

For Parents...Your Children Learned Today...

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY FAMILY



### 1. Shared Sense of Commitment.

- This means that family members are dedicated to promoting each other's welfare and happiness. They expect the family to endure. They have a sense of shared responsibility for the family, and a commitment to stay connected during times of transition, difficulty or crisis. Commitment in the healthy family means an investment of time, energy, spirit and heart. A healthy family also has a support system beyond the immediate family, which might include extended family friends and others.

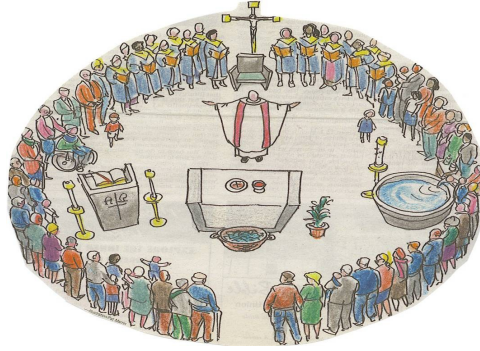
### 2. Spending Quality and Quantity Time Together

- Families share leisure time together, and have a sense of play and humor. Time together allows relationships and understanding to grow. Yet, in healthy families there is also balance, so that togetherness does not become stifling. By sharing time together, the family develops a sense of family identity.

### 3. Good Communication Skills

- Family members take the time to listen to one another. Spouses have a strong, loving relationship and are capable of sharing deep feelings with one another. The family has control over television and other electronic media which often impedes good communication. Regular shared meals times often provide time for family communication. The family encourages individual feelings and independent thinking.

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## 4. Appreciating one another.

- Healthy families take the time to let one another know that they appreciate each other in a variety of ways. Parents show affection toward their children and work to build trusting relationships in the family. Family members express their love for one another through caring, feeling responsible, showing respect, and learning to listen for the feelings of another. An environment of love, acceptance, and understanding helps children develop an inner strength for growth and development. As family members affirm and support one another, self-esteem is boosted.

## 5. Share a religious and moral core

- A shared faith and religious practice provides a family with a common set of values and a purpose in today's world, and can be an important element in strengthening and promoting healthy family life. Sharing, love and compassion for others are promoted. The family teaches a sense of right and wrong. There is a strong sense of family rituals and traditions. Faith is connected to daily living; in fact, the primary expression of faith for the healthy family is in daily life. They practice what they preach. The family values service to others. Parents feel responsible to "pass on the faith," but do so in positive and meaningful ways that allow for times of questioning.

## 6. Coping with crisis and times of stress in a positive manner

- Members of healthy families unite to face the challenges of a crisis by drawing on various family strengths, being able to adapt, asking for help and accepting assistance from others. Drawing on spiritual resources, humor and communication, the healthy family maintains a sense of hope and gratefulness, knowing that things will eventually get better. The healthy family expects problems and considers them to be a normal part of life. They admit to and seek help with problems that are beyond their own resources.