

Book Lists from Faith at Home

Enjoy your faith with your kids

Ideas, activities, inspiration

“Celebrating the Church Year with Young Children,” by Joan Halmo (The Liturgical Press, 1989). A wonderful guide for parents, giving background and a wealth of ideas for each season and holy day throughout the liturgical year, in order of importance: Sunday, Easter, Holy Week, and so on. Lots of great ideas!

“To Dance with God: Family ritual and community celebration,” by Gertrud Mueller Nelson (Paulist Press, 1986). Another superb resource for parents. Lots of ideas for faith-based activities for daily family life as well as seasonal and yearly observances from Christmas to birthdays, Lent to St. Nicholas’ Day.

“Offering the Gospel to Children,” by Gretchen Wolff Pritchard (Cowley Publications, 1994). Makes a great case for offering children the fullness of the religious experience without analyzing and predigesting it on their behalf, and tells stories of wonderful ways to do this. Great comments and recommendations about children’s books and Bibles in the final chapters.

“Bundles of Faith and Tons of Fun: Easy activities, prayers, and projects for children,” by Patricia L. Mathson (Ave Maria Press, 2000).

“The Best of Holy Days & Holidays: Prayer celebrations with children,” by Gaynell B. Cronin.

“Seasons of Celebrations: Prayers, plays, and projects for the church year,” by Patricia L. Mathson and Katherine Coleman, illustrator (Ave Maria Press, 1995).

“A Feast of Seasons: Celebrate the Bible’s festivals with your family and friends,” by Margot R. Hodson (Kregel Publications, 2001).



Children & faith formation

“Raising Faith-Filled Kids: Ordinary opportunities to nurture spirituality at home,” by Tom McGrath (Loyola Press, 2000). Such a great resource!

“Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a life of faith,” by Catherine Stonehouse (Baker Books, 1998). Learn how a child’s faith forms and what we can do to nurture our children’s faith.

“Gently Lead: How to teach your children about God while finding out for yourself,” by Polly Berrien Berends (Crossroad Publishing, 1998)

“The Religious Potential of the Child: Experiencing scripture and liturgy with young children,” by Sofia Cavalletti (Liturgy Training Publications, 1992). Children need opportunities to approach God without adults dictating their experience. We can help them by providing language and symbols with which children can express their own experiences of the Holy.

“Children Praying: Why and how to pray with your children,” by Joan Bel Geddes (Sorin Books, 1999; ISBN 1893732045)

“Raising Kids Who Care: About themselves, about their world, about each other,” by Kathleen O’Connell Chesto (Sheed & Ward, 1996)

“Children and Prayer: A shared pilgrimage,” by Betty S. Cloyd (Upper Room Books, 1997).

“Exploring the Spirituality of Childhood,” by Vivian Paley, Clark Wade, and Jane P. Ward (Treehaus Communications, 1998).

“Godly Play: An imaginative approach to religious education,” by Jerome Berryman (Augsburg Fortress, 1994). In Godly play, wonder together about a Bible or faith story that’s presented in very simply, much as Jesus told stories. Then children explore the story.

“Nurturing Your Child’s Spirit: A Montessorian approach,” by Jeannine L. Schmid (Treehaus Communications, 1997).

Family life

“The Family Cloister: Benedictine wisdom for the home,” by David Robinson (Crossroad Publishing, 2000). St. Benedict’s very practical rule of life for a monastery (everything, from prayer to laundry, eating to gardening, is done with a heart oriented toward God) is applied to life in a family.

“Sacred Dwelling: A spirituality of family life,” by Wendy M. Wright and Santa Murphy, illustrator (Forest of Peace Publishing, 1997).

“Living in God’s Time: A parent’s guide to nurturing children throughout the Christian year,” by Margaret Persky (Upper Room Books, 1999).

“Rituals for Home and Parish: Healing and celebrating the family,” by Jack J. Rathschmidt and Gaynell Cronin (Paulist Press, 1996).

“Weaving Faith and Family... When You’re Hanging on by a Thread: Reflections and suggestions for your busy family,” by Eileen Marx (Ave Maria Press, 1999).

Just for parents

“Parenting as a Spiritual Journey: Deepening ordinary and extraordinary events into sacred occasions,” by Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998). Everyday events such as bath times, story time, and dinner can become part of the “crash course in love, grace, creation, revelation, forgiveness, law, suffering, power,” that is parenting – “the most intensive seminar on spirituality around.” *Originally published as “Our Share of Night, Our Share of Morning: Parenting as a spiritual journey.”*

“The Contemplative Mom: Restoring rich relationship in the midst of motherhood,” by Ann S. Kroeker (WaterBrook Press, 2000). A wonderful book on how a mother’s busy life can actually be a route to drawing closer to God and enriching her spiritual life -- even though quiet moments of prayer are so scarce she barely recalls the feeling!

“The Mystery of Children: What our kids teach us about childlike faith,” by Mike Mason (WaterBrook Press, 2001).

For kids

“God’s Paintbrush,” by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Annette Compton, illustrator (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992). A wonderfully charming book that invites children to encounter God through moments in their own lives, and provides questions an adult and child can explore together. A treat.

“God Lives in Glass, and Other Spiritual Reflections of Our Children,” by Robert J. Landy, Editor (Skylight Paths Pub.?, 2001; ISBN 1893361306).

“What Does God Look Like?” by Lawrence Kushner, Karen Kushner, and Dawn W. Majewski, illustrator (Skylight Paths Pub., 2001).

“What Is God’s Name?” by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Phoebe Stone, illustrator (Skylight Paths Pub., 1999; ISBN 1893361101).

“Water, Come Down! The Day You Were Baptized,” by Walter Wangerin, Jr., and Gerardo Suzan, illustrator (Augsburg Fortress, 1999). This beautifully illustrated book for children ages 4-8 (which could be enjoyed by younger children too!) shows all of creation -- sun, rain, cloud, and more -- celebrating a child’s baptism.

“The Glorious Impossible,” by Madeleine L’Engle (Simon & Schuster Children’s, 1990). The Story is retold with matchless art. The beautiful Renaissance frescoes by Giotto are a wonderful accompaniment to Madeleine L’Engle’s retelling of the life of Jesus Christ. A great addition to the family library.

Books by Tomie de Paola are a delightful combination of art with a pre-modern feel and the simplest telling of the stories. The result is books that allow you to enjoy the essence of each story. There are subtle details to be found in the pictures. Great for all ages.

“The Parables of Jesus,” by Tomie dePaola (Holiday House, 1998). A wonderful resource for “supposing” and “wondering” about a single parable at a time with your child.

“The Miracles of Jesus,” by Tomie dePaola (Holiday House, 1987).

“Tomie dePaola’s Book of Bible Stories,” by Tomie dePaola (Putnam Publishing Group, 1990). This is my choice for reading Bible stories with my children. Lovely art; a spare & beautiful retelling of each story.