

Spiritual Growth Tool



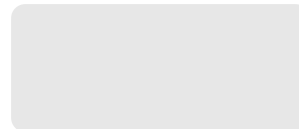
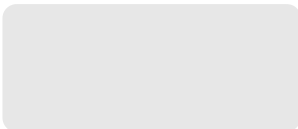
Child's Name

WHAT ATTRIBUTES DO YOU SEE MOST ACTIVE IN YOUR CHILD? CIRCLE YOUR ANSWERS

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Prays on their own |  Enjoys Christian multi-media (shows, podcasts, movies, etc.) |
|  Understands a basic view of Salvation History |  Knows basic prayers |
|  Wants to use their gifts for God |  Is willing to talk about Jesus outside a church setting |
|  Can pray outloud when asked |  Talks about Jesus like He is a good friend |
|  Reads the Bible or other religious books |  Asks big questions about life and God |
|  Joyful |  Participates well in the Sacramental Life |
|  Likes to talk about God with others |  Has Catholic friends |
|  Curious about Church teachings |  Generous |
|  Is welcoming and inclusive of others |  Looks to be helpful to others |

WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST PROMINENT SPIRITUAL ATTRIBUTES IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE? WHY?

**TALLY THE COLORS FOR YOUR TOP THREE ATTRIBUTES BELOW.
PUT A STAR NEXT TO THE HIGHEST COLOR SHOWING YOUR CHILD'S MOST NATURAL ATTRIBUTE. CIRCLE THE COLOR WITH THE FEWEST COLOR TO INDICATE WHERE YOUR CHILD COULD BENEFIT THE MOST FROM INTENTIONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH.**



What is Discipleship?

The goal of sacramental formation is to help your child to grow into a life long disciple of Jesus Christ. To do this, parents must help their children grow spiritually by helping them to recognize and learn how God is speaking to them. Spiritual growth is a difficult goal. Discipleship is so much more than our external spiritual habits like memorizing prayers or sitting quietly in Church. At its core, discipleship is about cultivating an intimacy with Jesus Christ in our hearts. This means that you can't teach discipleship like a regular school subject or an extracurricular activity focused only on facts and skills. Rather, the spiritual life has to be intentionally cultivated within the life of the family. Much in the same way as a plant absorbs light and water from its environment, a child will absorb the faith life present in their family.

This intentional cultivation must also take into account your child's unique faith needs. A child's expression of faith is different but, just as valid as an adult's. The spiritual life is also very dynamic as opposed to static with periods of growth and periods of stagnation that can be frustrating. The hope of this tool is to simplify discipleship into a quantifiable reality that will allow parents to determine what resources might be most helpful in prompting spiritual growth.

DISCIPLESHIP HAS THREE ASPECTS: ENGAGEMENT, UNDERSTANDING AND DESIRE



ENGAGEMENT

This aspect of discipleship embodies individuals who immerse themselves in the lifestyle of following Jesus. They find fulfillment in being disciples and embracing the practices inherent in this way of life, demonstrating their commitment through outward displays of action.

**GROW
ENGAGEMENT
ON PAGE 3**



UNDERSTANDING

This facet of discipleship epitomizes individuals who possess a firm grasp of the theological truths of the faith. They derive satisfaction from exploring the intricacies of their beliefs and demonstrate the ability to articulate their understanding at a later point in time.

**GROW
UNDERSTANDING
ON PAGE 4**



DESIRE

This aspect of discipleship defines individuals passionate about their Catholic faith, expressing it through actions beyond the church. They eagerly participate in liturgical practices and church events with genuine enthusiasm.

**GROW
DESIRE
ON PAGE 5**

GENERAL GROWTH STRATEGIES

- Pray for your children deliberately and by name. Let your children hear and see you praying for them.
- Faith and spiritual growth are gifts from the Holy Spirit. We cannot on our own efforts force spiritual growth. The best we can do is create the right conditions for growth to happen and trust the Lord.
- Parents are the number one influencing factor in how children will perceive God. Spend 10-15 minutes journaling about how your children experience God through your actions and inactions.
- Spiritual growth is a process. If something does not seem to be working, do not be afraid to change practices.
- The aspects of discipleship work together. Try strengthening your child by focusing on an area they display a natural aptitude for.
- As our children progress beyond the enchantment of fairy tales and childhood magic, it's possible for them to confuse God with being nothing but a fairytale. Show how God has acted through time in concrete ways by telling real stories. These stories show us who God is and how He wants to be active in our lives. Connect the dots between what He did in the past in scripture, what He did through saints and your family, and what He's doing now in your own life.

Engagement



This aspect of discipleship embodies individuals who immerse themselves in the lifestyle of following Jesus. They find fulfillment in being disciples and embracing the practices inherent in this way of life, demonstrating their commitment through outward displays of action.

