

God, give us the grace to find the holy moments in our own family that show we're there for one another.

Your Child's Moral Development: SELF-AWARENESS

When asked, "Why did you do that?" it's not uncommon for a child to respond, "I don't know." And the fact is, the child is likely telling the truth. It takes a while to acquire the ability to know why we do what we do. Parents can do a lot to help their child come to a better understanding of his or her behavior by focusing on self-awareness.

When children are young, fact and fantasy, reality and imagination often blur. As children grow. Their capacity to understand their own behavior and their motives increases. If they grow up in an atmosphere that is both attentive and nurturing, their self-awareness will naturally expand. Here are some ways to help that happen.

- Help your child come to better self-awareness by discussing your own motivations for decisions you made.
- Have a gentle conversation after your child has made a bad choice, to help you both understand the child's motives better. "What were you hoping would happen?" is a way to unearth motives that might otherwise remain murky.
- As your child prepares for bed, pause together for a brief moment in silence so that each of you can listen inside to what God might be trying to tell you. Ask your child to consider how he or she feels, what thoughts are stuck in his or her head. Spend a few minutes praying for the grace to know and follow God's will.

Excerpts taken from "Preparing at Home for First Reconciliation" Tom McGrath www.loyolapress.com

Secret Signal

With your child, develop a "secret signal" for your family, It might involve tracing a heart into the palm of another's hand, a double hand squeeze, a tap-tap-tap for "I love you" on the shoulder, even just a wink or a high-five. Establish this secret signal as your sign that you love one another and that you are there for one another.