



Spirituality, Faith And Religion

by Father Steven E. Boes

(NAPSA)—Recently, I got to do something very special. I said the opening prayer at a session of the United States House of Representatives. It was a wonderful experience, one I won't forget.



Father Boes

As I was writing the prayer, I thought about the powerful roles spirituality, faith and religion play in our country and at Boys Town. We tend to lump these three words together and use them interchangeably, but they are different in both subtle and profound ways.

How we explain it to our kids is that spirituality involves your will. That is, you choose to act a certain way based on your beliefs. Some of our kids struggle with their beliefs. They've had only negative influences to help them form their beliefs and as a result, for instance, they have a hard time telling right from wrong. You can be spiritual about lots of things—including God.

When you have faith, it means you have an intellectual relationship with someone or something that is strong enough to earn your

full trust. Faith moves us closer to God, who's always there for us. Getting children to trust again and have faith is a powerful way to change behaviors and begin the process of bringing God into their everyday lives.

The habits you form in daily life demonstrate to the world that you have faith in God. This is religion, and it's the toughest one for us. It's the practice of our faith—praying each day, going to church, putting others first. These habits are important because they can help us through rough times. We encourage our kids at Boys Town to practice their faith, whatever that faith may be, so they can be resilient when they face life's challenges and trust that God is always by their side.

Take the time to get back to religion. Take your family to church, pray before a meal. Sharing these habits with your kids will give them and your family powerful ways to exercise their faith, grow their spirituality and experience the resiliency only God can provide.

• *Father Boes is president and national executive director of Boys Town, which has been saving children and healing families for more than 90 years. He offers more good advice at www.boystown.org.*