

## 10 Secrets to Joyful Parenting

“I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:13)

1. Always show your family a joyful you. Nothing is so depressing as a father or mother out of sorts.
2. Never weary in cheering your family with your smile. One smile from you will brighten them up and let their spirits expand. Give them the gift of a smile, hard though it be at times.
3. Amiably show the greatest interest in the smallest things. Everything that concerns those we love most in this world should be worthy of interest: the baby’s first tooth, the honor ribbon won at school, the 99th picture your daughter drew of a flower. It is in acknowledging the small things that you encourage them to go out and do bigger things.
4. Do not be overly severe or stark in the name of “religion.” If your home is Christian and each member of the family is learning to carry his cross, then it is essential to avoid making others suffer by too much austerity. Better to devote oneself to procuring joy for others.
5. Be sure to treat all alike. Nothing is so disrupting to home life as favoritism for one child over another. The same measure for all!
6. Do whatever it takes to propagate a joyous spirit in the home. Henry the Fourth of France used to crawl around on all fours, with his children on his back, to enliven the family get-together. The son of a famous French playwright relates, “My father was never so happy as when he was free to spend a few days with us. Even in the presence of strangers, he dared to be a father; he belonged to all our games.”
7. Never begin an argument. Open discussion is a good thing, until it develops into bickering. A free exchange of ideas is always profitable; the children should even be encouraged to join in. It will develop in them a wise and discriminating mind and a habit of suspended judgment.
8. Be discerning in your choice of topics. What can be shared, speak of it openly. If something must not be told, then don’t tell it. Do not spoil their innocence with the discussion of unsavory and disturbing subjects.
9. Always act patiently and answer graciously. This is no small task. That it takes the “patience of an angel” to rule vigilantly over the little world of the family is beyond question. A kind and gracious spirit is essential.
10. Loving much is the key to gain all. By good will, you will gain the hearts and souls of the members of your family without exception.

***These 10 secrets to joyful parenting are not easy steps, by any means. But with frequent recourse to the sacraments – especially confession and Holy Communion – you will achieve what so many others only hope for. Adapted from Father Raoul Plus, S.J.***