

Forgive . . . and Forget!

Ann Ponath

It was a simple devotion. The title, “Forget About It,” spoke volumes. Our family was gathered around the dinner table. The story was about Kaitlyn and Jack. Little Kaitlyn apparently had trouble leaving Jack’s fresh painting alone, and Jack was very unhappy with her. The writer asked us to consider a time when a brother, sister, or friend made us angry. Our family had an abundance of personal experiences from which to draw. The author went on to observe how easy it is to become angry when someone does something mean to us. Heads around the table nodded in agreement. Then came the hardest part of the lesson: “If you really love someone, you’ll stop being angry and forget about it.”

A Bible reading from 1 Corinthians 13:4,5 reminded us that “love is patient, love is kind. . . . It is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.” We closed with a prayer. *Help me, God, to forgive and forget, to love my friends and not get upset. Amen.*

The seed of God’s Word had been planted. But these were still only words. The real test would come when each of us was called upon to live what we had just read. And only then, when the anger was raging inside, would we realize that forgiving *and forgetting* is something for which we desperately need God’s help.

Forgiveness is an essential ingredient for a healthy family. When sin rears its ugly head, the love of Christ is the only antidote. As he has forgiven us, we forgive one another.

Without forgiveness, bitterness and anger are left to fester. In time they will recycle, only to boil over again in more bitterness and anger. Left unattended, the result is predictable; the inevitable outcome is *hatred*.

When siblings quarrel and never ask one another for pardon, when parents argue and never apologize, the family is frequently left to suffer the consequences. Satan takes great pleasure in every one of those little unforgiven sins. He knows that if he is able to undermine family relationships, he has a good chance of also destroying the faith of individual family members.

Forgiving others is not always as easy as it sounds. In this sinful world, it is hard to forgive the brother who just punched you. It hurts when people sin against us with an unkind word or in mean-spirited conduct. To make matters worse, our sinful pride gets in the way. We may even enjoy holding on to a grudge, nursing our anger, and letting it simmer until scores can be evened. In fact, we are all capable of such behavior, even when the target of our anger is someone we truly love.

We marvel at the great love God has shown us in Jesus! None of us deserves to be the beneficiary of such profound love. He sacrificed his one and only Son for a world of sinners. To withhold forgiveness from others when Jesus shed his own lifeblood to forgive our sins is an insult to God’s grace and mercy.

Scripture has several beautiful stories that demonstrate the importance of forgiveness. King David committed a whole series of sins—lust, adultery, deception, murder.

(Continued on page 2.)

**SIMPLY PUT,
FORGIVENESS IS
ESSENTIAL TO A
HEALTHY FAMILY.**



Illustration by Amanda Haley

(Forgive . . . cont.)

By God's grace, he repented and found comfort in knowing that God had forgiven him.

Joseph's brothers had done some terrible things to Joseph. They even conspired to sell him into slavery. One could certainly imagine why Joseph might seek revenge for all the unjust suffering they caused in his life. When he finally had the opportunity to avenge himself, Joseph forgave his brothers instead and invited them to live in Egypt while a famine ravaged their homeland.

The story of the prodigal son is probably the best known of all Jesus' parables. The son squanders his inheritance—money earned, no doubt, by his father's hard work. The son further disgraces his family's good name and reputation with shameful living. But when the father sees his son returning, he runs to greet him and welcomes

him back into the family without any preconditions. And then the father celebrates by throwing a lavish feast in honor of the son's return.

Lest we forget, in the big picture of Scripture, the same message is pervasive and echoes from virtually every page. We call it the gospel. It is the powerful and moving picture of our loving, heavenly Father, forgiving his wayward creatures and then forgetting that anything ever happened. Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." In response to such overwhelming love, we pray, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."

But do we really mean it? Confession can be a scary, humbling experience. Forgiving others is also hard work.

Consider the alternative. One experienced mother said, "When families don't

forgive one another; they hit, they are angry, they hold grudges, they stop supporting one another, they quit praying for one another, they cease to serve one another. This can lead to a loss of faith. Not forgiving takes away the peace that God wants Christians to have."

Children sometimes have a way of putting such difficult and complex concepts into simple language. In the words of three-year-old Micah, "Forgiveness is Jesus, and that's all we need to know."

Forgiveness is essential for a healthy family.



Ann Ponath lives in Stillwater, Minnesota, with her husband, David, and their four children.

