# How to create a pro-life culture at home

## Acknowledge life

The process literally begins in the womb. The way we value our own children gives witness to the value of all human life. When a mother is pregnant, it’s important that she talk openly – and joyfully – with her other children about the miraculous blessing of the life growing within her.

“Acknowledging the presence of life is very important,” said Eva Fortini, a Midwestern mother of two small children. “I take my other child with me to prenatal checkups. I love it when we hear the baby’s heartbeat, and I can explain that to my little one.”

Answering their questions age appropriately and involving them in preparations for the new baby helps, too. Once the baby is born, mothers should allow them to assist in caring for him or her, as long as they show interest and willingness. Moms also shouldn’t be afraid to modestly nurse their newborn with their other children present.

All of these things demonstrate to children that babies are to be welcomed as a blessed addition to family life, and not a disruption to it.

## Keep a positive outlook

It’s not only our own babies that must be valued; we must also value the babies of others. Our children see how we respond to news of an unexpected pregnancy or view large families. They can sense our skepticism or disapproval before we’re even aware of it ourselves. Once we’ve shown our reactions, there’s no way to take it back.

“Being really positive of newborn life and being congratulatory about it is very important,” Fortini said.

Often we hear — or even make ourselves — comments that seem harmless but actually negate the value of children, such as “two kids are enough” or “not another one!” This sends a message that babies are an inconvenience rather than a gift. We also can do harm by responding negatively or threateningly to teen pregnancies. Comments such as, “If my daughter ever gets pregnant before marriage, I’ll … ” give the impression that babies are mistakes to be dreaded, embarrassed about, or “taken care of” by abortion.

“Kids are spongent,” Vicki Thorn, internationally known speaker, author and founder of Project Rachel, a post-abortion healing ministry, told Our Sunday Visitor. “They absorb everything.”

Guiding our children to be truly pro-life starts from the beginning and is best done through tangible means.

“They need to come from an experiential perspective,” Thorn said. “We have to show them that that baby is a gift, not a mistake. Let them experience the joy of babies and the beauty of nursing moms. That will have far more influence on them than words.”

## Be a witness

What our kids see us doing is as important as what they hear us say.

“Being pro-life means being kind to women with babies and toddlers,” said Kristen McGuire, mother of eight from Great Falls, Mont. “And sensitive to the reality of families being themselves in public. Sometimes, we might see a family struggling with a toddler or a preschooler at Mass or at the grocery. I never allow my children to criticize, nor do they hear criticism from me.”

With special needs children of her own, McGuire knows how hard it can be to face the scrutiny of others. “I tell parents they are doing a good job when I can, and when I am speechless, I try to give a genuine smile.”

Actions can speak louder than words, and so there are things that we can do to create a pro-life culture at home. One way is to actively support pregnant mothers – wed or unwed – by lending a hand when we can.

Joining a meal train for new moms, volunteering for a pregnancy help center, praying before abortion clinics and participating in pro-life fundraisers are all ways to show the value of life.

What we don’t do is important as well. Elizabeth Contreras, San Antonio mother of three young children, is teaching them to make a pro-life statement with their political votes and dollars spent.

“I talk to my kids about people, organizations and companies who do not support mommies and babies,” she said. “I am teaching them to stay away from anything and anyone who does not support mommies and babies when they have a choice. They are too young to explain or discuss abortion, but I do talk to them about being ‘for life.’

## Pray

Prayer is an essential component of a pro-life culture within the family cell. Praying in front of abortion clinics is an effective pro-life measure, but praying within our own families makes it a part of our daily lives. When we pray with our children for pregnant mothers, the revitalization of the family and an end to abortion, we teach them that the pro-life cause isn’t something “out there;” it’s something that we all should be concerned about.

We also can show our children good role models, such as

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, St. Gianna Beretta Molla and St. Gerard Majella.

Contreras read the life of St. Gianna with her daughter, and the message hit home. At Halloween, her daughter wanted to dress as an obstetrician.

“We found some labor and delivery scrubs at the thrift store, and she carried a baby doll around to make sure everyone knew that she was a ‘baby doctor,’” she explained. Most critical to creating a pro-life culture at home is your overall attitude.

“I think if it’s important, you live it,” McGuire said. “You embody it. If it gives glory to Jesus, then he will bless that attitude or that conversation. You won’t have to go looking for ways to be more pro-life, because you received that gift of being pro-life in whatever way God chose to bless you. Receptivity is prior to creativity.”

This article first appeared in Our Sunday Visitor.