

*Full of  
God's  
Goodness*

*Be Who God  
Created You  
to Be*

**PLEASE PRAY  
THAT**

- Parents will help their children become *who* God wants them to be.
- All youth will image God rather than image the culture.
- Parents will help virtue come alive in their children.
- All children will know the security of true love from their parents.
- Families will create homes filled with mercy and love.
- Parents will witness a visible love for God for their children to see.
- Charity will flourish within every family.
- No child (or parent) will ever feel they are beyond God's loves and mercy.



**Teaching  
the Way of Love**  
Because humanity passes by way of the family...

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## Being before Doing

Even though I am both a teacher and a public speaker today, I never saw myself talking in front of people. You see, I didn't grow up with a lot of self-esteem. I was a smart kid and did great in school. But in my own eyes I was a failure in all the areas that mattered. I was clumsy, slow, weak, and ugly.

My sixth grade teacher did see promise in me. One day she pulled me aside and invited me to participate in a speech contest. I memorized that speech word for word. The one area I had trouble getting through was the introduction. So I repeated the introduction over and over again until I could recite it without thinking.

When the day of my speech arrived, I felt like I was ready to take first prize. That is, until I got up on the stage and saw all the people looking back at me. I took a deep breath (as I was coached) and launched into my introduction. I got through the introduction without a hitch. And then . . . my mind went completely blank. I couldn't remember the next line. I stood there in silence for what seemed an eternity. My mind skipped to somewhere in the middle of the speech. So I started there. The speech got all jumbled up. Somehow I struggled through to the end and returned to my seat. Needless to say I was incredibly embarrassed.

I sat through the rest of the speeches without really listening. The reward ceremony was the longest ten minutes of my life. I didn't win anything. No consolation prizes were given at this event to stroke broken egos. As we stood up to leave my mom gave me a big hug and said, "I'm so proud of you."

"For what?" I asked sullenly.



*Because humanity passes by way of the family...*

“It took a lot of courage to get up there in front of all those people. It took even more courage to keep going once you forgot your line.”

That was an important lesson for me. Even though I failed the accomplishment, I had exhibited the virtue of courage. My mom identified a personality trait in me that she could nurture through her praise.

Besides my sixth grade teacher and my mom, a wonderful neighbor lady once told me, “You know what? You just have a heart of gold.” She, too, affirmed who I was as a person without praising any accomplishment.

These very savvy adults knew what to nurture in me and how. They helped me understand a very important truth; *who you are is more important than what you do*. Because of their encouragement, I grew up developing an internal character that I could be proud of. They helped me understand that my accomplishments didn’t matter as much as the person I would become.

This illustrates an important lesson for parents. And it’s a truth taught by the Catholic Church in the Latin phrase “*operatio sequitur esse*,” which means “action follows being.” Who we are is more important than what we do, and what we do flows out of who we are.

## Discover God’s Goodness in October

Parents want what is best for their children. Here are a few simple steps to help you see your child’s God-given goodness and to reframe your child’s thinking about how they value themselves.

- Remind your children that God loves them unconditionally and wants them to become the best people they can be. Tell them this again and again and again.
- Tell your children you love them because of *who* they are rather than because of what they accomplish. Remind them that even when you correct them, you still love them.
- Look for character traits (virtues) in your child to affirm and nurture when they do things. Are they patient; are they helpful; do they compliment others; do they play fairly; are they diligent?
- Celebrate your children for who they are not for what they do. Celebrating their Baptismal anniversary is a great way to do this.

Teaching your children to focus on who they are more than on what they do lays a firm foundation for a strong sense of self-worth, for virtue development, and ultimately for loving others.

This challenge is just a small part of good Catholic parenting. Visit [www.twl4parents.com](http://www.twl4parents.com) for more strategies that will help you become the best parent you can be. And for the best systematic approach to parenting, consider purchasing the Teaching the Way of Love program, which can be found at the same website.

This article series is brought to you by Alice Heinzen and Jeff Arrowood, authors of the Teaching the Way of Love home study series for parents. Find out more at [www.twl4parents.com/teaching-the-way-of-love](http://www.twl4parents.com/teaching-the-way-of-love).