

## Peace on Earth Begins @ Kitchen Table (Pt. 1)

Beth, a mother of four children ages 5 to 12, admits that her children may see her as June Cleaver. “I don’t know that they’ve ever seen me in my pajamas in the morning,” Beth says. “By the time they get up, I’m showered and dressed, with my makeup on.” Far from being an aspiring 1950s housewife, however, Beth explains that getting up an hour before her children is something she does for herself—not her kids.

“Once they get up, my life is crazy,” she says. “Taking the time in the quiet, before that first kid wakes up, gives me the peace I need to start the day.”

For parents, peace can be elusive. New parents struggle to have a thought or sleep for more than three hours without a baby interrupting. Parents with toddlers and preschool-age children can feel life has become a test of wills—from putting on shoes to getting in the car, suddenly nothing is easy anymore.

School conflicts snake their way into family life, and a once-close husband and wife can find that the sheer speed of life with children and teens can reduce their once-thoughtful conversations to barked instructions.

Yet amid the noise and the chaos, most families enjoy pockets of peace—those times when everything aligns—and we glimpse the family we’d like to be all the time. Upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Mother Teresa of Calcutta was asked, “What can we do to promote world peace?” She answered, “Go home and love your family.”

If family peace can bring about peace on earth, as Mother Teresa says, we better figure out how to get there.

**Peace within the parent:** As my friend Beth intuitively understands, we cannot lead our children toward peace if we ourselves are feeling unsettled. When family life starts leaning towards the decidedly un-peaceful, our first instinct may be to look toward the child who seems to be causing the most problems—the 7-year-old who is incessantly tattling; the sulking teen.

Yet if we first check for peace in our own heart, we may find that fear, stress, or anger have taken up residence there instead. Peaceful parents can better build a peaceful household. “I find that just lighting a candle on the kitchen counter and praying for a few minutes in the morning sets a completely different tone for my day than when I don’t make time for it,” says Carol, a mother of four.       *...continued next week*

—by Annemarie Scobey from the pages of [At Home with Our Faith](#), Claretian Publications’ print newsletter for parents on nurturing spirituality in the home. Winner of the 2010 and 2011 General Excellence award from the Catholic Press Association. Here’s a [sample issue](#)