

10 Mass Tips for Catholic Families

~ from KatieWarner.com ~

As Catholics, we know that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith, and Mass is really the pinnacle experience of Catholic culture that we engage in every week as a family.

So here are some strategies for making the most of Mass as a family:

1. **Review the readings before Mass.** This helps the readings “sink in” better when you hear them for the second time at Mass, and reading them ahead of time also gives you the opportunity to learn their context within the greater narrative of salvation history. Reviewing the readings before Mass is also immensely helpful if you have young children who may innocently divert family members’ attention away from the readings or Gospel during the liturgy.
2. **Sit near the front.** For some, it seems counterintuitive to sit near the front of the Church, especially if you have a pew full of little ones, but being near the altar is generally immensely helpful in paying closer attention to what’s happening.
3. **If you have little ones, explain the Mass to them as it progresses. For older children and adults, learn about the Mass at home.** Little children like to have the Mass narrated to them, so they can feel like they are “in the know” with what’s happening (“Now we are going to listen to stories from the Bible.” “Now you are going to go receive a blessing from the priest, while I receive Jesus in the Eucharist!”). For older children and adults, learning about the parts of the Mass and their Scriptural roots makes the celebration of the Mass even more meaningful and engaging. (Click the links for great learning resources about the Mass!)
4. **Dress for the occasion!** Wearing your “Sunday best” signals to your family and to others how important the Mass is to you, and sets the stage for better concentration, appreciation, and behavior.

5. **Participate!** Sing the hymns, pray the vocal prayers – be engaged! Show your family through your participation how you want to be at Mass, and they will more likely follow your example.
6. **State your expectations and the rewards of going to Mass.** Talk to your family about how one should behave at Mass (for example: quiet voices, do not disturb others, stay in the pew...), and why you go to Mass as a family ([Here are some great reasons.](#))
7. **Minimize distractions.** This probably looks different for every family, but know what distracts you and your kids and then avoid those things! Some common distractors to all families include chewing gum, food, certain toys, or even bulletins (which are not intended to be read *during* Mass). My toddler has never needed toys during church (because he’s never had them offered to him), and is usually content with either nothing, or one religious book or a children’s rosary.
8. **Go to *daily* Mass when you can.** When people ask me why my toddler behaves so well (most of the time!) during Mass on Sunday, I respond, “We go to daily Mass; he gets a lot of practice!” Making the Mass a more regular part of your family’s routine is always, always a good thing.
9. **Consider putting something in the collection basket,** rather than tithing solely online, if you have kids in the pew. Have them participate by adding in a dollar (or a few) themselves. Watching you tithe is an important behavior to model for them.
10. **Take turns discussing one thing you each learned from Mass that day.** You can do this on the ride home or at a meal time that day, but for all who are old enough, share your one “take-away” from either the readings, homily or other prayer time during Mass and discuss how you might use that tidbit of insight or inspiration as you go through the following week.

“It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without Holy Mass.” -St. Padre Pio

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an intentional faith at home with your family,
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