

# ICD Advisory

Volume 1, Issue 1

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## PRIMACY OF PURPOSE

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As ICD’s Advisory year begins, the students will be introduced to their Purpose:

- To know God completely and fiercely, and
- to love other people in God’s name.

Whether 12, 40 or 80 years old, this is our Purpose. No matter our career, if the car has a dead battery, or how scheduled our day is, **our first and highest purpose will always be to PATH (Pursue All Things Holy) by loving God completely and fiercely, and loving others in God’s name.**

As a parent, the primary benefactor of you living your Purpose is your child. By way of your daily best efforts, **your Purpose is to love him in God’s name**

**and in God’s way.** The constant devotion, unconditional love, and merciful acceptance you practice literally make God visible and immediately present to him. Simultaneously, your efforts validate the efficacy of living a life that reflect your God-given Purpose. It is your modeling that will teach him the deepest nature of selfless love.

Obviously, you are the game-changer in the evolution of your son or daughter’s faith life.

With God’s grace, your child’s real-life experience of Purpose-in-Action will become the underpinning of every relationship, struggle, and

*“Our first and highest purpose will always be. . . to love God completely and fiercely, and love others in God’s name.”*

accomplishment they experience. Playing soccer is awesome but it’s really awesome when played *with Purpose*. Homework and chores are necessary but become meaningful when done *with Purpose*. Mastering self-control demands daily effort, but it’s possible if the effort is *Purpose-full*.

**Think About It**

In what ways are you most effectively supporting your child’s faith growth?

- \_\_\_ Time
- \_\_\_ Energy
- \_\_\_ Resources
- \_\_\_ Intention
- \_\_\_ Commitment
- \_\_\_ Practice

**Tap Their Potential**

We see our children’s potential before they do. Our calendars confess the time, energy and resources we allocate to their skills and passions. How else can they develop their gifts but with intention, commitment, and practice?

Nurturing our children’s faith is similar:

- It is a gift.
- Time, energy, and resources create space for its growth.
- With intention, commitment, and practice it can thrive.

**Set A Goal**

Choose an area to concentrate on for two weeks. Add a daily reminder on your phone.

- \_\_\_ Time
- \_\_\_ Energy
- \_\_\_ Resources
- \_\_\_ Intention
- \_\_\_ Commitment
- \_\_\_ Practice

# Working with the Raw Material

## Brain Basics

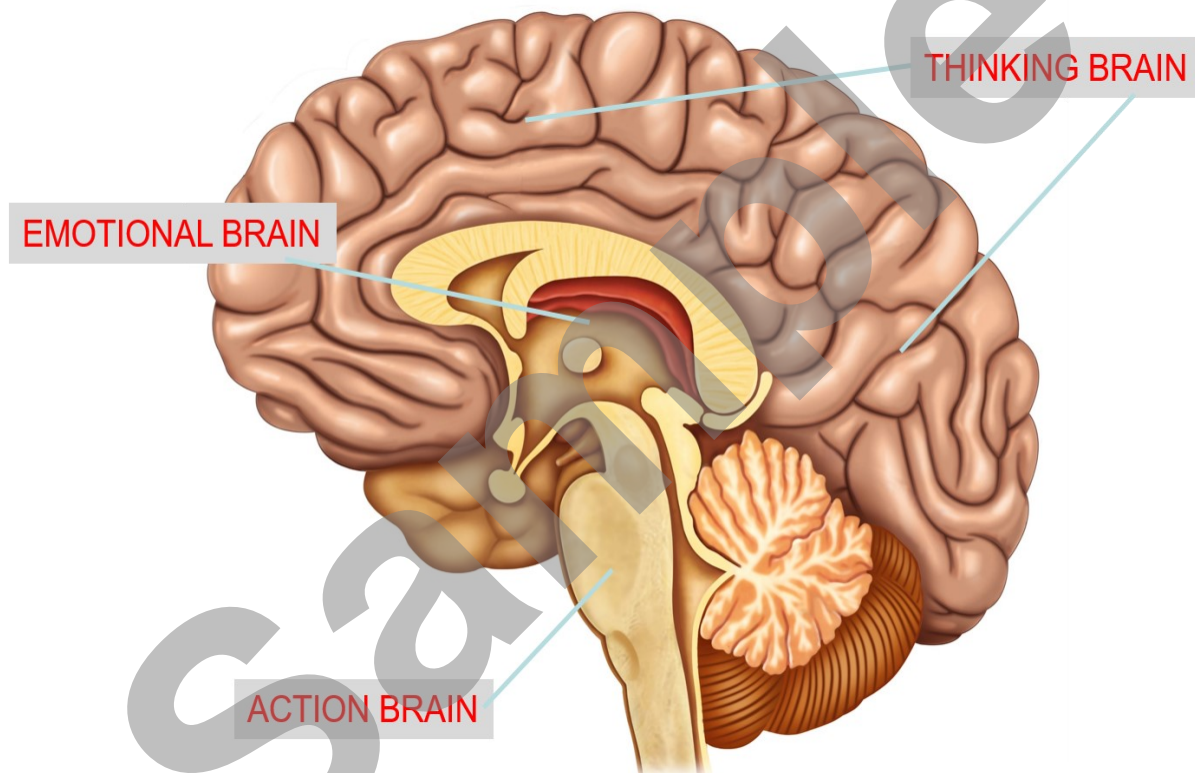
**The Action Brain** (the brain stem) is the most primitive area of the human brain. It regulates breathing, digestion, and heartbeat. We can exhibit no meaningful control over the action brain.