Participate in our online discussion board at www.parentscrosslink.net where we will hold a discussion about forgiving and forgetting.



To add thoughts and continue the discussions about these questions and answers, go to

www.parentscrosslink.net.

Should I send my children to a VBS sponsored by another denomination?

Since most VBS programs are not heavy on doctrine, sending a child to a VBS program sponsored by another denomination might not seem to be a big issue.

Scripture tells us differently. Paul wrote, A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough. A little false teaching contains danger for a soul. Such teaching is often subtle.

Our Lord gave us the Bible to make us wise for salvation. He encourages us to test the spirits, to see whether they are from God. He says, If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. God wants us to cling to the truth of his Word. We are inconsistent regarding our love for the truth when we enroll our children in programs that are sponsored by churches that don't teach God's truth. Satan uses such programs to promote falsehood.

In a world where religious tolerance is increas-

ingly popular, the truth we want to teach our children is the truth that only comes from Jesus; he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

How can I teach my children to give some of their money back to God?

Parents teach the art of giving with their example. Do you think of giving as an exciting opportunity or as a burden? Do you speak about God's promise to bless us when we choose to serve his purposes first?

Children need to understand that money has different purposes. Saving can help secure future plans. But it is also needed for paying monthly bills, buying food and clothing, and providing shelter. Some money can be used for entertainment. Some should be used to help others. Money given to church will help others when the gospel is shared with them through local ministries or in mission programs abroad. Jesus commissioned young and old alike to participate in that work.

Very young children can watch a parent put money in the church collection plate. By age 2 they can place money in the collection themselves. A 6-year-old is able to break a dollar bill down into coins and apportion it for giving, saving, and spending. A 9-year-old appreciates the value of money earned and should be learning that there is a sacrificial element to giving. A 12-year-old can think in terms of percentages. Teens should be making prioritized

decisions about spending. They should approach giving as an act of worship, remembering that our love for God moves us to give him the firstfruits.

How can parents help their children take responsibility for their actions?

Teaching children to take responsibility for their actions is often about having the courage to face painful or difficult situations. Hebrews 12:11 says, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

To begin, all kids need to identify the role conscience plays. An active conscience is an invaluable tool in galvanizing one's sense of responsibility. Taking responsibility often requires some healthy soul-searching. In the face of the truth, kids often realize they have not been behaving in a God-pleasing manner. When a child is unwilling to face the truth, there should be clear consequences. On the other hand, look for opportunities to reinforce the idea that one finds real peace from being truthful with himself or herself and others.

Children also need to be reminded of their motivation for being both responsible and truthful. Such behavior comes as an expression of our love for the Savior, who died on the cross so that all of our sins would be forgiven.



Katrina Brohn

It was a beautiful Saturday morning, but I was feeling sorry for myself. I had to go to work. My husband did not. I was a mommy-to-be. Yet I felt I was missing out. We were adopting and wouldn't know the age or size of our child for several months. So we couldn't buy baby outfits. We couldn't even pick up a pack of diapers. "I just want something for the baby," I cried in my husband's arms.

We decided on a changing table. I knew just what I wanted: a simple, white changing table. My husband priced tables on the Internet while I searched mail-order catalogs. Everything cost more than we could afford.

Then our eyes were opened to a new possibility. Almost overnight garage sale signs had sprung up on nearly every street. Like the first flowers of spring, these signs gave me hope.

As my husband drove me to work, he promised to check out a few sales. I went about my business with a smile. I would have a changing table. I was a mom-in-the-making!

Later that morning my husband drove into my drive-through lane at the bank. "I found a table!" he exclaimed.

"What color is it?"

"It's in rough shape," he continued, ignoring my question. "But it can be cleaned up and repainted."

"What color is it?" I asked again.

"It works great," he said with a grin. "I tried it myself."

My eyebrows rose as I mentally pictured my husband grabbing a nearby baby and diapering it in some woman's driveway. What *had* he been up to?

"What color . . ." I began, "and what do you mean you *tried* it out?"

"It's black and rusty, but I think I can sand the rust off."

"I don't want a black changing table!" I wailed. "Rusty?"

"Well," he admitted, "it isn't exactly a changing table. It's a table saw."

I began to be excited for him and for his first garage sale success. "Send a man out for a changing table, and he comes back with a table saw," I joked with the girls at the bank. Inside my heart ached with disappointment.

