

## Top 10 Catholic parenting tips found in the 10 Commandments

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(Catholic Online) – Parents play a crucial role as lead characters in their children’s real-life video, teaching by the words they choose, the actions they take, the expressions on their faces, the time they spend with family and the tone of voice they use.

Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the important role of parents as being authentic examples and teachers of Christian living to children in July 2, 2006, remarks made before his planned trip to Valencia, Spain, July 8-9, to help close the Fifth World Meeting of Families.

“Families should be "authentic communities of love and life in which the flame of faith may be handed down from generation to generation," he said.

But in a busy, media-crazed world where children are exposed to a multitude of negative images, behaviors and peer pressures, many parents are in search of those guidelines or that guidebook to help them deal with the many challenges they face over time as they help their children grow as healthy Christian men and women.

The good news for Catholic parents is that they probably have already learned and have at their fingertips those valuable and useful guidelines.

The Ten Commandments can serve Catholic parents as a useful reference and foundation for parenting and for their own leading of a moral life.

Listed below are some questions associated with each of the Ten Commandments that might help parents take a quick inventory of their life behaviors and parenting patterns, and lead to confirming positive lessons that can be transmitted to their children:

### **Reflecting on the Ten Commandments for parents**

#### **1. “I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before me.”**

Question for parents: Do I honestly have faith in God, and place him at the center of my life?

*Lesson for kids: Through words and actions children can see what living a life looks like based on the teachings of the Catholic Church, and can learn how to then teach their children. Children will also be able to feel the strength of their parents' faith.*

Or:

Question for parents: Are my priorities material things, alcohol, work or causes not related to God?

*Lesson for kids: Don't place God first, instead strive to drive fancy sports cars, always win the game, and wear the trendiest clothes.*

## **2. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."**

Question for parents: Do I choose not to take the Lord's name in vain and not use offensive language?

*Lesson for kids: Taking the Lord's name in vain, swearing and offensive language are not spoken in the home and not acceptable behavior.*

Or:

Question for parents: Do I use the Lord's name in vain for drama and use offensive language because other people use it in conversation and in the media?

*Lesson for kids: It is acceptable to use the Lord's name in vain, as well as other offensive language.*

## **3. "Remember thou keep holy the Lord's Day."**

Question for parents: Do you attend church on the weekend, spend time in positive activities, take a rest and not obsess or work extra hours (not scheduled)?

*Lesson for kids: Go to Mass once a week and make Sunday an extra special day by sharing the time and activities with family and friends.*

Or:

Question for parents: Do you miss Mass, work extra hours and not have a chance to share time with family or enjoy God's gifts, such as nature, family dinner, music or reading?

*Lesson for kids: It is not necessary to go to Mass regularly or spend time with family on weekends, and it is acceptable to put make or personal activities priority on days off rather than spend time with the family.*

#### **4. “Honor thy father and thy mother.”**

Question for parents: Do you speak of and to your parents with respect, spend time with them and offer them help?

Lesson for kids: *If they see your parents shown love and respect, they will learn how to do the same for you, and other people as well.*

Or:

Question for parents: Do you avoid speaking with them or visiting them, or say unkind things about them?

Lesson for kids: *If children see that their own parents do not show respect, honesty and healthy communication patterns toward their parents, they will probably use the same negatives behaviors toward you and their grandparents.*

#### **5. “Thou shall not kill.”**

Question for parents: Do I keep this commandment and also not allow one’s self and children to watch murder related television shows or play violent video games that promote players to “kill” images on the screen?

Lesson for children: *The influence of watching violent behavior is negative, and though a popular pastime in our culture, can and should be avoided.*

Or:

Questions for parents: Have I killed or contemplated taking the life of another? Do I spend free time watching violent television shows about murder, and/or allow my children to watch violent television and/or play video games encouraging players to “kill” the screen images? In a much milder connotation, have I purposely killed another person’s dream, enthusiasm, curiosity or idea?

Lesson for kids: *Watching violence on the television is acceptable and playing acting out “killing” people figures on a video game is acceptable.*

#### **6. “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”**

Question for parents: Do I stay faithful to my spouse in body and mind? Do I tell jokes or laugh at jokes that demean the institute of marriage?

Lesson for kids: *If a marriage is filled with respect and commitment, they will see what that looks like and how it is done. More importantly, if parents keep this commandment, their children and spouses will never experience the conflict and pain that being unfaithful can create.*

Or:

Question for parents: Have I been unfaithful in body, and/or chosen to use pornography or otherwise participated in virtual or real online relationships outside of marriage?

Lessons for kids: *In marriage, it is acceptable to be unfaithful to one's spouse and choose to spend time in affairs of the body and/or mind.*

### **7. "Thou shalt not steal."**

Question for parents: Do I refrain from choosing to steal or from cheating in financial transactions?

Lesson for kids: *Honesty is the best policy and stealing is wrong.*

Or:

Question for parents: Do I steal clothes from stores or office supplies from work, cheat on taxes and/or steal ideas from co-workers and take credit for their work?

Lesson for kids: *Stealing is only wrong if I get caught.*

### **8. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."**

Question for parents: Am I honest in dealings and communications with my family, community members, parish and co-workers?

Lesson for kids: *If parents speak the truth with others, and about others, children will see how honesty and respect are practiced. This can be reinforced as they develop relationships with family and friends.*

Or:

Question for parents: Do I speak untruths or spread gossip about people?

Lesson for kids: *It is acceptable to lie and gossip.*

### **9. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife/husband."**

Question for parents: Do I think of my spouse as my one and only lover and accept all aspects of my spouse?

Lesson for kids: *Married couples show total commitment to each other and accept each other.*

Or:

Question for parents: Do I desire a neighbor/co-worker/other person instead of my spouse or wish my spouse was more like other people?

Lesson for kids: *It is acceptable to place one's desire for love outside of marriage and want your beloved to be at the center of your life until someone better comes along.*

**10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods."**

Question for parents: Am I grateful for the life I have, the family I have, the home I have, and the faith I have?

Lesson for kids: *On any given day, look for something in your life to be grateful for. Always be grateful for what you have.*

Or:

Question for parents: Do I want a bigger house, faster car, greener lawn or more prestigious job?

Lesson for kids: *Appearances are very important, so always try to keep up with the Jones', being jealous of them until you do.*

Underlying all actions as parents is one other bonus guideline: Do unto others, as you would have done unto you.

The Ten Commandments can be used by parents as a way of life, and as a reference to teach their children life lessons. Words about people and actions toward their children, spouses, and other people are what truly become the raw material of what children use as their own real-life videos that teach them how to behave and grow toward adulthood.

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