

SUPER MARIO



WITH TWO KIDS UNDER 5 IN THE HOUSE MARIO LOPEZ

HOST OF *EXTRA*, ACTOR AND BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF THE MEMOIR, *JUST BETWEEN US* — Is
“LOVING THE CHAOS.”

By Damarys Ocana Perez

You are a devout Catholic. What role does spirituality play in your family life?

We try to go to church as a family every week, sometimes without the baby, because babies will act up. If not, my daughter and I will go every week. They are definitely going to go to Catholic school. It's really important to me that they get a faith-based education.

You credit your parents for your values. Which of their lessons are you passing on to your children?

First and foremost, it's going to be to treat others with respect. Be polite: Manners go a long way. Try to come from a good place. And aside from that, stay focused, and do the right thing.

What's the biggest lesson you have learned about fatherhood?

There are no time-outs, really. Weekends, you think you can catch up on rest, and it's the opposite. It gets busier. It's a different kind of busy!

Your family is blessed in many ways and are more economically privileged than you growing up. How do plan to keep them grounded?

I don't want them to be spoiled. I make sure to communicate, especially with my little girl, how blessed she is — by going to church, Boys & Girls Clubs, to events where kids don't have it so good, where she'll be able to recognize their life, and later be able to help. ■

Watch Mario on *Extra*; also on the cover of *Parents Latina* magazine, and check out his book, *Just Between Us*.

Any upcoming family vaca plans?

We're going to Puerto Vallarta with my sister and her kids. Altogether, it will be seven kids. We've been taking my children (Gia, 4, and Dominic, 21 months) to Mexico every year since they were born. Knowing where their culture and language are from is important, and we still have family there. The kids have these funny passports; we had to hold their heads up for the pictures because they couldn't do it yet.

How are the kids with speaking Spanish?

A lot better than mine when I was that age, because my parents, and our nanny talk to them in Spanish. So they get a lot of it. My daughter understands and speaks it. She actually takes a Spanish class.

What's life like with two kids under five?

My wife (actress/producer Courtney Mazza) and I call our son Wreck-It Ralph, because he destroys everything. He's got a lot of fire in him. My daughter is very dramatic. She was sick recently, and said, “Oh, my god, I'm not going to feel better. My cough is never going to go away!” I told her, “Don't worry, you'll be okay.

