

LIVING FAITH *Kids*

Questions from Catholic Kids



Answers from a Parish Priest
Fr. Joe Kempf

Introduction

I love questions! Good questions make me think and help open me up to what is most real in this world. Of course, not every question has an answer. And some questions lead to more questions. That, too, is a wonderful thing.

As you read the questions in this booklet, perhaps you might find a thought or two that helps you.

Certainly being a human person is not easy: There are so many things to grapple with, so many questions.

Is it okay to be angry? How are



we to think about death? What do I do when I am trying to pray and my mind won't sit still? How do I help someone who is sad? What do we do when someone calls us names?

You will see these questions, and more, in this booklet. My responses are only *part* of an answer, but hopefully they will help lead you to other important questions.

My deepest hope is that, in the midst of whatever questions you face, and no matter what life throws at you, you will be able to hang on to the great promise: You are *never* alone.

In Christ,

Fr. Joe



A Note to Parents and Teachers:

If there is a child in your life, you have a beautiful, holy and difficult responsibility. My hope is that this booklet will help you nurture the faith and goodness in the hearts of the children entrusted to your care.

The questions in this booklet represent just some of the things children find themselves wondering about or just some of the things that concern them. Reading these short articles with children might open a brief window to help you see other questions that might be on their minds. Hopefully this will also help your children be more comfortable with questions in general and with bringing those questions to you. Perhaps they will also provide the right moment for some prayer together. May God bless you in your calling!

Dear Fr. Joe,

When I go to Confession, I disguise my voice because I'm embarrassed. Can you help?

Josefa

Dear Josefa,

Thanks for the honesty of your question. Certainly it is appropriate to feel sorry for the wrong we've done and the good we've failed to do. But we never need to fear God's reaction when we go to Confession. The truth is that we do not have enough power to make God stop loving us.

God never invites us to grow without first loving us where we are!

Perhaps you are embarrassed about what the priest might think. But I'm sure that almost every priest is like me in this regard: When someone comes to me in the Sacrament of Reconciliation because they are



sorry, I do not think badly of them. Instead, I only have more love in my heart for them.

When Jesus told us the story of the Prodigal Son, he described a young man who had broken his dad's heart and made a mess of his life. When the son returned to his father to beg for mercy, his dad was so glad to have him back, he threw his arms around him! Jesus told us that story to describe what God is like. I encourage you to let your own voice be known because that is the kind of love that waits for you in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In Jesus,

Fr. Joe

Dear Fr. Joe,

My dad is out of work, and mom and dad have been fighting. I am afraid of the way things are going and don't know how to pray. Can you help?

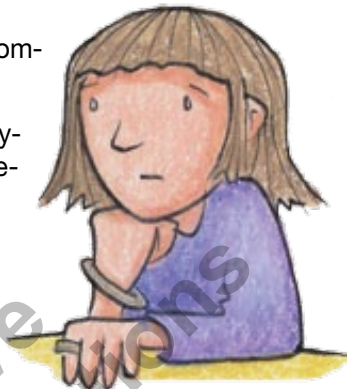
James

Dear James,

For everyone, life is sometimes sad or scary. It might be hard to remember, but at times like those, we already have in our hearts what we most

need to be okay. God has promised to always be there.

Perhaps the first step to praying in difficult times is to remember that you are not talking to yourself. Then, tell God honestly what is on your heart because God always wants to be with us just as we are.



In addition to whatever other ways you might pray, in case it is helpful to you, I offer the following prayer:

So many things are changing.
The world is different now.
I'm told that I will be okay,
but I just can't see how.

Help me to be brave, oh God,
when what I feel is scared.
Help me trust that You will help,
that love is always there.

I know that You are with me.
You'll never go away.
Things aren't the way I wanted,
but You are here to stay.

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When we begin to grow in our lives of faith, we also begin to have many questions: *Did Adam and Eve really exist? What do I do if I feel jealous? Is the Bible*

really true? Fr. Joe Kempf has heard many questions like that from the children of his parish over the years, and he has some very good answers in this little booklet. Maybe he even has an answer to your question!

Fr. Joe Kempf is pastor of Assumption Church in O'Fallon, MO, author of children's videos and books and founder of "Gospel Values," an organization dedicated to proclaiming the message of Jesus to all children. Visit him and his blue, furry helper, Big Al, at WeLoveBigAl.com.

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