CHECK ACTIVITIES WHICH IMMEDIATELY CAPTURE YOUR INTEREST

- Keep an eye on how often your kids see you praying, reading the Bible, attending sacraments, etc., by yourself. Try to show your faith to your children more often.
- Invite trusted family or friends to speak to your children about their experiences and stories of God.
- Buy or borrow a new Catholic book for your child to read. Find a great list for 8-9 year olds here: <https://tinyurl.com/youngcatholickids> or 10-11 year olds here: <https://tinyurl.com/oldercatholickids>
- Choose a new podcast to listen to: www.littlewithgreatlove.com/saints-for-slackers/, www.catholicprouts.com, www.shininglightdolls.com or www.enkindlepodcast.com
- Pray before your kids' school, sports, and other activities. Involve God intentionally in those moments. Check out www.hallow.com
- Look at how your home is decorated to see if your children see your Catholic faith reflected in them. Simple changes like a cross, a picture of Jesus or your family's sacramental moments
- Build family traditions, food and activities around the Liturgical Year. Check out this video on how to get started: <https://tinyurl.com/startliturgicalliving>.
- Choose a night and how often to have family prayer. Stick to it, even if only some family members can join or if it's difficult because of behavior.
- As a family, try to let go of excess stuff. Donate clothes, toys, and limit screen time. Materialism can get in the way of bonding with each other and with God. Spend the extra time connecting as a family.
- Add Christian praise and worship music into your family's playlists for driving or time at home.

My Top Three Activities To Try

Other ideas:

01

02

03

Understanding



This facet of discipleship epitomizes individuals who possess a firm grasp of the theological truths of the faith. They derive satisfaction from exploring the intricacies of their beliefs and demonstrate the ability to articulate their understanding at a later point in time.

CHECK ACTIVITIES WHICH IMMEDIATELY CAPTURE YOUR INTEREST

- Encourage your kids to ask questions, even hard ones to answer. Make it clear with your kids they can always talk to.
- Commit to growing in your own understanding of the Catholic faith. As you learn, you can share things that excite you about the faith with your children. Try the “Bible in a Year” podcast or “The Fr. Mike Schmitz Podcast” or “Ascension Presents” on YouTube as starting points.
- Chastity Project offers valuable insights on purity from a Catholic viewpoint. The resources and podcasts provided are both engaging and enlightening, shedding light on the dignity of human love as intended by God. Visit www.chastity.com for more information.
- Bishop Barron offers resources to show how science and faith are actually connected www.reasonfaithscience.com
- The American Scientific Affiliation are a group of Christian Scientists with resources at www.asa3.org
- Fr. Spitzer’s has resources which explore the truths of the Catholic faith and science. Check out www.magiscenter.com or Fr. Spitzer’s Universe on EWTN
- Set up a spot in your home to showcase moments of God’s faithfulness to your family. Include stories from your family’s past (like heirlooms) or recent memorable moments (like keepsakes). Physical items serve as reminders of these moments. Involve your kids in deciding which stories to feature in this space.
- Begin a family Mass journal. After Mass, ask everyone what they found most meaningful from the homily, readings, prayers, etc. Write down these moments to see how God is speaking to your family over a month.

My Top Three Activities To Try

Other ideas:

01

02

03

Desire



This aspect of discipleship defines individuals passionate about their Catholic faith, expressing it through actions beyond the church. They eagerly participate in liturgical practices and church events with genuine enthusiasm.

CHECK ACTIVITIES WHICH IMMEDIATELY CAPTURE YOUR INTEREST

- Take a moment to think about your outlook on faith: Do you see the sacraments as duties or chances for growth? Pay attention to the words you use about Jesus around your children. Decide to be enthusiastic about your faith, even when it's challenging.
- Watch an episode of "The Chosen" instead of a family movie. The show is free on the Chosen App. Note: some episodes might not be suitable for children
- Purchase a Catholic gift for your child. <https://catholicfamilycrate.com/> or <https://www.catholiccompany.com> as starting points.
- Purchase your child a more mature and beautiful rosary at a store like <https://ruggedrosaries.com/>
- Create fun traditions after sacramental moments like going out for ice cream or donuts after Sunday Mass
- Cultivate moments of gratitude to thank God for all things
- Set a family game night that has nothing to do with the faith. Bonding through fun builds trust which allows you to speak more directly on matters of faith.
- Visit local Shrines and Basilicas to show the beauty and majesty of the faith.
- Using YouTube, take a virtual tour of famous Churches or Shrines around the world with your children.
- Stay consistent. Show that the truth you preach is the truth you strive to live by. Be willing to admit and apologize when you make mistakes. You're teaching them that we all need God's grace, we're all still learning, and we can all ask for forgiveness and begin anew.
- Encourage kindness towards those in need—donate to the poor box, food pantry, or homeless shelters. Get involved in local service projects or make cards for the elderly. Help your child understand others' perspectives to develop empathy by looking for peers who are lonely, shy or don't fit in.

My Top Three Activities To Try

Other ideas:

01

02

03

Spiritual Habit Tracker

Time Frame Being Tracked

Fill in using goals from Spiritual Growth Tool.
Complete before your retreat and turn it in @ retreat

PLAN - OUR SPIRITUAL GOALS ARE:

REFLECT: WHAT WERE OUR SUCCESSES & SETBACKS?

PARENT/GUARDIAN

I was at my best when...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

CHILD

I observed my child growing spiritually when....

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

FAMILY

of times we went to Mass

of times we prayed as a family

of times we intentionally made time for God outside of Mass and Prayers

My Top Three Spiritual Highlights Are

01

02

03

I feel God is teaching me

One change I can make going forward is