

Parent pages



Resources for Christian parents in the 21st Century

Vol. 7 No. 7 • March 2008

Discipline is Teaching

Your children are your disciples. You are the model of what you want them to grow up to be. If these sentences are a bit scary, they should be.

The answer to that fear is to pray. Pray fervently, pray often, pray with confidence that God stands ready to answer your prayer in ways that you cannot imagine. God loves you and chose you to be the parents of these children. He will gladly support you in the task He has assigned to you.

Here are some of the blessings God will use to answer your prayer for wisdom and guidance:

God will create a community of love and support.

God will help you treat your children with respect and gently, but firmly, hold them responsible for treating you and other family members with equal respect. Your family should show and feel unconditional love for each other at all times.

God will give you honesty.

God will help you be honest about your mistakes. Apologize and accept forgiveness. Explain why you were wrong and what you should have done instead.

God will bless your home.

God will help you provide an environment that encourages your child to obey. Is there a temptation that your child is not mature enough to resist? Remove the temptation.

For older children, take care to watch and help them learn to resist. Know what is going on when you are with your children and when they are at school, child care, or a friend or relative's house. Take advantage of communication opportunities and develop relationships with the families and people who care for your child.

God will bless your family with boundaries.

God will help you to set limits and hold firm to them. Children have a love/hate relationship with limits. They desire the safety and security provided by limits but are in a near-constant state of challenging them as they grow and learn. Some limits do not change; others need to change as your child grows



and matures.

The acts of setting limits, enforcing limits and changing limits should come from you and be accompanied by necessary teaching. Remember, however, that your child is at a different stage of development than you are and therefore does not understand limits in the same way you do.

God will bless your family with trust.

God will help you to show unconditional love. Consistency and courtesy in your words and actions will build a solid level of trust between you and your child.

Trust depends on your child's personality and developmental stage. With infants, we learn whether or not to trust them with small objects. With teenagers, we need to learn whether or not to trust them with large vehicles. Past experiences and past decisions play a big part in developing that trust.

Children grow and learn. Our level of trust needs to grow alongside that physical development.

Pray fervently, pray often, pray with confidence ... God stands ready to answer your prayer in ways you can't imagine.

A Growing Christian Makes the Best Parent!

God will bless you with timing.

God will help you deal with a misbehavior as close to the event as possible. In terms your child can understand, explain what was wrong and what behavior is desired. Children have a habit of misbehaving in public places. They seem to know they have an advantage in such situations. Dealing with misbehavior may garner critical looks but know that there are others standing in silent support.

God will bless you with serenity.

God will help you to stay calm when disciplining your child. Remember that you are modeling desired behaviors all the time. Children learn how to push parent “buttons” as readily as they learn to push sibling “buttons.” We are adults and can learn to ignore the button-pushing. In doing so, we teach a powerful lesson about dealing with disappointment.

When you and your child stay calm, you have better access to the reasoning side of your brains.

God will bless you with guidance.

God will help you to redirect your child to desired behaviors. With very young children, this is how you remove temptation. With older children it is important for modeling successful behaviors. In other words, you do your child no favor by concentrating on what you do *not* want him or her to do. Spend more of your discipline words and actions teaching what you *want* your

children to do.

God will bless you with creativity.

God will give you insight. Just as soon as we adjust to one developmental stage or phase of our children’s lives, they move on to the next one, and we must learn all over again. Add to that truth the fact that each child has a unique personality and we realize we can’t always depend on what worked before.

Be prepared to handle each situation in its own way. If a given consequence is not working, stop doing it. Rethink the situation and ask God to help you find another way to teach your child.

God will bless you with discernment.

God will help you see things from your child’s point of view. The motivation behind each mistake, misbehavior, or bad choice is sin and our sinful nature. This is no less true for our children than it is for us as parents.

There is often an emotion that motivates a child to repeat a behavior. Some children misbehave out of fear or anger. It could be anger over an uncontrollable change in the family; it could be fear of not getting what is needed in terms of love or attention. Fear and anger are not excuses for

misbehavior.

However, if you know what is behind the behavior, you will have more wisdom and discernment in how to address the situation.

“This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ‘I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.’”

Is. 48:17



Raising children of God in this chaotic world is an overwhelming task—a task for which we are no match. Our strongest blessing is the fact that God does not merely charge us with this responsibility, but stands ready to help us in every aspect. God loves your children even more than you do. He wants and knows what is best for them.

God stands ready to help us in every aspect. God loves your children . . . He wants and knows what is best for them.



National Lutheran Schools Week 2008

For Discussion:

- Why is modeling behaviors for children an effective way of teaching? Does it work for adults, too?
- What is hard about modeling? What is easy?
- What are the positive and negative consequences of using modeling as a discipline tool?
- What personal feelings do you have in response to your child’s misbehavior? Do you feel your child’s behavior reflects on you as a parent?

For Further Study:

- *The Lutheran Book of Prayer* (CPH, 2005) has prayers for parents, children and family. You will find this book and other resources for parenting and devotions at www.cph.org.

“Parent Pages” is published by LCMS District and Congregational Services—School Ministry

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 1-800-248-1930; www.lcms.org

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Vol. 7, No. 7 • March 2008