

JMJ

THE IMPORTANCE OF BRINGING CHILDREN TO HOLY MASS

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” - Mt. 19: 14.

When we bring our children to Holy Mass, we are bringing our children (as well as ourselves) to Jesus, to His perfect Sacrifice offered to God the Father for the salvation of the human race, we are bringing them to Jesus – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, we are bringing them to the fountain of grace flowing from His Paschal Mystery! Don’t miss the grace!

1. Bring them and keep bringing them – be consistent.
2. If possible, sit close to the front.
3. Try to get to Mass a little ahead of time and stay a few minutes after.
4. Use common sense in terms of noise – not too quick to jump if there is some very “light” noise or murmuring, (they are children, not adults), but if baby is wailing or child is “throwing a fit,” take him/her to the cry room or vestibule.
5. My opinion is that it is best to leave the toys at home. If they need their blanket that’s fine (and quiet). If they must have something else, maybe a colorful Bible book or book on a saint, or, better yet, on the Mass. Bottles are ok and often necessary, crackers & food are not so good.
6. Teach them about the parts of the Mass – especially what happens at the Consecration! The better we learn it and the more faithful we are, the better we will be able to teach our children. Start young and stay at it. Sometimes it might not seem like they are getting it at all, but they will probably get a lot more than we realize and surprise us from time to time. **Note:** The more prayerful and faithful that we are, the more pre-disposed we will be to tap into the tremendous graces that are available to us in the Mass and the better able we will be to communicate the faith to our children.
7. Teach them to bless themselves with holy water and to genuflect toward in the tabernacle, since it contains the Blessed Sacrament, when entering or leaving the Church. Should not expect them to just learn this on their own, but we need to teach them over, and over, and over, and over, and over again, with the utmost patience.
8. Teach them about the parts of the Church, e.g. tabernacle, stories on stained glass windows, altar, crucifix, baptismal fonts, etc.

9. Don't let the Mass be the only time they pray or that they see you pray. Minimally, there should be family prayer together each day at meal times and before bed. Optimally, also in the morning and at other appropriate times.
10. Should learn the "standard" prayers, e.g. Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer to Guardian Angel, etc. Good to also have some brief extemporaneous prayer (prayers of thanksgiving good here) and some singing. "Lex orandi, Lex credendi – Translated this means, "The law of prayer is the law of belief."
11. Patience is crucial. Always a balance between an appropriate firmness so that the children learn boundaries and proper behavior, but also a certain and appropriate "light-heartedness" is important. Remember we want them to learn their Faith, but also to love it. If they love it, they are more likely to want to learn more about it and practice it for the "long-haul" and vice versa.
12. Don't speak disrespectfully of the Mass, the Church, the clergy, the homily, etc. This sets a bad example for the children and can eventually, in later years, lead to them being cynical about the Faith.
13. If the priest is greeting the people after Mass, bring the children to say hello to him.
14. Try to attend Mass at the time that is best for the children. This will also make things easier on you and everyone will be happier.
15. Try to make the entirety of the Lord's Day a day of prayer to, and worship of, God. Also, make Sundays a family time, and, as much as possible, a peaceful, unhurried time.
16. Persevere, Persevere, Persevere, Persevere, Persevere, Persevere, Persevere!!!

BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN IN BRINGING THEM TO MASS

- The grace being poured out.
- Helps to develop a love and fascination for sacred things
- When brought to Mass frequently, children more quickly learn the language of the Faith.
- Behavior at Mass gets better at an earlier age if they are taken from an early age and become used to going.
- The Faith becomes *interwoven into the "fabric" of their lives*.
- A love for and hungering after the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

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