

Thoughtful Moments

St. Francis

One of the most cherished of all saints is St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Friars Minor. On his feast day, October 4, many parishes may offer a blessing of the animals during which you can bring your pet for a special blessing in his honor. This reminds us that St. Francis rejoiced in all of God's creation.



Too busy?

On your deathbed you are not going to lie there thinking, "Boy, I wish I had worked more." You are going to long for more time with your spouse, your children, or your family. A child needs the undivided attention of his or her parent for a little while each day. Don't be so busy that you miss even one special moment with yours.

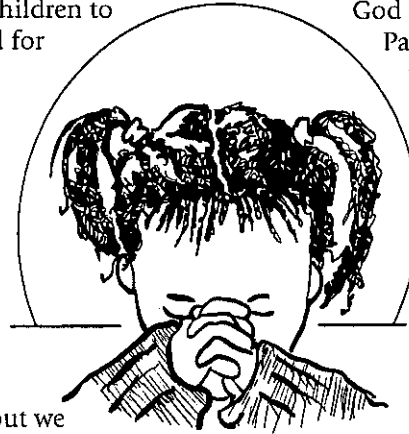
"Had I cherished evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard. But God did hear and listened to my voice in prayer" (Psalm 66:18-19).



Teach children to pray for miracles

Prayer is part of our nature as Christians. In prayer, we praise God, ask for favors for others, and pray when we have a need. As Catholic parents, we want children to pray and trust God for answers, but what do we do when our experience tells us only a miracle will help?

Teach children to overcome doubt with faith. Adults want to protect children from disappointment, but we never need to protect them from God. Overcoming doubt with faith is part of friendship with Christ. Letting children wrestle with their faith helps build a faith that can withstand the trials that may lie ahead.



Talk about God's history of answering big prayers. For example, Jonah prayed for his life to be spared from the belly of the whale, and God saved him (Jonah 2). St. Paul asked for and received the ability to heal Publius' ailing father and other sick villagers (Acts 28:7-9). When Elijah prayed for rain, "the heavens gave rain" (James 5:13-18). We know that prayer is our first and best strategy when we need a miracle.

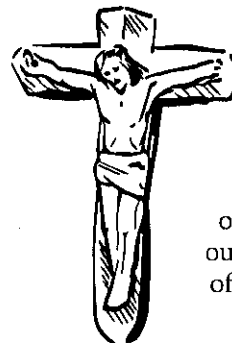
Encourage children to surrender. It's human to focus on the results of prayer rather than God's ability to answer. Teach children to expect an answer to every prayer and trust that the result will be the best God wants for us.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics have crucifixes instead of crosses?

The crucifix reminds us of the price of salvation and of God's infinite love: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). His Son is on the Cross.

In church, the crucifix indicates that "the sacrifice of



Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1367). In the Mass, Jesus, through the priest, offers himself to the Father on our behalf, under the appearances of bread and wine.