

## PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

### Did you ever consider the value and importance of the name you gave to your child?

No matter how you selected or decided your child's name, once given, a child's name stands for the depth of a child's being; it is a badge of individuality. Names also have great spiritual value!

**But do you draw down the graces available to your children** through their patrons among the blessed in heaven? A particular saint, whose name your child bears is especially prepared and eager to plead and intercede for an abundance of grace on your child's behalf. This is your child's Patron Saint. Tap into their offer of protection, help and example.



### **Saints are our family in heaven!**

*They stand as the highest ideals given to man, they are models of goodness, more than heroes and heroines, they are friends, teachers and inspiration. All the saints are waiting to welcome and guide the faithful. They are ready to reveal the source of everlasting happiness. They are mediators of God's grace in heaven for the living on earth.*

### Here are some suggestions for you, Parents (and Grandparents):

1. **Get to know your child's Patron Saint:** Feast Day, symbols of the saint, prayers, images associated with him or her and the virtues and gifts they possessed.
2. **Start a collection of Saint images, symbols and prayers** for each of your children. Because images are richer than thoughts, images are especially useful for your child's understanding. You can also use them for your child's special celebrations.

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3. **Make a family Patron Saint and Holy Day calendar.** Chart the dates of your family's patrons. Reflect on the collective power of love contained in this new assembly or army of saints, named and circled on your calendar, standing-by, poised to intercede for the good of your family! This activity can serve as a powerful way to unite children more closely to the Communion of Saints and bring lasting supernatural aid.
4. **In daily prayer, invoke the aid and employ the help available through the blessed in heaven.** Ask for protection and guidance and grace for your children.
5. **Teach children about their Patron Saint,** the beauties of their holiness, the courage of their convictions, the strength they demonstrated, the love of their hearts for God and their fellow men. Different saints have different gifts and strengths—show children how to pray for help to develop their own gifts.
6. **Celebrate your children's Name Days.** A Name Day is the Feast Day of your Patron Saint. (A Feast Day is usually the day that a saint dies, therefore it is the day of their entry into heaven.) Make Name Day a family tradition. Make it a Christian family feast, prayerful, meaningful and fun. **Look for the November ECFL Newsletter** for a variety of suggestions on creating meaningful and simple Name Day Celebrations.

*This article is based on "My Nameday—Come for Dessert" an essay by Helen McLoughlin*