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## Say It on Repeat: I Am Going to Keep My Calm!

By Caitlin Bootsma

There's no doubt, most of the world is in the middle of the storm. And on top of concerns about money, illness, and the future, many of us are home with kids, without help, for the foreseeable future.

It's quite possible that there are moments parents and caring adults feel like disproportionately reacting in anger to whatever the kids are up to. If you are reacting this way, you're not alone.

Yet, remembering that your kids are not responsible for the many stressors in our lives at the moment and are probably going through quite the adjustment themselves, here are a few suggestions to try to keep your calm and even grow as a parent during this time:



- **Delay your response:** Next time your child crosses the line, if you feel too angry in the moment, let them know you'll talk to them about it later and take some time to calm down.
- **Phone a friend:** The lack of community right now is difficult, but don't forget if you're navigating some difficult parenting issues that you can still reach out for a listening ear or guidance from a friend, parent, mentor, or even [online counseling](#).
- **Be proactive about your child's emotional growth:** Knowing that this may be a challenging time for them as well, consider ways that you can help your children express their feelings and grow in understanding of themselves. Consider resources such as the [Big Life Journal](#) or [Dr. Bottaro's Catholic Mindfulness](#) material.

- **Take time for yourself:** There is such a thing as too much togetherness. Plan regular alone time to exercise, pray, or pursue a hobby to "fill your tank" so that you're more prepared to deal with kids' behavior.
- **Designate purposeful time together:** Sure, you're already spending a lot of time in the same space. Yet, finding something you both enjoy doing together (e.g. biking, cooking, playing board games, drawing) can be a way to reset tension in your relationship.
- **Pray together:** Take the opportunity of being home together to pray several times per day. This can also be a time to share with one another.
- **Forgive one another:** Set an example of forgiveness. Forgive your kids when they are driving you crazy and ask them to forgive you if you lose your temper. In addition, encourage siblings to forgive one another. These can be real moments of grace!

Whether one is a parent or not, we all know that being a stalwart figure in the life of a child has both "up" and "down" moments. While this may be an extremely trying time, it can also be one of tremendous growth—for you, and the kids in your immediate or distant care!

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## What is Your Opinion?

Is there ever a time where you have needed to exhibit great courage with regard to children?

- Yes, when caring for them, near or afar, and showing the right example
- Yes, in order to protect them
- Yes, definitely both of the above options
- Maybe, but not that I can readily recall
- No, never

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