Knowing Your First Grader

As a child becomes six, changes occur rapidly in growth and development. First graders can be very enthusiastic about their endeavors. They love new places, new ideas, and new bits of information.

First graders enjoy ceremony and ritual.

What better way to meet that need in your child than to attend Mass as a family. As Catholics, we are obligated to attend Mass weekly and participate – by listening, responding, and singing. Children can take advantage of Children’s Liturgy of the Word. Six months of consistent Mass attendance and participation will yield an enjoyable experience.

Why do we need to go to Mass? It’s simple, because we love God.

Parents are the single most influential people in children’s lives. Children are always watching and imitating you. Enjoyment of the Mass is one of the ways you can build faith as a family.

Prayer comes naturally to first graders.

Prayer is our communication with God. As a family, you can dedicate a space where your family gathers for prayer. Choose a space that is comfortable – the kitchen, family room, bedroom – whatever works for you. The time in this space should be quiet and peaceful. Let your children know they can pray wherever and whenever they want or need to. God is always listening. Catechetical guidelines suggest that children in First Grade know the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be prayers.

Family prayer time connects faith and family. Every time you help your children understand their faith and deepen their relationship with God you are building the *Domestic Church*. You are doing this without even realizing it: by recognizing God in your daily activities and in creation; in teaching your children to share their toys; by sending thank you notes; etc. Your children will learn valuable lessons through your examples.

First graders tend to be somewhat self-absorbed at this stage of their development. They can be somewhat assertive and often feel they “know” everything. They exhibit as sense of spontaneity and confidence. It is a wonderful time to remind them how special they are and how each person is a precious child of God.