



Amoris Laetitia Family  
Year 2021 - 2022

# Guide n.8

## Video n.8



**Educating children:  
a call, a challenge, a joy**

# Educating children: a call, a challenge, a joy

## 1

### Educating to face today's challenges

#### **Massimo:**

“We are Massimo and Patrizia, an Italian missionary family, married for 25 years with 12 children. We live in Maastricht, Holland as itinerant missionaries”.

#### **Javier:**

“We are Javier and Araceli. We have 10 children and are expecting our 11th. We are missionaries in St Petersburg, Russia”.

*The Creator made man and woman share in the work of his creation and, at the same time, he made them instruments of his love, entrusting to them the responsibility for the future of mankind, through the transmission of human life”. AL 81*

#### **HOLY FATHER**

“The family has a natural vocation to educate children. Do not give up having children for fear of not being capable of educating and preparing them to face life's challenges and responsibilities! To be parents requires love and the desire to bring out the best in others”.

*“Families cannot help but be places of support, guidance and direction, however much they may have to rethink their methods and discover new resources”. AL 260*

*“Were maturity merely the development of something already present in our genetic code, not much would have to be done. (...) Inevitably, each child will surprise us with ideas and projects born of that freedom, which challenge us to rethink our own ideas. This is a good thing”. AL 262*

#### **Patrizia:**

“This is what we try to do even though we are weak: bring them with us to the Eucharist from the time they are babies, pray in the morning and evening with them, pray before meals, and especially on Sunday, having an interactive, festive celebration at home in which their father asks each of them: “How is the Word of God illuminating your life?” Through this dialogue, the children get used to growing up knowing that God is present in and acts in their lives”.

*“Raising children calls for an orderly process of handing on the faith. This is made difficult by current lifestyles, work schedules and the complexity of today's world, where*

*many people keep up a frenetic pace just to survive. Even so, the home must continue to be the place where we learn to appreciate the meaning and beauty of the faith, to pray and to serve our neighbour". AL 287*



### ***Invitation to reflect***

We experience every day how dialogue is fundamental in every relationship. In my relationship with Jesus: how fundamental is dialogue with Him? Among the many words I hear during the day, am I able to find time to listen to the Word of Jesus?



### ***Family activity***

We find time in the evening to spend as a family talking together about the day. As parents, let's pay particular attention during dinner to listen to what our children talk about.



### ***Community or group activity***

We could ask families to open their domestic Church to pray together along with other families.

## **Prayer**

Lord,  
teach us to make our families  
places where our children  
experience a lived faith.

Help us not to lose our trust in your help  
to overcome the challenges  
that today's society places on us.

Send your Holy Spirit  
over every family  
so that our hearts might be open  
to recognising how you manifest yourself alive  
even in our small domestic Church.

Amen



*Massimo e Patrizia Paoloni*

## 2

### Saying yes to Christ

#### **HOLY FATHER**

“Fatherhood and motherhood are irreplaceable roles. Motherhood shows how to bring love and protection to human weakness. Fatherhood reveals unexplored horizons of life to children and establishes the foundation of the moral life that allows them to courageously form their own life project. But there is more. Every mother reminds her own children that the source of their being is a Father with a capital “F”, that there is a longing for God. This awareness generates faith. The heart of the question is in fact creating the condition in which the new generations can say yes to Christ, to allow God to manifest Himself in their lives and lead them by the hand”.

*“Faith is God’s gift. [...] This means that we need to ask God to act in their hearts, in places where we ourselves cannot reach. [...] We know that we do not own the gift, but that its care is entrusted to us. Yet our creative commitment is itself an offering which enables us to cooperate with God’s plan”. AL 287*

*“Spiritual experience is not imposed but freely proposed. It is essential that children actually see that, for their parents, prayer is something truly important. Hence moments of family prayer and acts of devotion can be more powerful for evangelization than any catechism class or sermon”. AL 288*

#### **Javier:**

“We know we are handing on the faith to them, teaching them to live an essential mission as Christians... So, they have learned to live with God since they were little. They have learned they can forgive, that they can love in various ways, as God loves, that they can discover different ways to live. We have chosen to live within the Church and we desire this for them as well. In our family, we pray united together, knowing that the Lord is in our midst and that He is helping us, sustaining us, and encouraging us each day”.

*“Couples and parents should be properly appreciated as active agents in catechesis. [...] Family catechesis is of great assistance as an effective method in training young parents to be aware of their mission as the evangelisers of their own family”. AL 287*

*“Handing on the faith presumes that parents themselves genuinely trust God, seek him and sense their need for him, for only in this way does ‘one generation laud your works to another, and declare your mighty acts’ (Ps 144:4) and ‘fathers make known to children your faithfulness’ (Is 38:19). This means that we need to ask God to act in their hearts, in places where we ourselves cannot reach”. AL 287*



### ***Invitation to reflect***

Rereading the HOLY FATHER'S words, let us reflect on our way of being a father and mother. What actions can concretely convey to our children that we have chosen to found our lives in God?



### ***Family activity***

Let us share with our children why we have chosen to live in the Church.



### ***Community or group activity***

How could we raise awareness and train parents to be catechists?

How can our community encourage and appreciate catechesis done by parents with their own children or within the community?

### **Prayer**

*We praise you, Lord, for the gift of faith.  
Thank you for the gift of Baptism,  
that made our children Your children.*

*We pray that  
our witness  
might direct our children  
to You as the source of the choices  
we make each day.*

*You are the rock  
on which we have chosen to build  
our life and our family.*

*You are the Father who has always desired them,  
who loves them with a Love that knows how to provide  
the protection of a mother and the courage of a father.*

*Amen.*



Famiglia Martinez

### 3

## Education in the area of affectivity

### **HOLY FATHER**

“In an age in which sexuality is often reduced to mere consumption, to the use of others, families have the task to educate their children in the area of affectivity and sexual responsibility, respectful of the dignity of the person”.

*“But who speaks of these things today? Who is capable of taking young people seriously? Who helps them to prepare seriously for a great and generous love? Where sex education is concerned, much is at stake”. AL 284*

*“A sexual education that fosters a healthy sense of modesty has immense value, however much some people nowadays consider modesty a relic of a bygone era. Modesty is a natural means whereby we defend our personal privacy and prevent ourselves from being turned into objects to be used”. AL 282*

### **Massimo:**

“We are always attentive to the dangers of the world, especially regarding the use of new technologies. We are very aware of the dangers hidden behind them so we are very vigilant. We try to protect them – we encourage them to use the computer in common spaces. We give them a cell phone only when they become adults. We especially encourage them to practice the virtues of chastity, humility, sincerity – not moralistically – but sharing our personal experience with them, because we have seen that the Lord has helped us in our lives and he will help them too”.

*“The educational process that occurs between parents and children can be helped or hindered by the increasing sophistication of the communications and entertainment media. When well used, these media can be helpful. [...] We know that sometimes they can keep people apart rather than together, as when at dinnertime everyone is surfing on a mobile phone, or when one spouse falls asleep waiting for the other who spends hours playing with an electronic device. [...] We cannot ignore the risks that these new forms of communication pose for children and adolescents; at times they can foster apathy and disconnect from the real world. This ‘technological disconnect’ exposes them more easily to manipulation by those who would invade their private space with selfish interests”. AL 278*





### *Invitation to reflect*

How do I use technology and how are we educating our children to use it?

In this very challenging area, how are we educating our children about affectivity and respect for their own bodies?



### *Family/community activity*

Let's initiate some **proposals to educate ourselves in the use of technology.**

For example, we can plan some down time from television and cell phones:

- meal times
- one evening per week (during which we can organise something fun to do together)
- during an outing together

Let's make some **proposals for the positive use of our devices,** for example:

- that our children teach an elderly person how to use a computer/tablet
- offer our time to listen to a person who is far away and lives alone, through a video chat

### *Prayer*

Lord Jesus,  
help us to educate our children that waiting  
is a time in which desire  
takes shape and becomes the conscious choice  
of the gift of self.

Help us to be vigilant  
without being oppressive,  
so they can become capable of making  
free and autonomous choices.

Amen



## 4

# Teaching how to wait and respect for the body

## **HOLY FATHER**

“This way, pastoral care should help families internalize essential human values such as modesty, respect for the differences between men and women, awareness and acceptance of the body, the meaning of the total gift of self in marriage, the value of engagement as a period of maturation in view of marriage”.