Three weeks later, my husband casually mentioned he had stopped by a few garage sales. I cautioned my heart not to hope for too much. "Did you get anything?"

"Open the garage door," he smiled, pointing at the garage door opener.

It's in the garage? I thought. *Another tool.*

There in the middle of the garage stood what looked like a brand-new changing table. It was natural wood—plain, with white shelves. The bottom shelf was missing. But that could be replaced easily.

"Is it what you wanted, Dear?" he asked quietly.

"It's perfect," I whispered, tears flowing.

That garage sale experience taught me a few lessons about material blessings. I learned about patience and trusting God to provide what I need, when I need it. I learned not to base what I buy or when I buy on my emotions but,

rather, on my budget. I also learned not to demand exactly what I want but to be open to other possibilities God might have in mind for me.

God wants us to enjoy our material blessings. He also wants us to be thankful, generous, and content. All three are attitudes that are hard to cultivate in a materialistic world. Here are a few suggestions that have worked in teaching children to value their material things.

- Don't be afraid to say no to a purchase your child wants you to make.
- Demonstrate to your child that it takes time and patience to comparison shop, but it can also be fun. You may decide to check ads or look for bargains at garage sales together.
- Have your child make a *want list*. When a child asks for something, have him add it to his list. A few weeks later he might not want it anymore.
- Teach your child that emotions surrounding the things we might want can lead us to feel sorry for ourselves. When that happens, the focus is on us instead of on serving God and others.
- Have your child work to pay for what she wants. Children will think carefully about purchases when spending their own money. They also tend to take better care of their possessions.
- When your child gets something new, have him donate an old item to charity or sell it at a family garage sale.



Katrina Brohn lives in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, with her husband, James, and their daughter.

Learn more about a live chat with Katrina Brohn and how to help your kids live in a materialistic world. Go to www.parents.crosslink.net for the date and time.

WHAT'S MI from this picture

Why do so many WELS youth drop out of church?

Joel A. Nelson

In some churches it is quietly referred to as the “Wall of Shame.” Your church may also have one. It’s the wall upon which the group photos of each and every confirmation class hangs. Invariably, when people stand and peruse the pictures, this comment can be heard: “Wow, I haven’t seen him/her in church lately.” What’s even sadder, they are frequently talking about the youth confirmed just last year! This is a reality in too many of our churches, and it begs a question: Why are so many WELS youth dropping out of church?

In July 2003 this question was posed at the highest organizational level when the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) passed a resolution mandating that the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD) “research and publish a report on the extent of, and reasons for, teen and young adult losses in our church body.”* The CYD decided to concentrate less on the *extent* of teen and young adult losses (how many) and more on the *reasons* for it (why). As a result, the study took on a more qualitative design, enlisting young people who had actually left the WELS, or those who were considered inactive, to share the reasons for their leaving or their inactivity.

The CYD recognized that participants would be more willing to share their feelings and opinions if an independent research agency conducted the national study. In this way, it was felt that the study’s findings would be more reliable. So a Milwaukee-based research firm was engaged and, with CYD’s input, two online surveys were developed.

One survey studied the views of 14- to 24-year-old “leavers,” as they were labeled in the study. The second survey would examine the views of WELS pastors. A 12-member panel of young people, ages 16 to 24, made up this focus group. The group was an equal mix of *very committed to WELS*, *somewhat committed to WELS*, and *not committed to WELS*. This group was assembled in a live discussion with the researcher. Its purpose was to react to the findings from the two survey groups. Input from the leavers group, the pastors group, and the focus group provided the triangulation necessary to make the findings reliable.

An e-mail invitation to participate was sent to 1,310 WELS pastors along with a link to the online survey for pastors. One hundred sixty-three (12.4%) pastors, representing all WELS districts, completed the survey. These same pastors were also asked to forward an invitation to any former or inactive youth to participate in the study.

The number of leavers who received the pastor contact is unknown, but 91 leavers from across the country chose to participate. Some had attended WELS schools; others had attended public schools. Because the research method was more qualitative and the online surveys asked open-ended questions requiring narrative responses, the number of participants in each group was considered sufficient to provide reliable findings. The data from both online surveys were analyzed, and the findings were used as a basis for the focus group discussion.

It should also be noted that other research projects similar to the “National Study of Youth and Religion” seem to affirm the recommendations presented in the WELS-CYD study. Links to the entire 112-page research report and a 13-page executive summary can be found at www.parentscrosslink.net.

