

PARENTING AS A TEAM

WHY?

- ➔ For starters, it was God's idea! Before God created the first children, he created the first team (Adam and Eve) to care for them. And while there is no sacrament of parenthood, the Church has elevated marriage to the level of a sacrament, indicating that you have the grace to parent through the Sacrament of Marriage—together.
- ➔ It's good for the kids. The marriage is the foundation of the whole family, and the foundation is stronger when spouses acting together. God's plan creates stability, peace and safety for your household.
- ➔ It's also good for your marriage. Intentionally parenting together forges strong bonds between spouses.

SOME PRACTICAL HOW'S

- 1. Act like a Team!** Recognize you were designed to do this together. Each spouse has different roles to play and brings different perspectives and gifts to the family, and all are necessary. Always put your spouse before your children. (Remember, one day the kids will move out of the house, but you two will remain.) Most importantly, act like you are on the same team in front of the children. This encourages them to respect your spouse and their authority, and discourages them from causing divisions between you as a couple.
- 2. Respect the Differences.** The inherent differences between men and women aren't obstacles to good parenting, but rather the complementarity of men and women is an essential part of working out God's plan for each family. There will be tension at times, but this is by design. Also remember that your spouse comes from a different background with different experiences, and most likely has a different personality type than you do. They may be seeing the world, processing life, and making decisions very differently than you are, but what they have to contribute to the parenting of your children is valuable.

- 3. Rely on Grace.** Recognize in humility that even as a team, you two were never meant to do this on your own. Grace is always available! And grace builds on nature. The more you work on your parenting, the more grace can help you and be available to you—it will never dry up. Pray daily as a couple, and pray daily with your children, and also take concrete steps to learn about them, yourself, your spouse, and how to be a better parent.

HOMEWORK

1. Use our "[Parenting as a Team](#)" worksheet to have a conversation with your spouse about how you work together.
2. Take some time this week to pray for unity in your marriage and for each child individually.
3. Listen to the podcast "[Parenting as a Team](#)", "[Criticizing Your Husband](#)" and "[Principles of Discipline](#)"

PARENTING AS A TEAM WORKSHEET

Put aside some time for each of you to fill it out individually and then talk about it together.

1. List some of your common loves. Circle the top 3. Discuss these with your spouse and make plans to enjoy them together in the next week. Put it on your calendar.

2. Recognizing differences is the first step to respecting them. List some ways in which you and your spouse differ. (As you do so, keep in mind that these are not strengths and weaknesses, but instead personality traits that are not the same. For example, instead of saying, "I'm orderly, he/she is messy" you may say, "I'm orderly, he/she is more flexible". This will lead to a more productive conversation!)

ME	MY SPOUSE
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3. List 5 things that you admire about your spouse and the way they parent.

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4. Rate the following from 1-5 and compare with your spouse

1 - yes absolutely | 2- usually | 3 - most of the time | 4 - not really | 5 - not at all

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| 1. Are you unified in communicating your expectations to your children at home? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Are you unified in enforcing consequences for your children? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Do your children get different answers from mom and dad? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Do you backup your spouse and present a united front? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Do you feel that your spouse backs you up? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. List your children and together write down or talk about their strengths and weakness. What you see as their virtues and vices. Make sure you agree on the issues you list for each child.

Find more information on our podcast "Keeping Love Alive" and "Forgiveness in Marriage"