

*God's Plan
for Us:*

*Live His
Pattern*



Teaching the Way of Love

because humanity passes by way of the family . . .

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PLEASE PRAY THAT

- Parents will live according to the Ten Commandments, especially within the home.
- Families will challenge themselves to honor God's name.
- Parents will take extra time to pray with and for their children during this school year.
- Families will joyfully work to put God at the center of all they do.
- Families will cultivate a sense of awe and wonder for the greatness of God.
- Parents will witness a reverence for God and his creation in a way that their children will desire to replicate.
- Love and mercy will be abundantly shown within every family.
- No child (or parent) will ever feel they are beyond God's love and mercy.

No One Likes Name Calling

It is fair to say that public discourse – the way we talk to each other – has dropped to an all-time low. A quick check of most Twitter feeds, Facebook posts or trending YouTube videos will reveal multiple examples of foul language, cursing and the use of 'OMG'. What happened to the days when crude or rude speech – especially directed towards God's name - led to being corrected and admonished?

Demeaning and irreverent terms are so common today that most people don't even bat an eye when they hear them. We rarely take notice or react when they are uttered. It's as if we have become desensitized to the real meaning of these words or that we just don't think it's worth the effort to say something.



But, *we should say something and react* because blasphemous speech is a sin against God and His creation. It breaks the second commandment - **You Shall Not Take the Name of the Lord Your God in Vain.**

Why is it a sin to disrespect God's holy name? The name of God reveals His meaning to us. It conveys his reality; that he is all mighty, all loving, all trustworthy. He is the creator of everything that we are and have. The name of God deserves our highest honor and respect. That is why we say in the Our Father *hallowed be thy name.* (BTW, hallow means 'keep it holy'.)

Think about your own name for a moment and recall what it means to you. What's the origin of your name? Why did your parents choose it for you? What does it mean to them? Clearly, your name reflects who you are and it is likely that you are protective of it. You probably don't like people making fun of your name nor do you like others to use your name flippantly.

Because humanity passes by way of the family...

God doesn't like His holy name misused either. He doesn't like us to utter words of hatred, criticism, or defiance against him to either ourselves or to others (this is called blasphemy). And, he doesn't want us to use vulgar language which is called cursing. Both defile his holiness and weaken our relationship with God.

The second commandment is also a reminder to us that we have an obligation to protect holiness in general. There are many people, places and things that have been touched by God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and deserve our respect. By example, consider Mary, the Mother of God, and all of the Saints; the Church (especially the tabernacle); Rosaries, bibles, relics, crucifixes... These are all holy and worthy of reverence. They reflect God and his goodness.

If you want to keep the second commandment, improve your reverence. Reverence is the ability to stand in awe of someone or something because you know it is more important, more beautiful, more wondrous in the universe than you are. Reverence for God means that we humble ourselves before him with wonder and amazement. Reverence helps us recognize that God is the reason for our existence; that he is the source of our life; that he is our salvation. He is above all things and worthy to be praised, adored, honored, respected, feared, and revered. He is the creator and we are the creature.

Let's take a look at some practical ways to become more reverent as a family.

Encouraging the Virtue of Reverence

1. **Make your home a no curse zone.** Talk as a family about the second commandment and what it really means. Discuss the importance of names and how disrespectful it is to use any name—especially God's name—in vain. Then, challenge your family to extinguish the use of cursing and other vulgar speech over the next 30 days. Check in on everyone's progress once a week.
2. **Say the Our Father as a family every day.** As you pray the Lord's prayer, slow down when you say "*hallowed by thy name*" and then pause briefly before resuming. Let the power of these words sink in.
3. **Experience the Sign of the Cross.** When you say the Sign of the Cross, become aware that you are praying *in the name* of God. It is so easy to rush through this and miss the meaning. Slow up and be more intentional.
4. **Try reverential silence.** Find times during the day to stop what you are doing and feel the holy presence of God. Just pause for 5-10 seconds and become mindful that God is with you. And, try a few minutes of reverential silence when you enter Church. Instead of checking out the congregation, kneel and close your eyes and sense the presence of God in your midst.
5. **Model reverential language.** Use the word "holy" to describe sacred things: "holy Mass, Holy Eucharist, Holy Rosary, etc. The Divine Praises is a great prayer to adopt as a family. You can find this beautiful prayer at www.ourcatholicprayers.com/divine-praises.html

This challenge is just a small part of good Catholic parenting. Visit 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.