

Invite them...

INVITING TEENS & YOUNG ADULTS BACK TO CHURCH

As we begin a new year, it's a good time to talk to teens and young adult children about coming back to Mass. Our children may wander during phases of their lives, but it's never too late to instill the importance of faith in their lives. Simply showing up at Mass is the first step to reconnecting with God.

BE A TRUSTWORTHY FRIEND...

Most young people (teens and 20-somethings), like many adults, have lost trust in many institutions, including the Church. **But they still value trustworthy people...especially their friends, family and the older adults who they can rely on.** Be a trustworthy friend to a younger adult, or youth, and, by doing so, be a witness to the goodness of your faith and the importance of our parish. Your words of trust in God, and your love for the Church (and our parish), can encourage them to trust in the Lord.

BE AN EXAMPLE...

Young people need to see that the love of Jesus is alive in you. This peace and strength comes from your relationship with Christ and the power and blessing of prayer. Let them see the joy that comes from being blessed by God. Let them hear from you how Jesus makes a difference in your life.

OFFER A CHANCE TO HELP...

Not every young person is ready for Sunday worship, but many would jump at the opportunity to assist people in need, and make a difference in the world. Be ready to extend such an invitation along the way. We have plenty of opportunities at Saint Ambrose (go to: www.StAmbrose.us/volunteer). Share the stories of the good work our parish is doing in service to those in need. **Young people care greatly about the work of justice and mercy.**

SHARE A PERSONAL STORY...

At your family gathering, share a story about God working in your life – the way you see your faith – and God's faithfulness making a real difference in your life and in the life of your family and our community. **Your personal stories and witness will make all the difference.**

ALWAYS INVITE THEM...

Always, always, always invite others and young people to Mass with you. Encourage them to join you so that they experience the love of Christ more fully in their lives. Worship, and thanksgiving, which we do best at the Table of the Lord for Mass, makes a difference, along with community, song, prayer and service. Gratitude, which is at the heart of the Mass, is scientifically proven to make you happier.

MAKE MASS A FAMILY EVENT...

Make going to Mass an event. Make it personal and familial. For example, "please join me at Mass, and then we can go to your favorite place for breakfast". This gives you the opportunity to 'unpack' the experience of prayer while you share food and fellowship.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER...

Our Parish has great activities for family members of all ages. **Invite your adult family members to our Saint Patrick's Day Celebration on March 5th!** Great food, drinks & entertainment!



Supporting Teens

DURING DIFFICULT SEASONS

Reflections and Ideas for your support from Dr. Dobie Moser

FIND 3 PEOPLE

Every young person needs at least 3 caring adults in their lives. These are people who express care daily, who check in to see what they are thinking and feeling, and who offer a safe relationship where young people can find their footing as they figure out who they are in the world. Find 3 people and be that person for children.

SPACE TO PROCESS

When a difficult, overwhelming or traumatic event occurs, each person experiences and processes the trauma in ways that are unique and make sense to them. Provide the relational space to listen and **allow the young person to express what they are feeling and thinking about the trauma without projecting your thoughts, feelings and fears onto the young person.**

LEARNING SKILLS

We all need to be attentive to dealing with the trauma and pain in our own lives. When we do not do so in a healthy and integrated manner, it is easy to transfer our own pain and fears onto others. The counseling adage of *"Hurt people hurt, people."* applies here. **The goal is to transform our pain and experience of trauma into growth and resiliency.** May people do this well and our Christian faith offers a model of Jesus taking on pain and transforming it into love, growth and new life. There are learned skills to help us all grow and improve in these areas.

PRAY

You may ask the young person if you can pray together with them at the end of your conversation. Doing so allows them to know that when struggling and needing love and support, we turn to our loving God and seek God's grace, spirit and assistance. **If they say yes, pray with them. If they say no, pray for them often as they work through their struggles.**

Essential Building Blocks to talk with your teens about difficult, overwhelming or traumatic events.

LISTEN Make an effort to listen to what a young person is feeling, experiencing and thinking. **Listening does not include adults offering their thoughts, feelings or answers.** Listening sounds like: What happened? How are you? What were you feeling/thinking then? Now? What was that like for you? There may be moments of silence as they figure out how to articulate what is going on inside of them. Quietly wait, letting them know that silence is okay too.

HONOR Provide cues, verbal and via body language, that you heard what they are saying and that you understand their interpretation of their experience. **You do not need to agree with it. You need to hear it and communicate back what you heard.** Honoring them sounds like: I hear your feelings of ... ; I hear... - confusion, pain, whatever emotion they are expressing in their words or voice. Is that what you were feeling? What was that like for you? I don't know what that must have been like.

CONNECT Consider what the young person is thinking regarding moving forward and what might be helpful based on what was expressed in the listening and honoring steps. **Connecting sounds like: What are you hoping may come next? What would you like to do next? What do you need from me** or from our family/parish as you navigate this? May I offer you a resource or idea that may be helpful? If they say yes, proceed. If they say no, honor their no.

The Listen – Honor – Connect approach will involve multiple conversations over time. Patience is required by and for all parties.