The research agency felt the study findings would be more meaningful to CYD and WELS if they were presented in an “actionable” format. Consequently, the findings were organized into 11 recommendations (see sidebar at right). Many can be wholeheartedly considered. Some must be viewed more carefully as they are examined in the light of God’s Word. All, however, serve as a valuable tool for further reflection, discussion, evaluation, and improvement. And that process has direction-setting potential for WELS, local congregations, parents, and young people.

So far, as you have been reading this article, you may have been wondering, What does all this have to do with me?

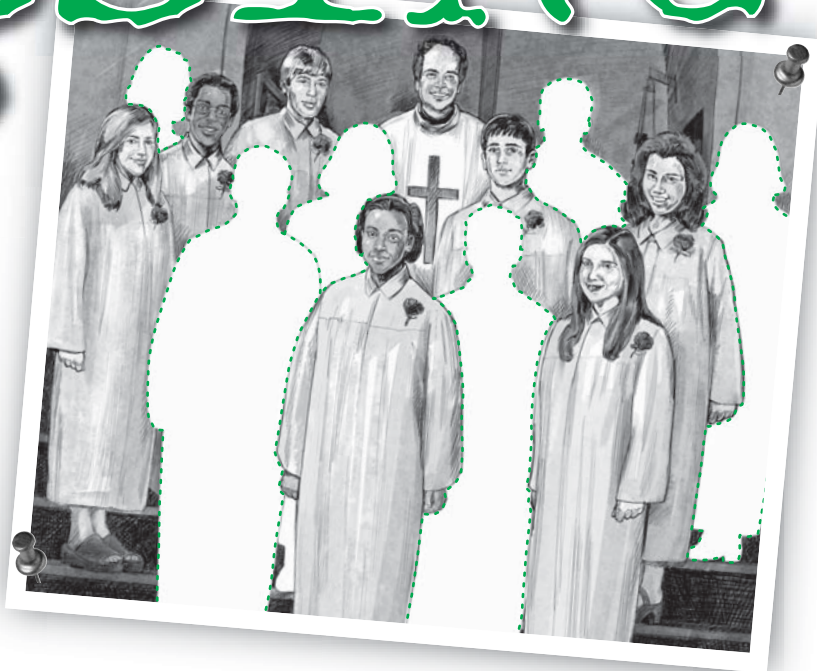
That’s an excellent question. Here are some answers to think about:

As a parent, you are very interested in your child’s future. As a Christian parent, you are even more interested in your child’s future with Jesus. The WELS-CYD research study can serve as a reminder to you about the tremendous influence you have on your child when it comes to spiritual things. In the first recommendation, the report noted that parents “leading through example in areas such as church attendance, sharing God’s Word at home, enrolling children in Sunday school, Bible study, and various youth activities generally appears to correlate with a stronger WELS commitment [in their children].”* It is especially noteworthy that pastors, *leavers*, and the focus group members all independently agreed that parents have more influence than any other factor in a child’s spiritual development.

* *Proceedings*, p. 64, Resolution No. 4:5b.

SSING

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Research Recommendations

Some editing was done for the sake of clarity.

1. WELS [at all levels] needs to lobby parents more aggressively, communicating the critical role they play in their children's future WELS relationship.
2. WELS pastors and congregation leaders need to better tune in to the needs and interests of their young adult members.
3. Place a greater emphasis on youth groups which appear to be losing their effectiveness and meaning.
4. Reduce the degree of repetitiveness in worship services and consider some music variation.
5. Related to #4 above, evaluate opportunities/potential to incorporate some contemporary aspects into religious services.
6. Efforts directed at having children and young adults attend Lutheran schools, particularly Lutheran elementary schools (LES), need to be continued and perhaps stepped up.
7. [In ways that do not compromise biblical doctrine] pastors and other adult leaders need to [consider how our teaching about other denominations and women may be impacting youth negatively.]
8. WELS leadership [at all levels] needs to demonstrate more respect [for youth] and introduce more positive roles/participation opportunities for young adults. The current feeling that "young adults don't count" needs to be reversed.
9. The largest resource allocation toward retaining these young adults should focus/concentrate on males age 16 or older.
10. Increase efforts directed at those leaving for [or] away at college.
11. The post-high school group that is not in college (many of whom may have had abbreviated college experiences or no college experience) appear particularly vulnerable and require a targeted [ministry] effort.

