

The Handbook for
Catholic Moms
A Discussion Guide

Lisa M. Hendey

CatholicMom.com



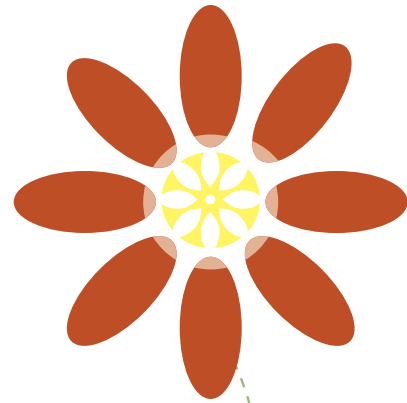
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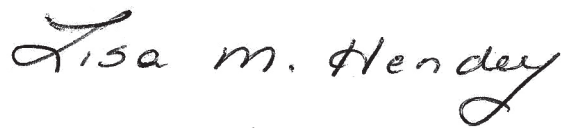
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Welcome

Thank you for your support of my book, *The Handbook for Catholic Moms: Nurturing Your Heart, Mind, Body, and Soul*. This discussion guide has been created for either personal or group use—to prompt conversation, learning, and adaptation of lessons found in the book and in the living of your vocation as mother. Obviously, not every mom or small group will have time for each of these questions. Feel free to pick and choose whichever ones fit your particular situation as you work your way through various chapters of the handbook. As always, I appreciate your feedback on ways in which we might improve this guide and enhance your experience of the book.

Please know that I am praying for you in your role as a Catholic mom!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa M. Hendey". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'L' and a decorative flourish at the end of the word 'Hendey'.

Lisa M. Hendey

Chapter One

1. What are some small ways in which you and your spouse keep Christ at the center of your marriage?
2. Name a few nonverbal signs of your spouse's love for you. What about those you show toward him?
3. Do you have a marital support system or "marriage mentors" in your life? Does your parish or diocese provide support for married couples? If so, have you taken advantage of it, and how?
4. What are some memorable ways you and your spouse have celebrated your wedding anniversary?

Chapter Two

1. Have you had to play the role of "bad guy" in your parenting vocation? If so, how did you handle this? How do you and your spouse share disciplinary responsibilities?
2. What are some ways in which you pray with and for your children? How do you communicate with them the importance of prayer in your own growing faith?
3. What steps do you take to build up your children and help them develop their God-given talents?
4. How do you let your husband and children get to know the "real" you? What are two things about you that they might find surprising?

Chapter Three

1. Do you have “soul sisters” in your life that you can lean on for emotional support? Tell about them.
2. Do you ever struggle with a sense of isolation in your vocation as a mother? What helps you through these difficult times?
3. What are some resources in your parish and community for connecting with other women?

Chapter Four

1. Does your parish feel like a faith family? If yes, what steps have you taken to develop relationships within your parish? If no, what is missing that might help you feel more connected to your faith community?
2. In what ways has your family sought to serve your parish?
3. How can you develop a more personal relationship with a priest, religious sister, deacon, or lay parish staff member?

Chapter Five

1. What are some of the challenges that are unique to your family? What are some of your more positive characteristics?
2. In what concrete ways can you lift up moms in your community who face exceptional parenting circumstances?
3. If you were to create a support network to assist you in difficult times, what key components might it have?

Chapter Six

1. Have you ever faced the challenge of being—or perhaps feeling like—a single parent? What were some of your greatest hardships and rewards?
2. Do you turn to private prayer and the sacraments when you feel alone in your parenting vocation? What role have these practices played for you in times of difficulty?
3. Are there single parents or moms facing heavy burdens in your community who could use some physical and emotional support? Brainstorm together some concrete steps for helping them and agree on a plan to do so.

Chapter Seven

1. Name a few ways in which your home is a classroom, both literally and figuratively. What are the most important lessons that have been taught and learned in your household?
2. In what specific activities and attitudes is the Domestic Church alive, well, and growing in your home?
3. How do you model the joy of lifelong learning for your children?

Chapter Eight

1. How would you describe your vocation? Depict the path by which God called you to your life's work. Are there signs that God is still calling you? In what ways?
2. What are some little ways in which you can offer each day's tasks and duties as a prayer?
3. What are some of the challenges you face in your daily work? How do you meet the struggles head on and move through them?

Chapter Nine

1. During the course of your typical day, when do you spend time in prayer or conscious awareness of being in God's presence?
2. Do you feel a balance in your life between your work, service to your family, other relationships, care of your physical body, and your spiritual life? If yes, how do you maintain it? If not, what can you do to try to strike a healthier balance?
3. How can you simplify your load, to make more time for the things you value most?

