

There are 3 major reasons why teens don't want to attend church.

1. Entertainment - The church cannot compete with the entertainment world today. Kids are being brought up today by TV, movies, internet, sports, etc. Being entertained has become a life-style. If they are not entertained, they are bored.

A possible and likely tragic result is this: If a child has the option to quit something he is bored with, he will always quit. Why? He does not have the discipline to stick it out. His character has been trained to only do things that are entertaining. What will happen to that child when he becomes bored with high school? or his job? or marriage, etc? He'll quit!

The Mass is not supposed to be entertainment. It is not something ordinary and secular. It is worship of the God who made us and saves us. It is an opportunity to praise God and thank Him for all that He has done for us.

If we have a correct understanding of Mass, it will become more meaningful for us. We will want to go to Mass. We will understand why the Mass is God's precious gift to us, and we wouldn't think of refusing that gift.

Be patient. Bring an attitude of prayer and thanksgiving to Mass, and you will reap great spiritual riches: consolation, confidence, peace, deep happiness, and spiritual strength for the challenges of life.

Parents make your children go to church and explain to them the great meaning of the Mass.

Ah, you say, "I'm not going to force my children to go to church like I was."

I am heartily sick of the protest "I don't go to Mass because my parents forced me to go when I was young."

OK, what else did your parents force you to do?

Your parents forced you to wash before you went out in the morning. Those cruel tyrants made sure that you cleaned your teeth before you went to bed. They dragged you kicking and screaming to school so that you could learn to read – and

the teachers collaborated by forcing you to learn the alphabet and put the words together.

To top it all, after looking after your physical needs, they had the temerity to exercise their authority by looking after your spiritual needs and taking you to Mass on Sunday.

Now, if they had neglected to see that you were clean, had suitable clothes, eat some sort of nourishing food, get some education and cross the road safely, they would have been visited by social services and given a care plan so that you could be healthy and safe.

And you are complaining because they took responsibility for your eternal life?

Let's perform an exercise. We will change ten reason why I never go to Mass to ten reasons why I never wash:

1. I was forced to as a child.
2. People who wash are hypocrites – they think they are cleaner than everybody else.
3. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is best.
4. I used to wash, but I got bored and stopped.
5. I wash only on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends wash.
7. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.
8. I can't spare the time.
9. The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer.
10. People who make soap are only after your money.

2. Peer Pressure - "I'll let my children decide for themselves what they believe," declare many parents.

There is no such thing! ALL of us are the product of the influences of people around us. I believe Abe Lincoln once said, "You'll be the same person you are a

year from now except for the people you meet and the books you read." Of course today is different because we have more than books influencing us.

Teenagers are influenced in a profound way by other teenagers. Look at the way they want to dress or the way they eat, or the music they listen to, or the shows they watch. Parents, did you teach them to like these things? No. Who did? THEIR PEERS.

Because most children do not attend church, the pressure is put on children to believe that it is "normal" practice by their peers. No one, not even a child, wants to be abnormal.

Children need to be taught that peer pressure is not a good basis to make decisions on. If this is the foundation of their decision making, they will follow the crowd into premarital or illicit sex, drugs, drunkenness, etc. Don't allow what other children do to be the guide for what you allow your children to do! Especially concerning church attendance.

3. Hypocrisy - Nothing has harmed the message or the power of the church as hypocrisy has. I'm talking about people who go to church for 1 hour a week and act "religious" and then live like the devil the rest of the week. CHILDREN CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH HYPOCRITES, so can everyone else.

There is nothing that has turned children away from the church more than hypocrisy! Friends, it is the power of our example that gives power to what we are trying to teach. "Do as I say, not as I do" NEVER WORKS! Kids hate that! Usually the only teenagers we can keep coming to our church are the ones whose parents come all the time themselves and are honestly trying to live by God's Word.

What we do at Mass.

The Mass is first of all a sacrifice — the perfect sacrifice, created by Jesus. Through the priest we offer Jesus, Body and Blood, to the Father, just as Jesus offered Himself to the Father on the Cross. In an unbloody way, we repeat —

make present — Christ's death and Resurrection. Through this memorial of Jesus, we offer God our praise, sorrow for our sins, and deepest thanks.

The Mass is also a meal. At the Consecration, the bread and wine, through the power of the Holy Spirit, become the Body and Blood of Christ. Not a mere symbol, but Jesus's real flesh and real blood, under the appearance of bread and wine. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus Himself. He is real food for our soul. He said this very plainly: “I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.” (John 6:55-56).

What are the benefits of Holy Communion?

It strengthens our union with Jesus; He lives within us in a special way. It cleanses us from venial sins. (Mortal sins require forgiveness in Confession.) It gives us grace to avoid sin in the future. It increases our love of God and neighbor.

You care for your children’s physical needs, please care for their spiritual and eternal needs.

James Stenson, a prolific author concerning parental leadership, offers us this insight:

“Our ancestors risked persecution, even death, to be able to take part in Mass. When you have children someday, they will need the graces and strength that come from the Mass. If you fail to pass it on because of your own indifference, you will do the gravest injustice to them and to God. You have the power to snuff out, in one generation, the faith that has sustained your family for generations. This is an enormous responsibility. You will have to answer to God for it.”

If we understand the beauty of the Mass we will fall in love with it, because we fall in love with Christ.