), “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God Who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly and he will be given it” (James 1:5).

(Inspired by and adapted from *Superabundant Family Love* by Fr. Bill McCarthy, MSA)

PRAYER FOR OUR FAMILY

Heavenly Father, most good and gracious God, sustain our family in Your love. Make our family home a place where holiness and love abound. In our daily actions, help each one of us to learn to be more like Jesus. Aid our family to imitate the Holy Family of Nazareth: Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Help our family to learn from the good example of those families that especially please You in their way of life. May our family members learn to give good example always by living lives in true Christian faith, hope and love. Assist our family in learning to bear pain and suffering as Jesus did. Aid our family members, too, in overcoming difficulties and carrying their crosses. Help our family life to lead to Jesus Christ, the Source of all Truth and happiness. We ask this through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. AMEN.

FAMILY PRAYER TO OUR BLESSED MOTHER, MARY

Holy Mary, Virgin Mother of God, we seek your patronage and we invoke you under your title “Queen of Families.” O Blessed Mother, you were conceived without sin. May every family choose you this day as the model for their household, along with St. Joseph, your most loving, chaste and caring spouse. Through your Immaculate Conception, preserve all families from every disaster, from all violence and from every misfortune. O Holy Virgin, bless and protect all families, strengthen them in trial and keep them from every evil. AMEN.

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