Chapter Ten

1. Who is responsible for the family finances in your home, and how do you work in partnership with your spouse on this?
2. What components of your long-term financial plan are lacking at this time?
3. How have you prioritized a family commitment to stewardship, or what would you like to do in the future to model good stewardship for your family?

Chapter Eleven

1. How do you enjoy using the Internet? What are some of your favorite websites and tools?
2. Does your online activity ever impact negatively upon your "real world" responsibilities?
3. Have you and your spouse discussed a plan for your children's safe and appropriate use of information technology?

Chapter Twelve

1. Discuss one creative outlet you enjoy or one hobby you might like to pursue in the future.
2. When—during the course of your average day—can you find ten minutes to engage in a creative pursuit?
3. What was the last family outing your family took together?

Chapter Thirteen

1. What roadblocks keep you from being physically active on a regular basis? How can you work with your spouse's and your own schedule to prioritize regular exercise?
2. What is your favorite way to get moving?
3. In what innovative or creative ways might you incorporate exercise into your family life? What effect might this have on your family relationships?

Chapter Fourteen

1. Does your relationship with food or your personal body image ever disturb your sense of closeness to God?
2. What factors in your life contribute to any problems you may have with eating healthily?
3. How regularly does your family dine together? How can you prioritize family dinner in your home?

Chapter Fifteen

1. How does prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments help you cope with stress and anxiety?
2. Are you getting a healthy amount of sleep each night? If not, how can you strategize with your spouse and/or extended family or friends to fit healthful rest into your schedule?
3. What is one other strategy that helps you deal with stress and anxiety when you feel overwhelmed by life?

Chapter Sixteen

1. When was your last appointment for an annual physical? If you are overdue, what factors are keeping you from going to the doctor?
2. Do you have a relationship with a trusted physician who is aware of and respects your priorities? If not, how might you find one?
3. What health challenges are you or a family member facing at this time and how can your faith help to support you through these times of difficulty?

Chapter Seventeen

1. Do you struggle with finding quiet time for prayer in your life?
2. What is your favorite “sacred space” where you feel closest to God?
3. What are some of the prayer forms you enjoy personally and some that you enjoy as a family?

Chapter Eighteen

1. Does your family attend Mass together on a regular basis? What blessings does this bring to your life together? Do you ever discuss the meaning of Mass with your family? Why or why not?
2. What roadblocks challenge you in preparing for Mass, getting to church on time, and helping your children fully participate in the liturgy? Together with your group, brainstorm a few strategies for making Mass a less stressful and more joyful weekly experience.
3. How does Mass and frequent reception of the Eucharist fuel you in your role as a Catholic mom?

Chapter Nineteen

1. How would you describe your spiritual relationship with Mary?
2. How does or might a fruitful relationship with our Blessed Mother draw you closer to her son Jesus, to your husband, and to your children?
3. What keeps you from consistently emulating Mary's "yes" to God's will in your own life? What helps you to imitate her?

Chapter Twenty

1. Name one of your favorite saints. Why is this person a role model for you?
2. Do you celebrate patron saints in your family life? If so, who are they and how do you celebrate their feast days? If not, how might you recognize them?
3. How might an intercessory relationship with a trusted saint support and encourage you in your walk as a Catholic mom?

Chapter Twenty-One

1. Do you regularly read or study the Bible?
2. How can a prayerful reading of the *Lectionary* texts either before or after Sunday Mass support and encourage you as a mom?
3. Do you own a family or children's bible? What experiences have you had with sharing the scriptures as a family?

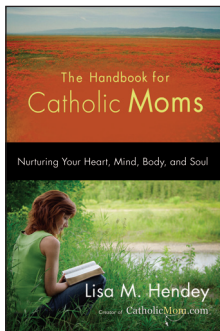
Chapter Twenty-Two

1. Does your family keep the liturgical calendar? In what ways?
2. How does your Catholic perspective color your decision-making process?
3. What are your hopes and dreams for your own spiritual life, for the life you share with your spouse, and for your children's futures?

Do you have questions or comments concerning this guide? Please email lisahendey@gmail.com with your feedback. We also invite you to visit www.CatholicMom.com for additional support, inspiration, and encouragement.



LISA M. HENDEY is the creator and editor of www.CatholicMom.com and the host of the weekly Catholic Moments podcast and “Catholic Mom” television segments. Hendey writes regularly for *Faith & Family*, and her articles have appeared in the *National Catholic Register* and *Our Sunday Visitor*. She also gives workshops and speaks on faith, family, and Catholic new media topics. Hendey lives in the Diocese of Fresno with her husband and two teenage sons.



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