**The Emotional Brain** (the limbic system) developed next. Tucked deep within the brain, it is governed by the amygdala, a tiny organ which stamps an emotional memory

to our various experiences, triggering actions and reactions in response to stimuli. These reactions were of great benefit to prehistoric humans confronted by woolly mammoths, erupting volcanoes, and threatening weather.

**The Thinking Brain** (cerebral cortex) is the largest and most advanced section of the human brain. It developed over many millennia as

humans learned to anticipate, problem solve and exert control over environmental factors. Dominated by the pre-frontal cortex (directly behind the forehead) it is the seat of all higher thinking skills: reasoning, planning, abstract thinking, self-control, and reflection. **Building effective neural connections between the thinking and emotional brain is a primary task of adolescence.**



### Know Their Task. Know Yours.

Your teen is undergoing a major shift in brain function that began at about age 11. While the action and emotional brains remained unchanged, a serious overproduction of “gray matter” (the thinking brain) occurred.

This is GOOD NEWS!! The resulting superabundance of thinking matter

provides your teen with the raw material needed for learning and mastering the higher order thinking skills needed to harness and direct the powerful emotional brain. **Recognizing, understanding and guiding emotion will be an avenue to self-identity, independence, and lived morality.** The pruning and refining of gray matter continues through young adulthood. God has appointed YOU as your

*“Parenting is the arena in which you practice your Purpose.”*

child’s primary guide for this task. Parenting is the arena in which you practice your purpose of loving God, fiercely and completely, by loving this child in God’s name.

## Show Up and Hang Out

Pope Francis takes every opportunity he can to encourage Catholics to “encounter and accompany” people exactly where they are. His personal examples of empathy and presence speak even more powerfully to all of us: a pizza party for the homeless, washing the feet of prisoners, setting up a shower station within Vatican City. He truly lives his Purpose.

**QUESTION:** How can you apply Pope Francis’s witness and words within your own home? How can you encounter and accompany your teen?

**ANSWER:** Show up and hang out with your teen *on her own terms*. Temporarily let go of your desire to correct and control and just be with her. Listen to her. Learn about what she is thinking and feeling.

You’ll need to intentionally make time for this. Sure, family life can become super busy and wildly over-scheduled. Yes, most of us juggle multiple balls all day long. If we are serious about our Purpose, we need to take stock and prioritize.

Showing up and hanging out on our teens’ terms is a selfless, other-



focused choice. It is a decision to meet your teen exactly where he is and walk with him right there, bridging the gap between the two of you with self-sacrifice. No phones are invited. No multi-tasking while together. Instead, your child receives the consistent gift of your undivided and non-judgmental attention.

