

3/26/2020

Dear Parents,

Your CKS Counselors, Haley LaRossa (K-5th) and Kris Smith (6th-8th), and Director of Religious Education, Emily Williams, wanted to reach out during this Home Learning time. We know that your world changed overnight and that this has not been easy.

God is with You

As a CKS community, we are looking at a calendar for spring 2020 that looks completely different from what we had planned. No one has lived this reality before. There is no roadmap for this yet; we are writing it together. In a recent Twitter post, Pope Francis encouraged the world, "today Jesus speaks to you: 'Take heart, I am here with you.'"

We are not alone in our daily struggles. If you have a horrible-no good-very bad day, and you are frustrated to the point of anger or tears, that is okay. God is in that. If you have an amazing-wonderful-happy day with your family or even just one child, be thankful, God is in that. And if your life seems to flip between those two types of days, that is okay. God is in that, too.

Finding Balance

Everyone, children and adults, reacts differently to stress and change. Remind yourself that you and your kids do not have to be perfect right now. This new, albeit temporary, normal will take time to get used to. Try a few of these stress reducing tips adapted from CDC guidelines (linked at end of document):

- Call a parent friend who is in a similar situation
- Get some fresh air/exercise
- Moderate alcohol consumption
- Pray
- Seek professional therapeutic help

Screens and Parental Sanity

As parents, most of us are trying to figure out how to navigate each day. Below is some reasonable advice summarized from an article (linked at end of document) on how screens are necessary now more than ever, but we can still make sure they are being used for good.

- Don't throw all screen time rules and limits out the window, but be flexible.
- Make sure there is a routine for time offline; play (especially outdoors) and rest/sleep are as important as ever.
- Continue monitoring content to make sure it is safe and age-appropriate.
- Use screens together as a family when you can – this is the perfect time for family movie night.
- Use the screen to connect – FaceTime and Zoom meetings with friends and loved ones can be encouraging.

Navigating Power Struggles with your Child(ren)

The CKS School Counselors have been lucky to have a working relationship with local parenting counselor, Rita Bostick (Licensed Professional Counselor). Please see her tips on mitigating power struggles with your kids during Home Learning. Her website is linked below.

If you don't want power struggles to arise or worsen, it's important to not simply *avoid* them by negotiating and bribing just to keep the peace. *Preventing* power struggles takes a bit of work, but is much easier and everyone is happier. Prevention of power struggles would include things like:

- Planning a structure for Home Learning.
- Noticing and using encouragement when your child is doing well with the schedule and expectations.
- Dealing calmly and clearly with your child's inability or unwillingness to follow the structure and agreements you've hopefully created together.
 - My biggest "secret ingredient" when dealing with these situations is to drop the "if" and replace it with "when." *For example, 'when your math is done, we can go to the park', (rather than IF you'll just finish your math, we can go to the park.....followed by 'but Mom, I did most of it and I promise I'll finish it later....pleeeeeeez!)*

We are Here for you

We are here for you all and your children through this time. Counselors are available for parent consultations or student check-ins. Mrs. Williams is available for family spiritual guidance. We also want to hear from you if you have any family activities/practices that ARE working well right now that we could share with others. Please reach out if you or your family needs help. We can be a listening ear or can connect you with resources.

God Bless,

Haley LaRossa, Kris Smith, Emily Williams

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Articles/Resources for Further Reading

CDC Managing Stress and Anxiety During Coronavirus: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Screening Practices During Coronavirus: <https://qz.com/1819866/how-to-manage-your-kids-screen-time-during-coronavirus/>

Helpful Mindfulness Practices: <https://childmind.org/article/how-mindfulness-can-help-during-covid-19/>

Archdiocese of Atlanta Spiritual Resources during Coronavirus: <https://archatl.com/covid-19/>

CTK Cathedral Website: <https://cathedralctk.com/>

Rita Bostick, LPC, Website (wrote about Power Struggles above): <http://www.ritabostick.net/>