

God, help us to trust you in times of uncertainty, knowing you will always be there to guide us.

Your Child's Moral Development: CONSCIENCE

DEVELOPING ONE'S CONSCIENCE IS A LIFELONG TASK

It's a process of becoming more and more attuned to the voice of God that resounds within our hearts. We can help our children get off to a good start in the following ways:

- Make a clear presentation of the wisdom of the Church on moral issues that affect your child. At this age, these tend to be simple issues of personal right and wrong- telling the truth, not taking what doesn't belong to him or her, and treating others fairly and with kindness.
- Children (and adults) learn through stories. Choose good books, films, and television programs for your child to watch, because we're all greatly influenced by the values in the stories we take in. Discuss your own values in light of the entertainment choices you enjoy together.
- Expose your child to Gospel stories. Use your children's Bible and read from it together.
- Rituals and worship are powerful shapers of conscience and consciousness. Worship together regularly and share how praying together helps you follow Jesus' way.
- Encourage your child to listen for the still, small voice within that is God.

Daily Examen

Part of the rich tradition of the Catholic Church is recognizing the need to reflect on our day. Saint Ignatius of Loyola developed a simple method called the Daily Examen. The simplicity of the Examen makes it a perfect fit for prayer life of a child. With a young child, you can talk through the steps, inviting him or her to say thank you to God for good things; to think about the day and how he or she moved closer to God or further away from God; to say "I'm sorry" for the times he or she did not act as God would wish; and to ask for God's help in growing closer to him tomorrow. Here are the steps:

1. **Stillness:** recalling God's presence
2. **Gratitude:** expressing thankfulness
3. **Reflection:** looking back on your day
4. **Sorrow:** asking for forgiveness
5. **Hopefulness:** resolving to grow

Bedtime is an excellent time to walk through the Examen with your child. Conclude with the Our Father. See www.loyolapress.com/godsgift for more on the Daily Examen.