This is the kind of love Jesus practiced when he invited Zacchaeus to dine with him (and probably had Zacchaeus’s favorite meal), chatted with the woman at the well, and lis-

tened to the disillusioned disciples while walking the road to Emmaus.

What might this “Jesus-like” love look like between you and your middle schooler? Perhaps it means you:

- Put down your phone or turn away from the screen when your child speaks, no matter how basic the conversation.
- Set a reminder on your phone to ask about a test or assignment your child is working on.
- Create a tradition based on his interests (watching a favorite show; staying up to date on a comic strip; smoothie Saturdays, etc.)
- Institute “Privates”—an occasional outing with just the two of you to see, learn about, or do something of interest to your child.

Showing up and hanging out are the quintessential Jesus moves. Your family will be different if your schedule and conversations start with Purpose-practicing. Slash anything else, but hold this sacred. Period.

## Pray About It

Pray the Sign of the Cross and then ask Jesus to come and be with you.

Bring to mind a favorite “look” your child gives you. It may be serious, goofy, loving or joyful. The important thing is that it is a *look from your child to you*.

Breathe in and out slowly for a few moments, thinking only of the face of your child.

As you breathe in pray, “For this beautiful gift,” and as you breathe out pray, “I thank you Lord.”

Rest briefly in this peaceful place.

Finally, thank God for always being with you and supporting you in your vocation as a parent.

End with the Sign of the Cross.

*During Advisory, your child will learn and practice different types of prayer forms. Each Advisory Newsletter will offer you a similar opportunity.*

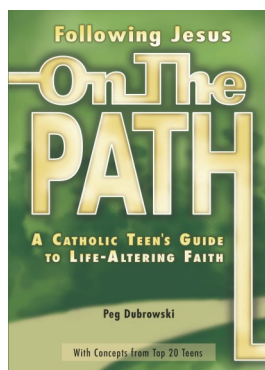
*Carve out 5-10 minutes and find a comfortable, quiet spot. Or read ahead and use your commute time as prayer time.*

## On the PATH Books

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Helping  
teens  
find faith  
that  
matters.



### What's Up in ICD Advisory?

During the month of August and into September, the seventh and eighth graders have been getting to know their advisors and their groups.

**Did you know...**The advisors are discussing Chapter One in *On The Path* in their advisories.

**We're learning...**Our true purpose in life is to love God completely and to be kind to others in His name. We are writing respect agreements in our groups to show what this looks like in Advisory and how we live out our faith in our small groups. Making and keeping these agreements builds trust among the members of the group. This reminds us to practice our virtue of the quarter, which is...Respect.

**We've created...**Banners will be hung in the hallway with our Advisory name, a saint, a virtue, and a motto or scripture that matches our purpose. Our Advisory T-shirts will have a similar design and will be worn on Fridays.

**We're excited about...**Plans are in the works for our Hands of Hope Service Project that will be on Tuesday, November 29. Each advisory will volunteer to do service in the community. Groups will be planning their projects during the month of September. There are opportunities for parents to drive and to chaperone. Stay tuned!

## Between Now and the Next Time

### Tips for Practicing Your Purpose:

1. **Pray, pray, pray.** Every day ask God to protect, guide, and attract your child.

2. **Read** pages 1-19 in *Following Jesus on the PATH*.

3. **Practice "Jesus Love."** In Luke 15, Jesus used three parables to

describe what God's love looks like. Choose one and make it your motto for the rest of September:

- The shepherd who leaves the 99 to seek out the one—*Never give up on her when she strays.*
- The woman who spent a day searching for a lost coin—*Practice uncompromising, patient devotion.*
- The Prodigal Son—Say to your child often, *"There is nothing you could do that would make me stop loving you."*

4. **Show Up and Hang Out.** Identify (Don't know? Ask!), schedule and follow through on two concrete ways to "accompany and encounter" that are built around your son or daughter's interests.

### Next Issue:

- Understanding your child's new thinking style.
- Strategies for guiding neural changes toward Purpose-based choices.
- How to develop family habits that build Purpose-driven character.

*"Your greatest contribution to the Kingdom may not be something you do but someone you raise."*

—Andy Stanley

