

Parents

How are we going to view them?

- See them as unsupportive and in the way vs. uninvited, unformed, uninvited, underdeveloped
- “Connecting Moment”
- See them as an opportunity for ministry
- Help them in their role/vocation as parents – empower them
- Know they are hungry/busy and underfed – Doesn’t mean they don’t want it – don’t know where to get it

How can we minister to them – so they can be more effective in their homes (and in their own lives) –?

- Prayer opportunities – Allow them moments to pray for their children
- Opportunities for them to reconnect to church community
- Let them know what the parish offers for them
- If they have been disconnected from church let them know how they can get up to speed. Reconciliation, communion, etc.
- Help for those living with a spouse who is not equally yoked
- Let them know about counseling services/support for those raising troubled youth

With their Teens

- Get them up to date on the culture, what they are up against. Going from young child needing us, loving to be with them, to a teen searching for independence. Mixed messages.
- Help them with tools to bring/share spiritually with their teens. How they can really journey alongside teens (during and after Confirmation)

Things to be aware of:

- Many of them feel inadequate

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- Have been wronged by the church
- Are afraid
- Are not living with another Catholic or spiritual partner
- Do not judge them, meet them where they are – Holy Spirit will allow them to take the next steps... Just provide the opportunity
- Do not assume they don't want this
- They are busy and overwhelmed – make it bite size

Where are parents coming from?

- Parent meditation me and Jyllian. Growing from young child needing us and loving to be with them, to a teen searching for independence. Mixed Messages.
- Also being affected by culture
- Worried about education/college
- Busy with sports
- Need to have teens involved in everything
- Not getting much info/support on how to raise spiritual teens or rise teen's period. Church isn't providing much (homilies are not necessarily "parenting" focused). Many of them too busy to join ministries and connect to church.
- Resource for them :
 - books
 - Cds for their car
 - Ways to get info when they have time

They may not have much catechesis – How can they teach in their homes.

Intake questionnaires – How can we help you?

Many don't know how to reach out and connect – need us to put our hand out first.

Different needs with parents raising who are raising – boys vs. girls.

They think this is what they should do. Let them experience that this is good for them too. They want it for their teens, know it is important. What about for them as well.

Opportunities

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Parenting as a Vocation

Course Objective:

To help parents recognize their vocation, the call on their lives to raise the child God has blessed them with. Recognizing this call, reminds parents of their responsibility to speak faithfully into the lives of their children.

Course Agenda:

Opening Prayer: Parenting is tough! Pass a big sack of potatoes around, and as each parent holds the weight they pray for a burden they are carrying.

Presentation:

- Our Vocation as Parents
 - The Ultimate Goal – Forever! With our Families
 - Modeling faith practices in our homes
- Understanding our Teenagers
 - Adolescent development
 - Teen culture/realities
 - Peer influences
- What Parents are up against
 - A Secular world that does not necessarily value family
 - Teens that are more savvy than their parents
 - Parents as wisdom weavers
- It takes a village to raise a child
 - Surrounding yourself with other faith filled parents
 - Surrounding your teens with positive mentors
 - Process with those who don't just say what you want to hear – but those who carry wisdom and share your values.
- Parent like it depends on you, pray like it depends on God

Parent Tool Box:

Have parents write a short letter to their teen (reflecting on what they have heard this evening) and have them tuck it into their teens lunch bag or back pack. The written word is still a powerful tool – and it still makes young people feel extra special.

Speaker Options: Pam Hurwitz – 714-282-3061.

This presentation is very effective when utilized while teens are on retreat.

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Surrendering Our Teens to the Will of Their Father

Course Objective:

From birth parents begin dreaming about the lives of their children, and yet their lives are ultimately in the hands of God their father. How can they raise their children in this world and let go of them for the next.

Course Agenda:

Prayer Experience: Parents will be led through prayer that allows them a chance to let go of themselves so that they can let go of their children. It is in giving God control of their lives first, that parents can then trust Him with the lives of their children.

