

# DEALING WITH JEALOUSY

## How do we live as Holy Families when there is jealousy?

Jealousy is a complex set of emotions that stem from feelings of loss or the potential loss of something important. It can occur if we feel abandoned, insecure or left out. There are times in any family when feelings of jealousy might arise — for example, welcoming a new baby, or when one sibling seems to be getting more attention than another. Recognizing what is at stake for a child is the key to dealing with this capricious emotion. It is important to remind children that there is always enough love to go around. We do that by showing them love and listening to their feelings, however difficult it may be for them to express those emotions appropriately.

Jesus demonstrated unconditional love for others. In particular, he was intentional about loving those whom others wanted nothing to do with because they were “sinners.” In this story about Jesus’ table fellowship with sinners, he is criticized for the unconditional welcome he extended to those who were considered unclean:

*“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ But when (Jesus) heard it, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Matthew 9:9-13 ESV)*

Love is not something that can be completely used up. On the contrary, the more you give away, the more it grows. As St. Paul said, “Love never ends” (1 Corinthians 13:8 ESV). We don’t always know or understand that love never ends, especially when we are children. If a child feels threatened by a perceived preference in the family, feelings of envy are bound to crop up. Something important is happening, but how do we get to the root of the problem?

---

*Jealousy can occur if we feel abandoned, insecure or left out.*

---

Our awareness of the emotional “field” within the family is something to be constantly paying attention to, especially if there has been a big change in the family. Change can often cause children to feel stressed or anxious. Talking about those changes, even in the simplest terms, can quell negative feelings. Remind the ones feeling left out that they too are loved and cherished. Your attention and assurance can help to assuage feelings of jealousy and hurt.



**Topical conversation starters to help parents stay on the same page with each other and their families.**

### Things to Pray and Talk About:

- When in your life have you felt strong feelings of jealousy? What was going on at the time?*
- How can jealousy be a disruptive and destructive emotion in our lives?*
- How do we know from Jesus’ life that we are loved beyond our wildest imagination?*
- How does God’s love offer us security and peace in life? In our family life?*

### Asking for God’s Blessing:

*Lord God, you sent your son, Jesus, into the world to show us what true love looks like. Help us to love one another so deeply and faithfully that we are secure in our relationships and don’t feel any jealousy toward others in our lives. Remind us that we are called to love others the way we want to be loved. In Jesus’ holy name we pray. Amen.*