



# Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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God pours his love into us so that we may love others.

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We can use our gifts to bring greater glory to God.

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### Why does God need our praise?

We praise God because only God fulfills all our needs.

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## 3-MINUTE RETREAT

**Early in the morning, often before dawn, birds arrive at feeders across the country and sing and chirp at full voice.** This

is their morning prayer of praise to God who provides for them. We can imitate our feathered friends and sing our praise to God too.



Try this. Sit quietly and think of your favorite song of praise. As you sing or whistle or hum your praise to God, visualize the many ways God provides for you. End your praise by praying the Glory Be to the Father. ■

For a daily online 3-Minute Retreat, go to [www.3MinuteRetreat.com](http://www.3MinuteRetreat.com).

## Realize Your Child's Capabilities

When she was 13, my daughter had saved enough babysitting money to make a shoe purchase I considered extravagant. But it was her money, so I compromised. I would accompany her to the department store, but she would have to conduct the transaction herself.

She nervously agreed. Once there, I browsed the sale racks while eavesdropping on her exchange with an older salesman. He addressed her kindly and attentively. Soon, her nerves disappeared. She asked questions, learned how to care for her purchase, and counted out her money with pride.

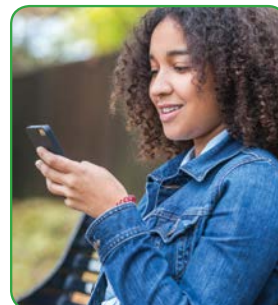
The experience awakened me to capabilities within my daughter that I might otherwise have overlooked until she was older. These capabilities were related, I realized with glee, to the phone she'd recently acquired.

When my daughter needed a haircut, I seized the opportunity. "You have a phone," I said. "Go ahead and call the salon."

She balked. "What should I say? What if they laugh at me?"

I explained that it was their job to schedule appointments. It would be fine.

And it was.



She soon came to understand that if she could make the call, it was hers to make. Now a rising senior, my daughter conducts most of her

own business. She calls the bookstore to check titles. She calls local shops to order gifts. She calls colleges to schedule tours.

This is liberating for me, of course. My to-do list has shrunk. I have more time for my own work.

But it's more liberating for my daughter. She has developed a self-sufficiency that will serve her well in all areas of life—including her faith life. One recent Sunday she headed out the door early. She was going to Mass, she explained, since she had another obligation later during our usual Mass time.

That shoe purchase wasn't extravagant, after all. We've gotten every penny's worth. †

**Claire Miller Colombo** lives, writes, and teaches in Austin, TX.





## 15-MINUTE PRAYER

### Enthusiasm

You know what we're critically missing now, more than anything else in the world?

#### Enthusiasm.

That inflammation of the soul, that fire in our hearts, that passion that drives us to new and glorious heights. . . .

What some people take for enthusiasm is little more than misdirected energy—the way, the night before a test, a normally studious school-boy jacks himself up on soda and chocolate and spends his time bouncing off the walls instead of putting his nose in a book. . . . The boy was certainly filled with energy, but none of us would argue that he was being enthusiastic.

Then what do I mean by *enthusiasm*? According to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, the word comes from the Greek *enthousiasmos*, to be inspired from God (bringing together the roots *en-* and *theos*), and it means to have "a belief in special revelations of the Holy Spirit."

What the world is missing now isn't misdirected energy, it is an out-pouring—a flowing awareness—of the living presence of the Holy Spirit that exists in each and every one of us. ■

Excerpt taken from [The 15-Minute Prayer Solution: How One Percent of Your Day Can Transform Your Life](#) by Gary Jansen (Loyola Press, 2010).

## SACRED READING/REFLECTION

The Holy Spirit ignites our hearts. Rest in the warmth of the Holy Spirit; then read the following Scripture verse slowly.

*When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.*

—ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2:1-4

1. **Imagine that you are in a closed room.** What does the room look like? Where are the windows and doors? What is the furniture like? You are with some of your closest friends and



family, praying together. How are you praying? Are you praying in silence? Are you singing? Are you praying for one another?

2. **Read the Scripture verse again.** The room trembles, as if shaken by a loud thunderclap. A strong wind blows open the windows. How do you respond? Are you scared? Confused? How do the other people in the room respond?

3. **Read the Scripture verse a final time.** You start to feel warm, as if you are close to a fire. You look around and see the other people in the room. They seem to be glowing. Everything appears bright and beautiful. How do you respond? Do you sing out in praise of God? Do you rest in silent awe?