*“It is not easy to approach the issue of sex education in an age when sexuality tends to be trivialized and impoverished. It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving. In such a way, the language of sexuality would not be sadly impoverished but illuminated and enriched. The sexual urge can be directed through a process of growth in self-knowledge and self-control capable of nurturing valuable capacities for joy and for loving encounter”. AL 280*

*“The important thing is to teach them sensitivity to different expressions of love, mutual concern and care, loving respect and deeply meaningful communication. All of these prepare them for an integral and generous gift of self that will be expressed, following a public commitment, in the gift of their bodies. Sexual union in marriage will thus appear as a sign of an all-inclusive commitment, enriched by everything that has preceded it”. AL 283*

*“An appreciation of our body as male or female is also necessary for our own self-awareness in an encounter with others different from ourselves. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment”. AL 285*





### *Family activity*

Once a week/month, let's organize a movie night, choosing a film with our children, including one containing the topic of human love [affectivity]. Then, let's talk about it together.



### *Community or group activity*

Movie forum: let's choose a series of films that deal with the topics of affectivity, engagement, the relationship of a couple. Let's invite the young people of our community to watch the films followed by a moment of sharing and reflection, with experts and people who can give their personal witness.

### *Prayer*

Lord Jesus,  
help us to foster in our children  
a sense of purity toward their body,  
that will lead them to accept it,  
take care of it and respect it.

Help us know how to express  
respect for others  
through our actions,  
beginning with our spouses.

Make our families  
places of human and Christian growth  
where each person's beauty might unfold.

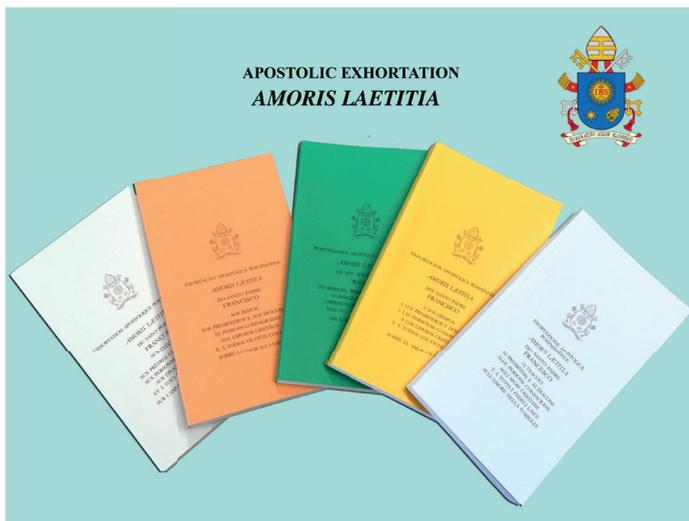
Amen

Invitation to read *Amoris Laetitia*

**“Towards a Better Education of Children”**

*Amoris Laetitia*, Chapter Seven, 259-290

Link to the Apostolic Exhortation *AMORIS LAETITIA*



***Familial love: vocation and path to holiness***

Holy Father,  
we are here before You  
to praise You and thank You for the great gift of the family.  
We pray to You for families, consecrated in the Sacrament of Matrimony,  
that each day they might rediscover the grace they have received,  
and, as small domestic Churches,  
they might know how to witness to Your Presence.  
and the love with which Christ loves the Church.  
We pray to You for families going through difficulty and suffering,  
from illness, or from problems only You know:  
sustain them and make them aware  
of the way of holiness to which You call them,  
so that they might experience Your infinite mercy  
and find new ways to grow in love.  
We pray to You for children and young people,  
so they can encounter You  
and respond joyfully to the vocation You have in mind for them;  
and for their parents and grandparents,  
so they may be aware  
that they are signs of the paternity and maternity of God:  
in caring for their children who, in body and spirit,  
You entrust to them, as well as in the experience of fraternity  
that the family can give to the world.

Lord, grant that each family  
might live their specific vocation to holiness in the Church  
as a call to be active in evangelization,  
in the service of life and peace,  
in communion with the priests and with every state in life.

Bless the World Meeting of Families in Rome.  
Amen.

Official Prayer for the *10th World Meeting of Families*  
*22-26 June 2022*

[www.amorislaititia.va](http://www.amorislaititia.va)



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