

# Family recipe includes social justice

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the fifth article in a series on raising your children in the faith.

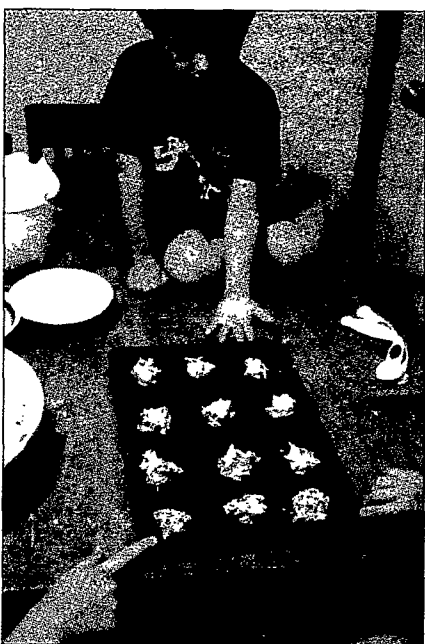
ROCHESTER — Three of Brigit Hurley's four children, ages 1 to 9, accompanied her to Blessed Sacrament Church on July 7. The children carried several batches of cookies they had baked with their mother, along with a budding sense of social justice.

The church's supper program serves 80 to 100 meals to the neighborhood's low-income residents three nights a week during the summer and five nights a week the rest of the year, according to Mary Jo Lightholder, director. Hurley, a parishioner of St. Bridget's Church, came to Blessed Sacrament along with her friends Catherine Burke and Amy Durkee-Pollock, who also brought their young children. The trio's families have cooperated in the past on such Christian social-justice activities as helping refugees resettle in the area, Hurley said.

Hurley said her children are often puzzled by the presence of men on the streets who carry signs that say they're hungry. A trip to the supper program helped her children learn the stories behind the signs.

"It was important for us to bring them here so that they could see that the people who come here are moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas," said Hurley as her children helped set up the cookie trays.

At one point, several of the women's children surrounded a friendly elderly lady who had come for dinner and who guessed their



Lella Navidi/Catholic Courier

With the help of his siblings, 6-year-old David Young finishes preparing a tray of cookies to be placed in the oven July 6.

ages. Later — although one of the children noted that they baked the cookies in hopes of getting to eat them — Hurley's 9-year-old son, Joey, said he understood the real reason they were at the supper program.

"We can help out people that don't have their own homes and can't get their own food," Joey said.

Hurley works with parishes on social-justice and advocacy issues through her position as parish social ministry coordinator for Catholic Family Center. She said she's trying to impart the Catholic Church's social-justice teachings to her children

## Parenting

as well. Busy parents can do simple things to teach their children about social-justice issues, such as asking them to bake cookies for a supper program like Blessed Sacrament's, Hurley said.

Bringing her children to the supper program also showed them that "they can be part of the solution" to hunger, Hurley said. She added that her family has donated goods to food pantries and soup kitchens, and when her children visit them, they have been delighted to discover "our pasta" and "our tomatoes."

In addition to such activities, Hurley said Catholic parents can do a

number of things to give their children a sense of Catholic social justice. For example, she said her family won't purchase sneakers made by Nike, since the corporation has been criticized by labor advocates for the way it treats its Third World manufacturing labor force.

"I think sometimes we pass on our values just by avoiding certain things," she said.

Parents should also spend time talking about social-justice issues with children, Hurley added.

"Hang quotes and Scripture verses on the refrigerator," she said. "Read (them) biographies of people who fought for justice. Look in the daily paper for examples of heroes. Ask often, 'What would Jesus do?' and read the Bible to find out."



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