

# DEALING WITH HOMESICKNESS

## How do we live as “Holy Families” when we are homesick?

Part of growing up is spending time away from the family home. That could mean participating in fun adventures like catechism camp, a sports camp, a school trip, or even simply spending the night at a friend’s house. Some children are naturally more independent than others and consider their time away from home as a wonderful experience. For others, going away from home and family, their own bed and toys, can be a challenge. They are simply more comfortable in their own familiar environment. This topic is not just for young children either – when young people go off to the military or college, many of them experience this yearning for home and family connections.

As parents, we can use these moments to help our children take a step toward independence and encourage them to venture out into new situations that will benefit them in the long run. Ultimately these adventures away from home and parents build confidence and allow a child to test their developing interpersonal skills such as making new friends, communicating with others, and taking care of themselves. We can assure them that we are only a phone call or text away and that more importantly, God is with them wherever they go.

When Jesus was preparing to give his life as a sacrifice for the world, he promised his disciples that he would not leave them orphaned, “I will come to you,” he said. (John 14:18) As Jesus promised his friends the gift of the Holy Spirit he assured them, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

There is never a place or a time where we are without our Lord. As parents we can take every opportunity to remind our children that Jesus is with them always, helping them, guiding them, com-

forting them when they feel alone, and teaching them to rely on him in the midst of life’s experiences. When we make a habit of reminding children that God is always with them, soon they will come to rely on that truth and draw from it when they are homesick or afraid.

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*Adventures away from home and parents build confidence.*

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It is normal to have a bit of anxiety over being separated from our family and home, but it is a good thing to get away from the normal, everyday routine of daily life and explore what the world around us offers. We can trust that we are always being watched over by our heavenly Father, and that before long we will be back in familiar surroundings. And just think of all the great stories they will have to tell when they return!



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

### Things to Pray and Talk About:

- a) *When was there a time when you were away from home and felt really homesick? Did you stick it out and stay, or did you cut your journey short and head home?*
- b) *What feelings are associated with being homesick? Is there anything in particular that would help you feel better in those moments?*
- c) *Read together Matthew 28:16-20. What gives you comfort in this passage? In what ways are we given a task to do when we go away from home? What is that task and what is the promise that goes with it?*

### Asking for God’s Blessing:

*Lord God, you know our fears as well as our joys. Give us confidence to venture away from home and experience life beyond our front door. Continue to mold and shape us into your saints, sharing the good news wherever we go. Help us to trust that Christ is with us always, even to the end of the age. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.*