Presentation:

How do we surrender our children to God's will?

- Use Mother Mary as an example/Look at Scenes from the Passion of Christ
- Listen to meditation focusing on the Wedding Feast at Canaan and Mary's realization regarding the impact Christ's ministry will have on his life
- Dream of the lives we want for our children
- Be aware of the realities of raising our teens in a secular world with very definite success indicators
- Understand that true peace in parenting comes from placing our children in God's hands
- Give Parents specific steps to help them release their children faithfully

Parent Tool Box: Parents will be given time to prioritize their goals for their children. They will then share these together in small groups and take these goals home as homework.

Speaker Options: Pam Hurwitz 714-282-3061

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Opening Parent Night

Your first Parent Information Night/Registration Night is critical in developing and laying out a vision for welcoming and including parents in the Confirmation process. This evening will set the tone and expectations for the exciting adventure ahead.

Some Ideas

Opening prayer – Begin with an opening prayer that focuses on calling Christ into the center of their parent/teen relationship. Allow them time to think about their child and the call to love and develop the young person that has been entrusted to them.

Opening Comments

Introduce yourself and your love for developing and guiding young people. Welcome parents and affirm them in their faithfulness of seeking Confirmation for their child.

Message

This is a time to address the opportunity and responsibility parents have in raising a faith filled young person. Remind them of their call and vocation as a parent and of your support in helping them live this out. Discuss how important their role is in the Confirmation process and your commitment in helping them with concrete tools and resources along the way. Be candid in letting them know that you understand for some of them this may be the beginning of their renewed commitment in their own faith. Make sure to make them aware that the way they view and respect the Confirmation commitment will be passed onto their

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child. The commitment will include some prioritizing to make it fit in the midst of a very busy family life. (I have included some notes from parent nights to help highlight these points.)

- Parent testimony – Try to have a real-life parent who has experienced the blessings of the Confirmation/Youth Ministry program in their family and in their parent/teen relationship share candidly about the joys and struggles of staying the course.
- Present Confirmation schedule and overview of the curriculum, service opportunities, retreats, youth ministry opportunities, etc.
- Invitation to parents for upcoming parent activities and events. Make sure this is typed up and handed out – highlight the different types of involvement opportunities that will be available.
- Give them a short form to fill out while they are present. Have it include a chance to let you know what topics they would like addressed during future events and meetings.
- Close with a parent prayer experience. (Two meditations included)

Bringing the Retreat Home with You

While your teen is on retreat:

- Keep a candle lit all weekend (or light it each night), reminding you to pray for your teen each time you walk by it.
- Set up a prayer table in your home, with a picture of your child, a cross or crucifix, and a Bible. Gather your family together and pray each night to remember your teen.
- Use the prayer log to ask other family members or friends to keep your teen in prayer this weekend. Then, leave it on your child's pillow for them to see when they get home!
- Decorate their room with encouraging words, or scripture passages from retreat to remind them of the theme. *2 Corinthians 5:17* would be great!
- Post-it note their life: Leave little post-its or notes with the retreat them in places they'll find during the week (like their sports bag, on their computer, in their backpack...)
- Visit the chapel during the day on Saturday, and offer a prayer in front of the tabernacle.
- Purchase any music from the retreat and make them a CD!

Spend some time on you:

- Spend some time reconnecting with your spouse or a close friend. It will be all too soon that our children will be grown up, and we will need to have these close relationships.
- Spend some time in prayer (just for yourself). When our children are gone, it makes us more aware of their growing independence. Try to surrender your child to God's developing plan for their life...and listen to what His plan is for your life.
- Spoil yourself a little! You're important, too---and our own lives need attention. Spend time doing something you enjoy, instead of carpooling and scheduling.

