



## 10 reasons we're choosing Catholic schools for our children

Leo will start kindergarten in the fall. You might think the easy decision would be to send him to the good public school in our area, but John and I never considered it—partly because of its distance from where we work, and partly because we have always wanted to send our children to Catholic school.

Because it's Catholic Schools Week, I thought I'd share 10 reasons why we are choosing Catholic schools (and a few photos my mother found from my own Catholic school experience):



**10. We love uniforms.** Never again will we worry about whether the Angry Birds shirt is clean. Uniforms are a timesaver, they make it clear that it's time to focus on learning, and everyone's clothes are equally cool. Besides, is anything cuter than a child in a school uniform?

**9. Let us pray.** We pray with our children at the usual times—bedtime and mealtime. But we also try to remember to pray throughout the day, when we see an ambulance, when one of the boys notices something special in nature, or when we avoid a close call on the beltway. In Catholic school, they'll say morning prayers, Grace, maybe even the Angelus. I remember well how when the Challenger exploded, our principal, Sr. Rita, came onto the loudspeaker at St. Pius X to lead us in prayer. When tragedy occurs, I hope my children will turn to God.

**8. Put a value on education.** We want our sons to have a sense of right and wrong. We don't want them to bully or be bullied. We want them to love and love deeply. We want them to understand sacrifice—and making difficult choices because they're right. Take a quick look at children's TV today, and you're hard-pressed to find a value beyond caring for a tree. I have nothing against trees. But let's go beyond that. I was so inspired to see photos of the young people who went to the March for Life last week. That's what we want for our sons—to understand that much of what we see around us is not acceptable and to stand up for what we believe.

**7. We want our boys to want to serve.** Maybe they'll make sandwiches for Our Daily Bread, or collect nickels and dimes for people locally and overseas who have less. Whatever they do, I hope they'll know that we serve not because of some vague notion of giving back and gratitude to some nameless entity, but because we follow the One who showed us how to give and serve by giving His life for His friends and enemies—and called us to do the same.

**6. When the saints come marching in, they'll recognize them.** We hope they'll find beauty in the Rosary, grow to love the Blessed Mother, sing as they walk in a May procession, feel connected to generations of saints, fast and abstain and know why it matters, and realize the universal nature of our Church. Maybe their hearts will leap at the smell of incense, and they'll instinctively genuflect when they enter a church. I can't wait to see them discover the richness of our faith tradition.

**5. They'll be able to talk about their faith with their friends.** I have friends with a variety of beliefs and ways of practicing those beliefs. And I'm grateful for, and enriched by, each of those friendships. But to grow in your faith, it's especially important that you have friends who share that journey with you.



**4. Keep God in the conversation.** Leo loves to talk about God. If we are discussing something, and there's a way for him to bring God into the conversation, he does. I love that he makes those connections. If he went to a school where that wasn't acceptable, he would be so confused.

**3. Academics are good, but that's not my top priority.** I'm all for learning, and I believe all the Catholic schools we've been considering are excellent. But I don't care whether they offer six languages, a robotics club, or tap dance lessons. I'm less concerned with whether our children become rocket scientists than I am with their becoming good, kind, selfless people. My job as their mother is not to make sure they earn six-figure salaries. My job is to help them get to heaven.

**2. Christmas will be about Christ's birth.** Easter will be about His Resurrection. Lent will be a time of penance. Advent will be a time of preparation. Holy days of obligation will involve going to Mass.

**1. We know we can't do it alone.** I'd like to believe that John and I can ensure that our children want to have a personal relationship with their Lord and Savior, that they'll grow to value the Catholic faith, and that they'll learn to treasure our Church. But I don't consider that a given. Of course, John and I will do all we can, but I also know how children learn from others who are not their parents. Especially in today's world, we can use all the help we can get. And we are so grateful to be able to turn to Catholic schools.

***Why did you choose Catholic schools for your child?***

1/30/2013 8:32:17 PM

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