

ORTHODOX PARENTING

Session I: Evangelizing our Children
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- I. **You can't give what you don't have.**
 - a. If we are to successfully evangelize our children the parents need to be evangelized.
 - b. This endeavor is a lot of work- it must become a way of life, a culture in the home otherwise it will never be convincing and will only exhaust us.
 - c. If we are passionate about the things of God it won't feel like work, it will be a joy, does a rushing river get tired of flowing?
- II. **What do we mean by evangelizing our children? What is the goal?**
 - a. To prepare them to withstand the assaults that are sure to come- of worldliness, sin, the devil.
 - b. To see them develop the fortitude of faith such that they will never give up, stay in the boat and finish their race well.
 - c. To see them so intimately connected to Jesus Christ that there is no chance of them ever disconnecting.
 - d. Finally: We are evangelizing our children to give themselves to God as a whole and total sacrifice, in other words: to become perfect in their love for God.
- III. **Where do we begin? Facing reality with respect- "Ye are gods"**
 - a. Children are human beings and we must treat them with respect
 - b. They are free and they will make their choices- ultimately we cannot control them, we cannot make them love God
 - c. Jesus said "ye are gods" - God created us with the freedom to either love Him or not and there is no power in heaven or earth that can override that.
 - d. Sober them up - help them get a grip on the seriousness of what it means to be a human being. You are a little god, I can't control you, I can't make you love God, God can make you love him, I'm here to help but in the end it's up to you whether you are going to love God and live.
- VI. **Our daily goal, to help our Children connect with Jesus**
 - a. We have to do everything we can to help our children have an ongoing existential and intimate encounter with Jesus Christ
 - b. That connection is made on many different levels, physical, experiential, intellectual, emotional, spiritual. We are leading them to the *knowledge* of God and the appropriate response to that knowledge.
 - c. Our children need to have a profound and personal encounter with the Truth- who is Jesus Christ-
 - d. The closer they become to Jesus as person the more stable they will become in their faith and the more difficult it becomes to betray Him.
- VII. **Encountering Jesus through catechizes**
 - a. Our children need to have an encounter with the Truth thru the rational intellect, they need to wrestle with the big metaphysical questions intellectually, they need to encounter the dogma.
 - b. The truth is important, doctrine is important. And I'm talking here specifically about intellectual rational, philosophical truth, not just emotional spiritual experiential truth.

- c. We make a critical error when we undervalue robust intellectual discourse about theological and philosophical questions. We need a living encounter with Christ and that living encounter includes rational intellectual engagement.
- d. We are rational creatures made to think and to philosophize if you don't guide you child into the truth and right theology and philosophy their peers and college professors are certainly going to guide them into the wrong ones. They need to be prepared to wrestle with the big questions of life.
- e. When I refer to catechesis I'm not talking primarily about data, just downloading information like how many ranks of angels there are. I'm talking about metaphysics and ontology, helping them think about God, about the meaning of life, about what it means to be a human.
- f. Wrestling with the big metaphysical questions of life is exciting and interesting and if you engage your children in this way you will find they hunger for it.
- g. You may feel a little intimidated by this task. Perhaps you don't feel knowledgeable enough to have guide them.
 - i. Do the best you can. As the parent God will help you. You won't have all the answers but you probably have more answers than you think you do.
 - ii. You will have to grow in your understanding, read, study, discourse with those around you who are more knowledgeable.
 - iii. You don't have to do it all by yourself. Read books with your kids, look to the Church to support this effort. If your Church does not have a regular catechism class for kids then maybe take them to the adult catechism class once a year. Maybe go to class yourself as a refresher.
 - iv. Discuss the sermon on Sunday afternoon with your kids.

VIII. Encountering Jesus in the Liturgy

- a. The primary way we must connect to Jesus is through the offering of Jesus to the Father in the sacrifice of the Eucharistic liturgy.
- b. Nothing will form and shape a person This has to be a priority. The greatest gift we can give our children is to impress the importance of this for their entire lives, that participating devoutly in the sacrifice of the Mass is how they fulfill their humanity.