



Looking back on our parenting efforts, Carol and I are pretty happy with the results. Our kids are grown and out in the real world, living lives of their own. Three of them are married, and the fourth is in a serious relationship. We have three grandchildren and a fourth on the way. We get together often and we enjoy one another's company very much. We all love one another and it shows.

Each of our children has inherited a few odd quirks from either Carol or I, but for the most part, they are well-adjusted young adults.

As I reflect back, however, I'd like to have one "do-over." I wish I had done a better job, done my fair share, of forming our children in the faith.

I offer up a couple of disclaimers at this point: First, thanks to Carol and through their own initiative, the kids have found their way when it comes to their faith, or are working on it. Second, as a young dad, I simply didn't know any better; I was still trying to figure out things for myself.

I took my job as a role model seriously. I tried to live a good life and talk to them about how to treat one another. Carol and I took them to Church on Sundays, usually hoping we could get through Mass without one of the four going crazy on us.

I can remember very few times, however, that I talked about faith with the kids. I didn't share what the Catholic Church taught, or what I believed and why. I didn't think to encourage family prayer, except before meals. I didn't share, in words, the beauty of the Mass. I didn't talk about the Eucharist with awe and wonder. I didn't talk about turning to God in our time of need. I credit Carol for any talk of Jesus or the assurance that He was always there for them.

We sent our children to Catholic grade school and high school, and three went on to Catholic colleges. Maybe I thought school, along with Carol's efforts, would be enough. Looking back now, I wish I had done more. I wish I had been **deliberate** in passing on my faith tradition. I wish faith had been a topic of conversation around the dinner table, or during the one-on-one talks I had with each of the children. Instead, my time with them was generally spent discussing school or sports.

There are no do-overs in life, so I offer this "I wish I had done more" confession as a piece of advice to parents of children in their formative years.

Don't just hope your kids will grow in their faith; and don't rely on Catholic schools to be the sole source of faith development for them. We at Bishop Chatard do our best to nurture the faith of our students, but the work must begin at home. I encourage parents to be deliberate in their efforts to teach the traditions of the Church, and share their own faith journeys.

Parents build the foundation on solid rock. Bishop Chatard will work to provide support and reinforcement of that foundation. Only then will our kids be able to weather the storms they will face out in the world.