

# READ, PRAY, GROW

## *Reading Challenge*



Dear Parents,

As you guide your children in their academic, personal, and spiritual growth, I want to invite you to join a powerful and simple practice that can deeply enrich your family's life: reading together.

Whether you are exploring stories about the saints, learning from the Bible, or diving into a favorite novel, reading with your child can have a lasting impact on their development and spiritual formation.

To inspire this habit, we are excited to introduce the **Read, Pray, Grow Challenge!**

This challenge encourages families to embrace reading not only as a source of knowledge, but as a way to grow in faith and connect with the truth and beauty of our Catholic tradition.

### **WHY READING MATTERS**

Reading with your child, even for just a few minutes a day, offers numerous benefits:

- **Academic Success:** Children who are read to 3-4 times a week perform 15-20% better in school and develop stronger language and cognitive skills. Reading just 10 minutes each night exposes your child to over 1.8 million words per year, significantly boosting their vocabulary and comprehension.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Studies show that students who read frequently are 4x more likely to score in the top quartile on standardized tests. Regular reading sharpens critical thinking, problem-solving, and focus—skills essential for success in life.
- **Emotional and Social Growth:** Reading together fosters emotional bonds and helps children develop empathy by stepping into the lives of different characters and learning how to understand others' feelings and perspectives. This builds emotional intelligence and stronger social skills.

## FAITH-BASED READING AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In addition to these general benefits, reading Catholic or faith-based books can enrich your child's spiritual life:

- **Strengthening Faith:** 83% of practicing Catholics feel that reading religious books strengthens their faith. Reading together deepens your child's understanding of Catholic teachings and provides meaningful opportunities for family discussions about God, values, and morality.
- **Inspiring a Personal Call to Faith:** Catholic stories—whether about the saints, Bible stories, or other religious themes—can inspire children to explore their own journey of faith. **68% of Catholic children** who engage with these stories report a deeper interest in living out their faith and participating in church activities.

*"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."*

—Philippians 4:8

In keeping with this wisdom, and to make reading a regular and enjoyable part of your child's routine, we invite you to take the Read, Pray, Grow Challenge by making the following pledge below.

Thank you for being such an important part of your child's journey.



## PARENT READING PLEDGE

As a parent, I recognize the importance of fostering a love for reading in my child's life. I commit to setting aside dedicated time to read together and nurture their growing imagination and knowledge.

**I pledge to:**

- Read with my child for **at least 10 minutes each night or 45 minutes per week**.
- Strive to make at least **1 out of every 4 books** we read together about our Catholic faith—whether it's Bible stories, lives of the saints, or fictional accounts of characters with Catholic values.
- Make reading a fun, enjoyable, and regular part of our routine.
- Support my child in developing strong reading habits that will benefit them throughout their life.
- Say an evening prayer together before or after we read.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Read, Pray, Grow Challenge - Monthly Reading Tracker

WEEK	DAY	BOOK TITLE	TIME (mins)
Week 1	Monday		
	Tuesday		
	Wednesday		
	Thursday		
	Friday		
	Saturday		
	Sunday		
Week 2	Monday		
	Tuesday		
	Wednesday		
	Thursday		
	Friday		
	Saturday		
	Sunday		
Week 3	Monday		
	Tuesday		
	Wednesday		
	Thursday		
	Friday		
	Saturday		
	Sunday		
Week 4	Monday		
	Tuesday		
	Wednesday		
	Thursday		
	Friday		
	Saturday		
	Sunday		

### MONTHLY TOTALS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Total reading time: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. Total books read: \_\_\_\_\_

# READING TIPS

- Goal: Read together for at least 10 minutes 4 different days of the week or 45 minutes each week.
- It takes 21 days to form a habit, so let's commit to reading together regularly!
- Read books in a series (Paul McCusker's *Nick & Sam*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Little House on the Prairie*). Children love finishing a book and then go to the "next" in the series.
- Don't underestimate your teenagers "listening in" on a book that is below their reading level. By doing so they revisit books they loved or hear a book they missed. Either way, there is a story that can be discussed among anyone in the family.
- While mom might be the primary reader, whenever possible, have dad or grandpa read. Listeners have a wonderful experience with a male voice, especially on adventure stories and stories about the faith.
- Car trips are awesome for reading. Turn off the videos and phone and if a parent is a non-driver, read the miles away.
- Read under blankets with flashlights to make reading time fun for children.
- Visit places where your books take place. If you can't go to Never-Neverland, go to a scenic countryside or river close to home so that the book location can be better imagined.
- **DON'T EVER STOP READING**, even when your children are "too old" keep reading aloud.