When your teen returns home:

- Greet your teen at the end of retreat with balloons or flowers. Make it a special homecoming!
- Prepare a special dinner or time together after they get home. Try not to push them back into the craziness of life too quickly. Help them to still savor the retreat.
- When discussing retreat, be mindful that they are exhausted. Try to allow the retreat to unravel instead of pulling it apart.
- "Fourth Day" is a term we use for every day after the retreat ends. You can help them "Live the Fourth" by writing a note to them at breakfast or lunch, or inviting them to pray with you at night or in the car.

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Parent Meditation

Close your eyes and get comfortable – Breathe in slowly and deeply – hold it – let it out. Breathe In slowly and deeply – hold it – let it out. Breathe in peace and stillness breathe out noise and distraction. Breathe in love and kindness - breathe out anger and resentment.

We are going to go back in time and meet your child that is preparing for Confirmation when they were a baby. Put yourself in their nursery. Look around the room, notice all the decorations, all the cute little things you

Put in their room to define them. Notice the small little clothing and all the blankets. Pick up one of the blankets and breathe in that new baby scent, a perfume we remember forever. All of a sudden you hear the beautiful sound of your baby sleeping – walk over to the crib. Put your hand on your child's small back and begin to rub it. As you are caressing their back – you are struck by how much they are dependant on you. You alone answer every cry, change every diaper, hold them tight, tuck them in, protect and love them. It is a very peaceful feeling – the love of a parent for their little baby. You feel so blessed to know you will get to raise this little baby and you begin to wonder what they will be like when they grow up, when they ride a bike, receive their Confirmation, get married, and have their own children. You smile at the excitement ahead. Pick up your baby now from the crib – so softly and hold them tight to your chest. Whisper the dreams and hopes you have for them – tell them how loved they are.

Your child begins to fall back to sleep in your arms and you lay them back into their crib, their little nest oh so carefully – you tiptoe out of the room and back into the hallway. As you are standing there, many years begin to pass in your head and you ever so slowly enter the door of your sweet baby now a teenager. You look around their room and notice all the decorations, the posters, the pictures all the things your sweet baby has grown into loving. Notice all the different things about your teenager that are now in their room, their interests, their hobbies, their schoolbooks, their phone, their radio. All of a sudden

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you hear the soft sound of your child sleeping. You walk over to their bed and watch them sleep. You put your hand on their back and begin to carefully rub it. You feel a little less connected to the child in front of you – you no longer can protect their world – they are choosing their own friends, making their own decisions – you no longer feel like the center of their world. As you are thinking you feel someone beside you and you slowly turn and see the softest, kindest man you have every known - It is Jesus. He begins to ask you about your child. How are the two of you getting along? What are you struggling with? He asks you to describe your child and what you love about them, what is frustrating you.....You begin to tell Jesus how scary it is to be the parent of this teenager. All the things you worry about. They now have their own hopes and dreams, they are busy and distracted and you barely have a chance to really have a conversation. Jesus reminds you that your little baby is beginning to be their own little person. The person he has called them to be. He knows the sadness of not having them talk to him as much, but he reminds you to be patient, as he is, as they grow in age and wisdom. He also sees the mistakes they make and he rejoices in their smallest triumphs – all these will be a part of their future steps. He puts his hand on your shoulder and reminds you that when you are frustrated as a parent you can come to him. He knows the child he gave you –before you felt them in your womb. This is the child he wants you to raise – and he tells you how He will continue to help you. He reminds you that he is their father and that he has set out a path for them. He tells you to hold your teenager in your lap. You put their head against your chest and you feel so connected to them. You remember all the reasons you love them. As you are holding your child Jesus prays over both of you. Listen to his words. He offers you encouragement; He knows it will be difficult. He knows how hard it was for him to watch his mother Mary anguish over Him. But He reminds you that He has prepared a place for both of you forever. Take it one day at a time and he will lead you to that place. You lay your child back down and he tells you he must go. He hugs you and promises you that you are not alone. You look down one last time at your beautiful, precious, baby and begin to tip toe out of their room. Now slowly open your arms.

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