



The Dad is a child's first experience of God's love. A dad needs to be a protector, provider, and to be present in his kids' lives. A dad should imitate God's love which is never changing and constant, providing what is good for his family unconditionally ("What father among you, if his son asks for bread, would give him a stone." Luke 11:11). This entails providing what they need, not necessarily what they want and protecting them from what is harmful. Additionally, a dad cannot model God's love if he is not present in his children's lives as God is constantly present in all of ours. With these thoughts in mind, here is a list of practical tips for being a great dad.

**Be Faithful to Your Spouse:** The best gift you can give your kids is to have a great marriage.

Love your wife unconditionally, openly and affectionately in front of your children. They will learn from this example!!

Support her decisions and never openly undermine, criticize, or ridicule any discipline decision given by her in front of your children

Be a unified front with her ensuring that she is always on the same page in any decision involving the kids

Treat a child's disrespect of their mother as a serious offense

**Be the Spiritual Head of the Family:** A family's faith has to come primarily from the dad. No matter how holy their mother is, it will be to no avail if you are not strong as well.

Live your faith openly in front of your children and teach/encourage them to do the same

Offer daily prayers and sacrifices for your children, and pray with your children (perhaps before going to bed)

Set spiritual goals for each of your children (reinforce a particular virtue)

Go to church every Sunday and pray with your family (even if you are not Catholic)

Read Scripture to learn about God the Father so as to echo his paternal qualities

Separate Work from Family Life: There is always more work to do. When you come home from work, you should separate yourself from that world as much as possible.

Make an effort to come home at a reasonable hour and have a family dinner

Shut down email and cell phone from Friday evening through Sunday and while at sporting events, school plays, etc. (be engaged in what they are doing)

Be willing to spend significant time with your kids at night

Be the Guardian of Your Daughter's Virtue: Daughters will often marry someone like their dad. How you treat your daughter, encourage her to dress, etc. is often the measure of her virtue until her adolescence. She will gain confidence from her father and learn how guys are supposed to treat them.

Go on Father/Daughter date nights (do what they like doing)

Leave girl things to girls: let your wife give her advice on girlfriends, gossip, cliques, and other feminine topic

Give as much attention to your daughters as to your sons: this will directly impact her purity down the road (i.e., no attention from her father will leave a girl looking for it from other men)

Be an Example for Your Children: No matter how much you tell your children what to do, it will have no effect unless you practice what you preach. What you do is carefully analyzed and assimilated.

Live by the standards you set for your children (especially as far as books, movies, and other media)

Be careful who you spend time with: your friends' behavior will influence them as well (a side note: develop friendships with other dads to share experiences)

Avoid excess: Drinking, TV, computer, etc.

Be an example of chivalry, ethics, honor, good language, and table manners

Be Your Children's Best Friend and Advisor: As a dad you should be approachable, someone your kids turn to for whatever they need.

Be interested in what your kids are doing and even get to know their friends. Reach them where they are so as to help them

Get your kids involved in work (lawn, cleaning car...) using it as an opportunity for formation

Your advice really matters to your kids (take the time to explain key moral principles to your kids)

Seek to understand your kids and later to be understood by them (silence and listening are an important part of fatherhood)

Set clear expectations for your children

Don't treat every child the same (be sensitive to their differences)

Be generous in expressing pride and approval to your children (we love you, we're proud of you, etc.)

Don't make promises you cannot keep

Give equal affection to all your children especially your sons (If a guy gets plenty of affection from his father, he will grow up to be an affectionate and compassionate man)

Be Present in Kids Lives: You cannot achieve any of this if you are not spending quantity time and quality time with your family.

Give them your undivided attention and avoid multitasking: if you are going to talk to you kids or do something with them focus completely on that

Spend one-on-one time with each of your children: don't have favorites (spend equal time & effort on each kid)

Try to take "one on one" over night/day trip get always that allow you to spend quality time together.



THE LOVE OF CHRIST IMPELS US. 2 COR 5:14

RegnumChristi NYTNJ