

CONNECTIONS

Your Resource for Building a Strong Catholic Family

Spiritual Fitness Counts



Since we are starting the New Year, and people in our modern times seem to focus on making physical fitness a New Year's resolution, we will look at improving our "spiritual" fitness. To do this we will look at one of the most intriguing truths of Catholic faith, the Trinity.

Child

What do we mean by the Blessed Trinity?

By the Blessed Trinity we mean one God in three Divine Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We cannot fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God having one and the same Divine nature and substance. This is a mystery.

What prayers remind us of the Blessed Trinity?

The sign of the cross, the Apostles' Creed, and the "Glory be to the Father" remind us of the Blessed Trinity

Questioning Mind

What do we mean by the Blessed Trinity?

By the Blessed Trinity we mean one God in three Divine Persons. There is no contradiction in stating that three persons share in one nature. In speaking of the Blessed Trinity we do not say that three natures are one nature or that three persons are one person.

Can we fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God?

No, because this is a mystery. A mystery is a truth that we cannot fully understand. We believe in mysteries because we have evidence that they exist. A modern day example would be electricity. We see its effects but we do not "see" electricity itself.

More Advanced Person of Faith

Why is the knowledge of the Blessed Trinity important to us?

This knowledge is important because it is the foundation of the Christian faith. As we become acquainted with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we also become acquainted with all that they do out of love for us. The grateful heart will try to love God, who first loved us. That is why we should often pray "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit."

Symbol Key



Formation

Fills in the holes of faith knowledge that you may have missed growing up and highlights what makes Catholics distinct



Charity and Service

Highlights charity and service opportunities for the family within St. Francis parish and the greater community.



Prayer and Worship

Understanding what happens at Mass and incorporating prayer into family life.



Family (The Domestic Church)

Incorporating Catholic customs and traditions into family life.



Fun, learning activities for the whole family to enjoy together.

Birth of Christ

DOWN

- Who were tending their flocks by night
- Who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds
- The wise men bowed down to Jesus to _____ him
- Jesus was born in this town
- "The _____ of peace" - one of the titles of Jesus
- mother of Jesus
- Jesus was born in a _____
- The shepherds were in the _____ when they saw an angel

ACROSS

- The wise men followed a _____ that led them to Jesus
- human father of Jesus
- There was no _____ at the inn for Jesus
- one of the gifts of the three wise men
- Jesus could not stay at the _____ because it was full
- and on earth _____, goodwill toward men (Luke 2:14)

Charity and Service



Recommitting ourselves to our health, family, friends, seems to be a natural part of the New Year's holiday. Recommitting ourselves to our faith should be just as important. Attending Mass weekly is a way to not only stay connected to our faith, but it keeps our St. Francis community strong. There are several ministries where you and your family can be involved in the Mass at St. Francis.

For adults:

- Lectors
- Ushers
- Eucharistic Ministers (invitation by Fr. Tom)
- Music Ministry
- Altar Serving (For kids nine years and older, and have received First Holy Communion)

For families:

- Hosting Coffee and Doughnuts

It's wonderful to see whole families involved in the Mass-why not yours?

The bulletin and the St. Francis Parish website have information for how you can be involved.



Mission Statement

The Strong Catholic Families initiative at St. Francis will provide support to help families pass on the traditions of the faith and share the love of Christ.

For more information visit:

<http://www.sfrancissherwood.org/>

(Go to: Faith Formation then Strong Catholic Families)

New Prayers for a New Year



How do I become spiritually fit? With New Year's Day just around the corner, all kinds of resolutions are forming in people's minds in anticipation of the fresh start a new year brings. Everything from diet and exercise, education, career, relationships, personal habits (both good and bad) are up for consideration as a New Year's resolution. How about a spiritual resolution? How about developing a consistent prayer life in the New Year, or, if you already have a routine prayer life, how about trying something new?

What can I do?

Increase your faith knowledge, try doing some spiritual reading or attend an Adult Education class such as the one we have here at St. Francis (call the Parish office for more information).

Uplift your heart.

Try listening to worship music (KBVM 88.3fm is a Catholic radio station; KFIS 104.1fm plays Christian music).

Enjoy some one-on-one time with God.

Try spending some time in Eucharistic adoration (check the bulletin for contact information and to schedule time).

Increase your prayer vocabulary.

Try learning how to pray the Rosary or the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

Increase the amount of grace in your life.

Try staying close to the sacraments. To learn how others who have gone before you made it to heaven, try learning about the saints. Any and all of these ideas are forms of prayer and will help you become spiritually fit. These resolutions will keep you on solid ground to face whatever challenges may arise in your life in 2012.

A Fresh Start for the New Year



The New Year is a time of new beginnings; an ideal opportunity for a fresh start. This year, in addition to all of the standard resolutions, consider sitting down as a family and setting some faith goals for this coming year. Our Catholic faith is rich with opportunities to learn, grow, and deepen our relationship with God. Here are a few suggestions to consider:

Make a commitment to consistent family prayer. Nightly would be ideal, but if that doesn't fit your family's ability, make a commitment for once or twice per week. Just because nightly prayers don't work at your house doesn't mean there isn't an opportunity to have consistent family prayer time. Draw up a realistic schedule everyone in your family can live with and stick to it. You know what they say: A family that prays together...stays together.

Make a commitment to attend Reconciliation consistently as a family.

The blessing of forgiveness that comes through reconciliation has a profound effect on your relationship with God. During Advent, we all had the opportunity for reconciliation at Communal Penance. Teach your children that the healing power of Christ is ever present and available more than once or twice a year. Attend reconciliation as a family on a consistent basis. Reconciliation is held at St. Francis every Saturday from 4:00pm-5:00pm.

Pray the Rosary as a family. The parish offers an opportunity each month for you to come and pray the Rosary, but if that doesn't fit your schedule, find another time that works and do it as a family in your home. I would suggest plotting it out for the year and putting it on your family calendar. If you put it in writing and have everyone in your family coordinate it on their calendars, it's much more likely to get done!

Find a service opportunity within the parish or community that you can do as a family.

We have lots of ministries to get involved in at St. Francis. Consider that you may fulfill several ministries through your family's service. For example, perhaps parents can usher at Mass while the children Altar Serve. Remember also that there is great need in our community beyond the walls of our Church. You will find that you are blessed through your family's service to the community. The reward is truly great.

God's love is endless, and though we take this opportunity to start a new chapter in our faith, it is important to remember that God is ever present in our lives and in his love for us. Spending a few brief moments to find ways to deepen our relationship with Christ is a small thing in comparison to the endless effort that God puts into our families. This is the year to do it. Set some Spiritual New Year's Resolutions as a family and make a conscious effort to fulfill them. If you do, 2012 promises to be a year of great blessing.