

Video 1: Peaceful & Important Rituals in our Families

“Let everything take second place to our care for our children, our bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. If from the beginning we teach them to love true wisdom, they will have greater wealth and glory than riches can provide...”

+ St. John Chrysostom

What is Family – God created “family” so that we belong to something bigger than ourselves; there is safety, feeling “covered” so that we are safe enough to **be our unique selves**. Our children do not need to recreate themselves within the “world’s house”.

Start the Conversation....

God’s Heart in our Home ----

In Our Home there is.....

❖ ***There is covering ...***

It is a place where our children know how much we care for them, but also where we all belong to something much bigger than ourselves; we are God’s family.

❖ ***In our home there are values and guidelines*** that define us as a family and protect us. We allow “margins” in our day to think positively and gratefully. We have time to worship together and BE together as a family.

Sister Magdalen writes in her book *Children and the Church*, “The love which a child receives from his parents at the beginning of his life is irreplaceable—it is a secure foundation on which he can build his life.”

Secure attachments in a child’s development are key for healthy relationships as they grow, but as Christians we realize that our children need to attach also to our heavenly father from an early age. We must help our children attach to God from the very beginning of their lives so that He becomes part of their being.

Start the Conversation....

Questions to Ponder and Share...

What nightly activities (or “rituals”) take place in your home?

Video 2- Stress, Awareness & the Jesus Prayer

*“When your children are still small, you have to help them understand what is good.
That is the deepest meaning of life.”*

+ Elder Paisios

Start the Conversation....

God’s Heart in our Home ----

In My Home there is.....

- ❖ **Respect.** Respect is not an option, but rather is nurtured, expected and taught by example...
- ❖ **Forgiveness and beginnings all along the way...**

Point 1-Your words and actions as a parent affect their developing self-esteem more than anything else. Your tone of voice, body language and facial expressions are absorbed by your children and influence their self-esteem.

A chief predictor of young people’s success, with respect to their motivation, health and productivity, is their perception of their parents’ image of them. This “perception” does not necessarily refer to what parents truly think about their children, but rather what children believe their parents think about them. We love our children unconditionally, but children naturally assume that they are loved conditionally. From earliest childhood, this distinction is important.

Point 2- Self-esteem is more than feeling good about oneself, though this is certainly a goal we want for our children. Self-esteem also involves esteeming others or "people-esteem." Children who have true high self-esteem possess mutual respect. They value both themselves and others.

Start the Conversation....

Questions to Ponder and Share....

What does your reset button look like so that you can be present with your child?

What are you missing by not “counting the freckles” concerning your children?

How can you make changes in your schedule to allow time for face-to-face connection?

Video 3- Creating a Safe Place & Engaging Play

“With us everything should be secondary compared to our concern with children, and their upbringing in the instruction and teaching of the Lord.”

+ St. John Chrysostom

Start the Conversation....

God’s Heart in our Home ----

- ❖ **It is a place where our parents listen to our voice and honor our uniqueness, but we the children do not lead.** We feel heard, validated for our perspective and we count on our parents to protect and direct the family of which we are a part...

Point 1- Listen to the child’s perspective and help them explore and problem-solve for themselves. When we convey trust and a belief in their ability to try new things and gain awareness through problem solving, we help them learn to make good decisions and to be open to learn from their mistakes.

Point 2- Create an environment of support where our children feel that we are listening and taking them seriously; then, they will listen too. Closeness and trust develop as a result of this experience.

Point 3- Make communication a priority. Make your expectations clear. If there is a problem, describe it, express your feelings, and invite your child to work on a solution with you. Be sure to include consequences. Make suggestions and offer choices together.

The question is not “Are you Listening” but “What do you hear me saying”- deeper listening to the deeper messages

Start the Conversation....

Questions to Ponder and Share....

How do you become aware of what your child’s perception is?

What do you do to help them express themselves and feel heard and validated?

Video 4- Holding the “mirror” for our Children & the importance of connecting with “God’s Heart”

“When we teach children to be good, to be gentle, to be forgiving (all these are attributes of God), to be generous, to love their fellow men, to regard this present age as nothing, we instill virtue in their souls, and reveal the image of God within them.”

+St. John Chrysostom

Start the Conversation....

God’s Heart in our Home ----

Point 1- Research tells us that much of our self-image is developed at an extremely early age. Children start developing their sense of “self “ at a young age when they see themselves through their parents' eyes. We hold the mirror for them.

Point 2- Children are motivated to learn if they can come to view themselves as capable at a very young age (“Me do it”). Children want to help and to feel needed, and they want to do important jobs. The outcome of the job is usually not as important as helping children develop a belief in their capabilities, and to show them that they are important to your family and to God.

Point 3- Let your children know that everyone makes mistakes and that you still love them, even when you don’t love their behavior. Mistakes should be viewed as opportunities to learn, rather than seen as failures. Invite participation from your children rather than demanding compliance. This will help them experience validation.

Point 4- Be generous with rewards. Your love, hugs, and compliments can work wonders, and are often rewards enough. You will be “growing” more of the behavior you would like to see, and the memory of these loving actions and thoughts will last a lifetime. Celebrate the little moments in your family; they write the memories!

Start the Conversation....

Questions to Ponder and Share....

How do they see themselves in the mirror you hold for them?

What do you do to help them express themselves and feel heard?

Video 5- It take a Village...Importance of the Church Family

(Care for Single Parents, Clergy Families and honoring the need for extended family)

"A manifest sign of love for God is a heartfelt gladness in God, for we rejoice in what we love. Likewise the love of God cannot exist without joy, and whenever a man feels the sweetness of the love of God within his heart, he rejoices in God."

+St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

"When we pray we enter into a conversation with God and attach ourselves to Him in body, mind, and soul. We ask Him for strength, guidance, and forgiveness. We thank Him for His many blessings and ask Him to care for those we love. We bring our prayers to life through our worship in the Church and in the home—both as a family and as individuals. Constantly turning to God deepens our relationship with Him and helps our children see how important He is in our lives."

-Melissa Tsongranis, Center for Family Care

Start the Conversation....

God's Heart in our Home ----

- ❖ God is love. Through knowing Him, we better understand what love is and are better able to experience it in our lives and help our children experience it for themselves.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love"

(1 John 4:7-8)

Start the Conversation....

Questions to Ponder and Share....

What relationships play a major role in your church family?

Video 6- There is Grace... The Holy Spirit in our Families

“And we too all are saved by grace...for not only was pardon of sins given to us...but...the gift of the Spirit far more glorious and more abundant. By this grace we have become the beloved of God, no longer as servants, but as sons and friends.”

+ St. John Chrysostom

“A lot of the times we’re trying to do all of these things and do them really well, which is important, but there is Grace. And there is so much Grace that even though we’re going to make mistakes...whatever mistakes we make as parents, as human beings, there is Grace that can cover that. Our Church is all about redemption, and resurrection, and renewal.”

- Edna King

Start the Conversation....

God’s Heart in our Home ----

- ❖ People, being unique, go through their own unique journey of grief.
- ❖ In troubled moments, we have the choice to cling to the hope provided by the Holy Spirit.

Start the Conversation....

Questions to Ponder and Share....

Listening to the conversation, what is ignited in your own heart and mind?