



CHURCH OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA

980 PARK AVENUE AT 84TH STREET • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10028 • (212) 288-3588

WWW.STIGNATIUSLOYOLA.ORG

“ B u i l d i n g a C o m m u n i t y o f D i s c i p l e s ”

September 21, 2008

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FAMILY DAY

There is always something special that happens when families gather around the dinner table together. From starting out your meal by saying grace, to sharing stories, laughs and even dessert with your kids, the bonds formed during dinnertime are truly a blessing!

Family Day
A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children

9-22-08

**Dinner
Makes a
Difference!**

[www.CASA
FamilyDay.org](http://www.CASAFamilyDay.org)



No wonder the Bible is filled with examples of families sharing meals together. Whether it was a Passover feast, the wedding banquet in Cana or the special meal prepared to welcome home the wayward son in the parable of the Prodigal son, the Bible makes it clear that food plus family equals love and that Dinner Makes A Difference!.

Even if your family dinners consist of battling with fussy eaters or asking 20 questions to figure out how your kid's day was at school, dinnertime is an important time in your home. During dinner you can teach your kids valuable life lessons and you can communicate your views on important topics like the dangers of smoking, drinking, using illegal drugs or abusing prescription drugs.

While schedules and commitments may make it increasingly difficult for your family to share this daily time together, the effort you put into having frequent family dinners is well worth it especially when you consider all of the benefits.

Research by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University consistently finds that the more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

CASA's *The Importance of Family Dinners IV* report found that, compared to teens who have five to seven family dinners a week, those who dine with their families fewer than three nights a week are:

- Three and a half times likelier to have abused prescription drugs.
- Three times likelier to have tried marijuana.
- More than two and a half times likelier to have tried cigarettes.
- One and a half times likelier to have tried alcohol.

To help inform parents that Dinner Makes a Difference CASA launched *Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children*™ in 2001. *Family Day* is a national initiative to remind parents that what your kids really want at the dinner table is YOU! The eighth annual *Family Day* will be celebrated nationwide on Monday, September 22nd.

This year CASA has introduced the *Family Day* STAR Pledge on its website www.CASAFamilyDay.org to encourage parents all across the country to take back their seats at the dinner table. To become a *Family Day* STAR simply click on the pledge button on the website. As a *Family Day* STAR you commit to:

S- Spend time with my kids by having dinner together

T- Talk to them about their friends, interests and the dangers of drugs and alcohol

A- Answer their questions and listen to what they say

R- Recognize that I have the power to help keep my kids substance-free!

Another way you can celebrate *Family Day* in your home is by downloading the free Family Dinner Kit from www.CASAFamilyDay.org. The Kit includes placemats and menu cards your kids can decorate, recipes and conversation starter questions to use during your meals.

Non-profit groups, elected officials and corporations will all be celebrating *Family Day*. *Family Day* Media Partner TV Land will air back to back episodes of “The Andy Griffith Show,” starting at 6:00pm E.T./P.T on *Family Day*. TV Land dedicates this time to encourage and remind families of the importance of time spent dining together.

First Lady Maria Shriver, Honorary Chair of *Family Day* in California and First Lady Nancy Freudenthal, Honorary Chair of *Family Day* in Wyoming, will be spearheading celebrations in their respective states. Major League Baseball teams including the Boston Red Sox and the Arizona Diamondbacks will be celebrating *Family Day* in their stadiums. Landmarks including Niagara Falls will once again light up in blue and red on *Family Day*.

This year 57 Catholic archdioceses and dioceses will be spreading the word about *Family Day* through their newsletters, websites and mailings.

The family at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, the only church in the nation to celebrate Family Day for eight consecutive years, will be distributing Family Day material in the narthex of the church. Saint Ignatius Loyola Grammar School will also be distributing Family Day materials.



The next time you find your family grabbing dinner on the go night after night or eating while being glued to the television, take a moment to reflect on what you are missing.

One of the most sacred times in your home can be the family dinner hour. Jesus knew the value of sharing meals with loved ones. In fact, before he went to the cross he broke bread with his disciples during the Last Supper. We should follow Jesus' example and make the time to eat regularly with our loved ones.



While there are no silver bullets – substance abuse can strike any family regardless of ethnicity, affluence, age or gender – the parental engagement fostered at the dinner table can be a simple, effective way to help keep your kids healthy and substance free. So have dinner with your family on *Family Day* and every day!

To learn more about *Family Day*, visit www.CASAFamilyDay.org.

Joseph A. Califano, Jr., Chairman and President

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, and former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare