



FAITH ALIVE @ HOME!

A DIGITAL GUIDE TO FAMILY FAITH FORMATION AND PRAYER!

Created for you by the Office for Lifelong Faith Formation of the Archdiocese of Newark

BACK TO SCHOOL 2026

What Catholic Families Can Do to Prepare to Go Back to School

Catholic families going back to school need to prepare with intentionality. This will help them to remain focused as the chaos and business of the school year unfolds. In this way families can successfully focus on establishing spiritual routines, building Christian virtues, protecting family time and navigating cultural influences. As the primary educators of their children, parents must find ways to balance a busy academic year with family activities that will help the entire family grow in their Catholic faith by:

- building regular sustainable prayer habits.
- actively guarding the sacredness of our Sunday Mass obligation needs to be a priority in the family calendar.
- reinforcing Christian virtues in regular family conversations.

These will help family members to be present to each other, communicate their love for each other and the importance of prayer, hope, patience, kindness, generosity, mercy and forgiveness.

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Family Prayer for Sending Children to School

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Heavenly Father, we place our children into Your hands as they leave the safety of our home to enter the school doors. You love them even more than we do, and we trust them completely to Your divine care.

Lord Jesus, guard their minds, their bodies, and their hearts today. When they face peer pressure, give them the courage to stand firm in truth. When they encounter someone who is lonely, left out, or hurting, fill them with Your compassion so they can be a source of Christ's love on campus. Shield them from anxiety, false worldly values, and any spiritual or physical danger.

Holy Spirit, be their counselor and guide. Grant them minds to learn, a retentive memory for their studies, and patience with themselves when schoolwork gets difficult. Guide their teachers to be fair, wise, and kind.

Amen.



Building Sustainable Prayer Habits

There are many ways Catholic families can build simple, sustainable prayer habits. Mornings and afternoons get very hectic, but anchoring the day in prayer helps remind everyone in the family that we are never alone. God walks with us throughout the day.

Here are some suggestions:

 **Driveway / Front Door Blessings:** Keep it simple by blessing the children at the driveway or front door. Say a quick one-sentence prayer blessing over them before they exit the front door of your home or board the car.

 **Commute Prayer:** Turn the morning or afternoon drive or walk to or from school into prayer time by listening to sacred music, or saying a "quick" *Our Father*, or *Hail Mary* or an invocation to your *Guardian Angel* or favorite *Saint*.

 **Printable Prayers:** Find short prayers and print them. Put them in the children's binder, backpack, or on the top of the home desk, encouraging the children to say the short prayer, once a day.



**HERE are some
more short
prayers for
school days!**

Family Prayers for the School Year

Heavenly Father,

as we begin this school year,
we gather as a family to place
our hearts, our minds, and our days
into Your hands.



You are the
source of all
wisdom, truth,
and love.
Amen.

Lord Jesus,

we ask You to walk down the
school hallways with our children.
Give them a spirit of wisdom to learn
well, a spirit of fortitude to face
difficult moments, and a spirit of
charity to see You in their classmates.
Grant them the courage to be a light
to those who are lonely,
a friend to those who feel
forgotten, and a witness
to Your love in
everything they do.
Amen.



Holy Spirit,

guide our teachers, administrators,
and school staff.
Give them patience, strength,
and joy as they serve our children.
Protect our family's home
and our calendar this year.
Help us to always prioritize our
Catholic faith, our family time,
and the Sunday Sabbath
above all worldly anxieties
and busy schedules.
Amen.



Our Lady, Mother of the Church,

wrap our children in
your mantle of
protection. Amen.



St. Joseph,

guard our
home and our
family routines.
Amen.



Guardian Angels,

protect us
every step
of the way.
Amen.



A Student's Morning Offering

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.
Good morning, Lord. I offer You this new day - all my studies, my hard work, my successes and my frustrations. Clear my mind so I can learn well. Guard my tongue so I only speak kindness. Open my heart so I can notice and help anyone who is lonely or struggling today. Holy Spirit, give me peace when I feel stressed, and patience when I am tired. May everything I do today bring glory to Your name. Amen.



