

**CWG III: The Challenge to Welcome, Nurture, and Form Children**  
**Blessed Sacrament Parish Listening Session, September 21 & 25, 2016 + 10**  
**Participants**  
**Report by: Rosario Martinez, Synod Delegate**

(Pending: Parish school parent survey responses, PTG meeting 9/21 and Faith Formation parent listening session 9/25)

**1. How can the Church in the diocese of San Diego more effectively communicate to our people the balance sense of parenting expressed in *The Joy of Love*, while also helping parents to turn that balance into reality?**

Answer:

- Communicate the balance sense of parenting by talking about it during the homily or during announcements
- Offer Family programs such as family worship, music concert, BBQ, service learning, testimonies from families and youth, family or youth retreats
- Sunday School, VBS, Youth Groups
- Faith formation children or Catholic school students participate in mass
- Weekly or monthly email with a spiritual message or a song
- Create a caring environment. For example when the Priest welcomes and prays for newcomers, prays for birthdays, anniversary's
- Bible Study for faith enrichment: <http://walkingwithpurpose.com/> (for women - highly recommended)
- Offer different ways children and youth can lead, participate and express faith. Youth can sing or play an instrument for mass. Youth can give a testimony to other youth.
- Prayer groups or prayer times for parents or families. The "Journey/ El Camino" model that has a curriculum and is led by lay people.
- Information, resources, internet links to daily study and practice in areas such as God being first in our lives, God's will, Peace in any circumstances

**2. What are the principal cultural distortions which limit healthy parenting in Imperial and San Diego counties?**

Answer:

- Our lack of recognizing or acknowledging different types of families – single parent, same sex parent, divorced or separated parents. Strength based verses deficit perspectives.
- Individualism
- Lack of looking at our faith in different ways– in mass, outside of church, caring for other families and members of our parish
- Competition among people, comparing yourself to others
- Materialism
- Wanting our children to be busy, focused all the time on activities, sports or academics – all things necessary to succeed in life, college, etc...
- Stress due to unemployment, lack of affordable housing, debt
- Trauma, domestic violence, drug and alcohol use and addiction, child abuse
- Public schools talking about birth control

**3. Specifically, how can we as a church more effectively empower our parents as the first teachers in the ways of faith, hope and love?**

Answer:

- Parents participating in the liturgy
- Pray for other families - prayer time
- Small prayer and worship groups utilizing “El Camino/Journey model with curriculum and led by lay people
- Identify empowered parents, mentors, sponsors: demonstrate things they do in the ordinary day or for special occasions
- Pray for a person at work, send out a prayer or a scripture that can touch the lives of others or read it to your family
- Resources needed for growth in the faith (like stewardship)
- Bible study (that is not too consuming, offered at times that are conducive to parenting, school, work). Scripture aligned with God’s love for us calls us just the way we are, to grow in love with Him. A process that realizes the depth of it and how to apply it to our daily lives.

**4. How can the Church better support families in the absence of extended family?**

Answer:

- Know the resources in the community and be able to refer families to them if they have difficulty meeting the basic needs of their family or need counseling or legal services.
- Bring resources to the church such as Catholic Charities.
- Refer families to prayer groups or let someone start a prayer group in person, via email
- Offer church programs that encourage families to participate: 1 x month, Friday family night at the hall or prayer at the park, cultural holiday activities
- Small faith groups and social activities: “family pray and play” at the park
- Small faith groups create internal support systems to help families in need
- Web site information: scripture, music, stories, lectures
- Email blasts or phone text regarding special events, faith based activities, prayers or thoughts of the day. There are software programs that have the ability to do it.