4. **Look forward to tomorrow.** How will you share your praise for and awe of God as you go about your day? Give thanks to God for the presence of the Holy Spirit. ■

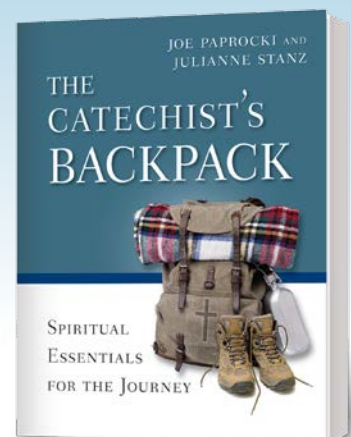


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### Essentials for the Journey

Joe Paprocki and Julianne Stanz foster, explore, and celebrate the spirituality of the catechist, encouraging catechists to embrace their spirituality so that they can pass on a living faith to the children they teach. *The Catechist's Backpack* gives catechists the resources that speak to the spiritual dimension of their call to share the Catholic faith. ■

[The Catechist's Backpack](#) (Loyola Press, 2015)



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# Simple Prayers for Busy Families

## BUILD UP YOUR FAMILY

“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” (1 Peter 4:10)

Everyone has gifts and talents. What are yours?

Spend time as a family discussing the talents and interests of each person, as well as what each person enjoys doing. Discuss how each member of the family contributes to making the family stronger, special, and unique.

### You will need:

- Any type of building blocks (one block per family member)
- Markers
- Space to display your finished build-up blocks

1. Give each family member a building block and a marker and ask them to reflect on these questions: What do you enjoy doing? What are you good at?



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## praying with the **Saints**

### A Prayer of Praise

*All powerful, most holy, most high  
supreme God: all good, supreme  
good, totally good, you who  
alone are good, may we give you  
all praise, all glory, all thanks, all  
honor, all blessing, and all good.  
So be it! So be it! Amen.*

—SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI



2. Write your answers on different sides of the block and then share your answers.
3. Stack the blocks and discuss the many gifts and talents your family has. How do all these gifts help your family stand together?
4. Give thanks to God for the many blessings he has given your family.

Every person brings his or gifts to the family. Take time to discuss how your family can use the gifts and talents of all its members to serve others and bring greater glory to God. ■

**Michelle Cook** is a busy mother of three and the director of youth ministry at Resurrection Catholic Church in Wayne, IL.





## Why does God need our praise?

**A:** *Sometimes we can have difficulty getting past the First Commandment, in which God directs us to worship him.* On the surface, it

may appear that God is acting like an impetuous child who demands attention. The truth is, however, that God does not need our praise. Rather, God knows that we need to offer praise to him so that we do not mistakenly offer praise and worship (our attention and allegiance) to something or someone who does not have our best interests at heart.



**To praise God is to acknowledge that he alone fulfills us.**

To praise and worship God is to acknowledge that, at our deepest level, we are incapable of sustaining ourselves and need to rely on God who does indeed have our best interests at heart. To praise God is to acknowledge that he alone fulfills us. Whenever we say “yes” to something, we are implicitly saying “no” to something else. To praise God is to say “yes” to a relationship with God and “no” to other “powers” that seek our attention and allegiance with promises that are ultimately false, empty, and bankrupt. ■

**Joe Paprocki** is the national consultant for faith formation for Loyola Press and author of *A Church on the Move* (Loyola Press, 2016).

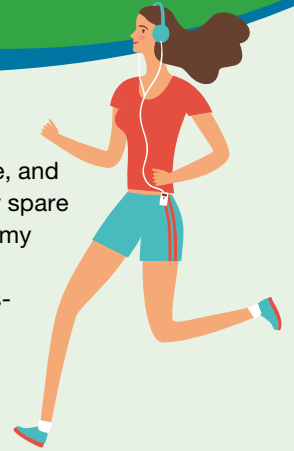
## 5 THINGS

### Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

#### Fitness

I'm an active gal. I run, bike, and teach fitness classes in my spare time. These activities feed my physical health, but even more so, they teach me lessons about faith:



- 1. Remember to breathe.** This helps to center me—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- 2. No feeling is permanent.** Whether it's a pain in my side or a pain in my heart, no feeling is forever.
- 3. It's harder than you think.** Fitness, like my relationship with God, isn't always easy. But God is always there for me.
- 4. You're stronger than you think.** Faith helps me find the strength to dig deep when life gets hard.
- 5. We're all in this together.** I love running along the lakeshore and catching another runner's gaze. We exchange a smile and I remember: we are a community! ■

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## { RAISING *prayerful* KIDS }

**W**HEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU EXPERIENCED AWE? What made that event different from your daily routine? I suspect it came because you were paying attention. When you cultivate awe by paying more attention, you come to realize that God is watching you with love.

Here are some ways to develop your family's sense of awe:

1. Take an attitude of respect. You can signal your respect toward God by getting down on your knees, praying

with open hands, or going to church services early and sitting in silence.

2. Follow a child around. Observe how delighted this child can be with the world. Watch that child's face and learn to feel awe once again.



3. Add some silence to your life. Let the silence restore your ability to appreciate the beauty of God's bounty.
4. Suspend your disbelief. Start your day by saying, “If I did believe that God could touch my life in special ways today, how would I live?” Then act as if that, in fact, is true. ■

**Tom McGrath** is the author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids* (Loyola Press, 2000).