**4 Ways Youth Can Strengthen Their Faith**

Are you a young person wondering how you could connect more with your faith? It might seem hard to live by [Catholic values](https://ccsww.org/about-us/catholic-social-teaching/) like care for creation, dignity of life, and family in a world that seems to be ever increasing in opposition towards them. COVID-19 has specifically highlighted gaps in our society and faith communities, illuminating an extensive need for rapid adaptation to ensure access to things that support and sustain our faith.

Considering this, here are 4 ideas to help us strengthen our faith:

**1. Examine yourself and your relationships**

We are what we do. Therefore, it is important to look at our patterns and habits. In what situations are we best able to use our virtues? When do we resort to our vices and give into temptation? Are the people you hang out with most helping you to become the person you ultimately want to be? This is not to say we should not hang around with people who have differing backgrounds and beliefs from us, because that is incredibly valuable. However, we must keep in mind that true friends are people who you feel free to completely be yourself around and who respect your values and beliefs.

**2. Engage with the sacraments**

The sacraments are a gift from God that ultimately bring us closer to Him. They are a visible sign of His presence on Earth that actively make our lives Holy. Catholics have 7 sacraments: Baptism, Chrismation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, Holy Orders, and the two I will be emphasizing today – Reconciliation and the Eucharist. God loves us so deeply that he sacrificed His Son to save us from our sins. However, God does not force His never ending unconditional love upon us, and instead gives us the free will to choose to accept and reciprocate it. Due to the fall, we can often come up short in this respect and ultimately put space between ourselves and God. Therefore, Reconciliation, where we confess our sins to God, is an incredible gift in repairing our relationship. The Eucharist is an incredibly intimate way to come closer to God as well. Receiving the Eucharist allows us to create a deep spiritual, physical and emotional bond with Him, as well as every other human being who has also received Him. We are all “Brothers and Sisters in Christ” because we literally all have Jesus’ body within our very bodies and hearts.

**3. Love the Church, in its beauty and its brokenness**

The Church is an institution that has been given to us by God. It is a reflection of The Holy Trinity, a community of persons coming together. The Church is also The Body of Christ, the hands and feet doing Christ’s work on Earth, and is therefore a beautiful mystery. However, the Church as a whole is made up of people who are broken and fallible. Youth who desire to see authenticity in the Church can become frustrated and disheartened when contentious issues arise. What we all must remember is that as members of the church, we all remain connected to each other in our past, present, and future, and it is our responsibility to be personally accountable as members of the church when it comes to our own actions in our communities and throughout the world. When we continually work to better ourselves individually, we strengthen the greater community of faithful as well. By transforming ourselves, we transform the Church.

**4. Love Jesus**

Ultimately, when it comes to strengthening your faith, I urge you to focus on Jesus. He is both fully God and fully human, a person who has all consuming love for you (yes, you!). When you are at your best, and when you are at your worse, God is always there supporting you along the way. God’s invitation to relationship with you is always present, all you have to do is open your heart and say yes. The Bible is a love story, and your life is beautiful chapter that will continue this love through all of time. I pray that you, dear reader, make it an epic one.