



## Thoughtful Moments

### Resolutions

The New Year is a good time to set resolutions that will help us grow in character. Even young children can form resolutions that will help them improve. The key is to pick age-appropriate resolutions they can actually accomplish. A good rule of thumb is, the younger the child the fewer the resolutions.



### Make it last

Don't take the Christmas tree down just yet. The retail Christmas season starts so early that by the time December 25th comes, we are ready to stuff the decorations away for another year. But for the Church, the Christmas season starts on the 25th and goes until January 9th, the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, the true end of the Christmas Season.

### Parents' advice

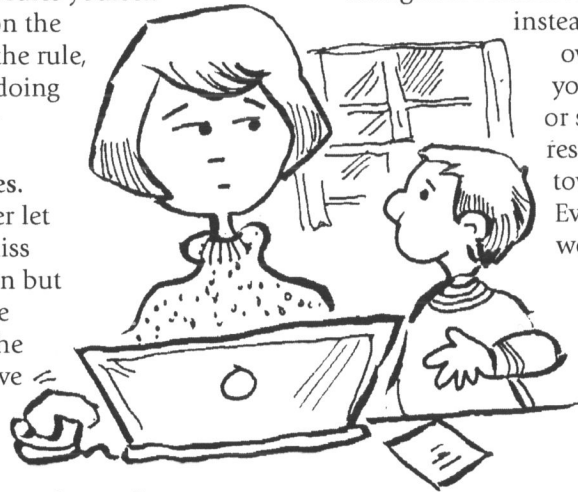
*"Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching; graceful diadem will they be for your head; a pendant for your neck"* (Proverbs 1:8-9).



## Are you teaching your children to sin?

Sounds like a silly question, doesn't it? No Christian parent would teach a child to sin. But, if whether or not you follow God's rules yourself depends upon the situation or the rule, you may be doing just that. For example:

**"White" lies.** Have you ever let your child miss school for fun but sent in a note saying that she was sick? Have you dodged a phone call by saying, "tell him I'm not home!"? Have you snuck extra items on the express grocery line? If so, you demonstrated that it's okay to break God's law about telling the truth. How can children tell when to stop?



**"Thou shall steal?"** Do you download copyrighted movies and music without paying? Do you tap into a neighbor's internet or cable service

instead of buying your own? Do you help yourself to napkins or silverware from restaurants or take towels from hotels? Even if the victim is wealthy, you are breaking God's law against stealing.

**Do as I do.** To our children, what we do is more powerful than what we say. *"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea"* (Matthew 18:6).

## Why Do Catholics Do That?

### Why are there statues and images in our churches?

In the early days of the Church, many of the faithful couldn't read or write. Images, icons, and statues in our churches served as teaching tools and spiritual aids.

Today, images of the Crucifix remind us of Jesus' sacrifice and



Resurrection. Statues of Mary and the saints recall their heroism and remind us of what we can become. These tools call us to better efforts at holiness, and urge us to ask God for the grace to keep trying for saintliness.