Spiritual Preparation and Activities for the New School Year

Here are some suggestions to help you prepare spiritually to head back to school:

- **Backpack Blessing:** Seek a backpack blessing from your local Catholic parish priest or deacon.
- **New School -Year Confession:** Take some time as a family to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as the new school year begins.
- **Family Holy Hour:** Spend at least 30 minutes to an hour as a family in silent adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, asking for God's help, blessing and grace for the new school year.
- **House Blessing:** Grab some holy water and walk through your home on the night before school starts, blessing each room especially your children's bedrooms and the use of their new school supplies.

2026							SEPTEMBER						
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Catholic Back-to-School Activities

Catholic back-to-school activities can balance academic growth and spiritual formation. These activities focus on community, prayer and living out the Gospel virtues. As a parent guiding your family, these ideas can be helpful:

A Daily Examen: Take some time each night before going to sleep to reflect on the day by identifying God's blessings and where there were struggles and difficulties. Thank the Lord for the day and ask for His mercy, guidance, forgiveness and wisdom so you may do better the next day.

Faith Time Capsule: As a family, create a "back-to-school faith time" capsule. Fill the capsule with personal prayers, faith questions and letters to God about your school year anxieties, hopes and dreams. At the end of the school year, open and share your memories.

Adopting a Family Patron Saint: Select a specific saint to intercede for your family throughout the academic year. Place the image of the saint in an appropriate place and remember to offer your saint prayers of intercession on a regular basis.

Watch this short video
about
Respecting Teachers



Find
more ideas
HERE!



Three Saints for the School Year

St. Aloysius Gonzaga June 21

1568-1591 Patron saint of students.

He was an Italian aristocrat who walked away from his inheritance and military career to become a Jesuit priest. He is known for his ministry to the poor and sick.



St. Thomas Aquinas January 28

1225-1274 Patron saint of students and universities.

He was an Italian Dominican friar and a philosopher of medieval Scholasticism. He is famously harmonized Christian theology with Aristotelian logic.



St. Carlo Acutis
October 12

1991-2006 Patron saint of technology, youth, and computer science students.

He was an English-born Italian computer programmer and gamer who used his technical skills to catalogue Eucharistic miracles. He is widely known as "God's influencer". He is the first millennial saint.



Prioritizing Christian Virtues

In a culture heavily focused on academic performance and competition, it is important for Catholic families to emphasize character over achievements.

Praise the Effort: Celebrate traits like integrity, kindness and humility just as joyfully as you would an "A" or a sports trophy.

Evening Reflection: At dinner or at bedtime, ask your children where they saw God during the day or highlight a specific Christian virtue – like patience or generosity – that they practiced.

Chores and Character: When setting up new chores or bedtime routines, explain the "why" behind them by connecting them to Christian virtues and gifts from God.

Stay Spiritually Engaged as Parents



Catholic parents need to be present and communicate love, security and a living faith with their children.

Partner with Teachers: Get to know your child's educators personally. Communicate your family's educational philosophy and expectations early on to build a unified team.

Parental Recharge: Take 15 to 30 minutes a day for your own mental and spiritual health. Steal moments of quiet time for your own prayer life, like slipping into a local church for silent prayer while your kids are at a sports practice or school rehearsal.

Watch for Signs of Stress: Keep communication positive and open with your children. Watch for back-to-school anxiety signs, including changes in sleep, loss of appetite, or social isolation. In your communication with your children, validate their feelings and let them know you are there for them.

School Year Faith Questions for Catholic Families

These questions can be used for personal journaling, bedtime check-ins, or family conversations in the evening.

With Elementary and Middle School Children:

- Where did I see God's beauty or goodness in school today?
- Was there someone in school today that looked lonely and sad? How can I be a friend to them tomorrow?
- What was the hardest part of the day? Did I ask God for his help?
- Was I honest and fair in my schoolwork and school games today? How can I do better tomorrow?

With High School and College Children:

- Was I faithful to my Christian identity today in my interactions with others?
- Did I take time today to pray and thank the Lord for his abundant blessings?
- Did I share God's love with those I met today? And, if I did not, how can I do better?

With the entire Family:

- Does our family calendar reflect that Sunday Mass and family prayer time is our top priority? If not, how can we make it so?
- How can we better support each other with the challenges that come throughout the school year?
- What "spiritual routines" can we realistically stick to this school year?



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