Knowing the study findings can move you to engage your own family members in a discussion about them. How would your children feel about this study and the things it has revealed? What would they like to see happen at home? What might they like to see happen in their congregation and synod relative to youth ministry? How do you feel about the study findings? What would you like to see happen at the local and church levels? How might the study findings move you to become more actively engaged in your study of God's Word at home. And how might these findings cause you to become more involved in the ministry of your congregation and synod?

The study findings can also serve as a catalyst for your own congregation's evaluation of its ministry to youth. And your knowledge of the findings can make you an advocate for positive change. There is an old adage that says if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. How can you, guided by God's Word and with the new insights you have gleaned from this study, help your congregation build stronger connections to its youth?

The most exciting outcome of this research is the healthy discussion it can generate and the potential for driving us all deeper into a study of God's Word to learn what may change, what must change, and what must not change. Wouldn't it be awesome if God used our discussion and Bible study to turn "Walls of Shame" into "Halls of Faith."



Dr. Joel Nelson is the administrator of the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship.

Join Dr. Nelson and members of the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship for a live chat that will discuss this study. Go to www.parentscrosslink.net for chat details. You can also participate in discussion boards that will consider several of the study recommendations.

Viewpoint

The “Safe” Choice

The billboard caught my eye: Safe for the whole family—an advertisement for a Christian radio station. What a great ad! In our world of terrorism, car bombs, and drive-by shootings, we’re all looking for things that will be safe for our families. But how many are going to tune in to that Christian station believing that they’re making a safe choice?

As the mom of four, I make daily choices for my kids. “No, the food coloring in that cereal is not good for you.” “Sweetie, you can’t wear sandals outside; it’s snowing.”

The Bible encourages Christian parents to “train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6). So I also make spiritual choices for my children. I prayed for my unborn children. Each new baby was baptized. We spend time each week in God’s house. We try to share a family devotion each night. All choices.

Some parents choose to listen to Christian radio. I don’t. The message of Christian radio is not always the message of the Bible.

My radio-listening time is usually while driving, when my attentions are divided. I am not always able to listen closely. If we’re listening to a secular station and a song promotes infidelity or uses godless language, I turn it off. But a subtle doctrinal error requires more attention. (How does one explain *conversion* to a four-year-old at 50 miles-per-hour?)

I cannot control what goes on in my children’s minds, but I can filter what goes into their ears.

I cannot control what goes on in my children’s minds, but I can filter what goes into their ears. Before they have to decipher the subtle doctrinal errors hidden beneath the guise of “safe for the whole family,” I want to guide them to the Bible. I want them to know

that God chose us and sent Jesus to take our sins away because he loves us. I want them to be like the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was true (Acts 17:11). Then, when my kids hear songs on the radio, they will be able to discern for themselves.

Parenting is a daily struggle to make the right choices—choices that will keep our children safe. Knowing how dangerous it is to be exposed to subtle false doctrine, I choose to not listen to the claim of safe for the whole family. It’s a decision that is safe for my family.



Pam Holz lives in Appleton, Wisconsin, with her husband, Kent, and four children.

Join us online at www.parentscrosslink.net for a discussion board conversation about the choices Christian parents are called upon to make daily on behalf of their children.

Pam Holz

our family MATTERS

Summer Afternoons

Dawn Aswege

The lazy days of summer are here, but they aren’t always so tranquil. Vacation time often means sports camps, game schedules, weekends at the lake, and family vacations. Before filling your summer calendar, consider some family service opportunities. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Share a storybook or songs with the children at your local pediatric unit.

Volunteer as a counselor, cook, or craft leader at a local youth camp.

Get to know your neighbors. Spend time talking about important things.

Sign up for a week or two of cleaning or lawn maintenance at church.

Assist with a summer reading program at the library.

Volunteer for a community cleanup project.

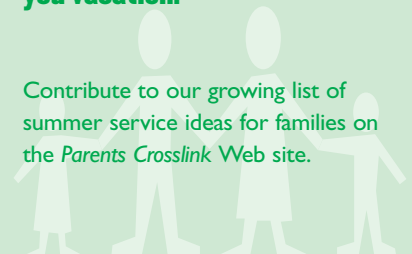
Help with your church’s VBS outreach or canvassing.

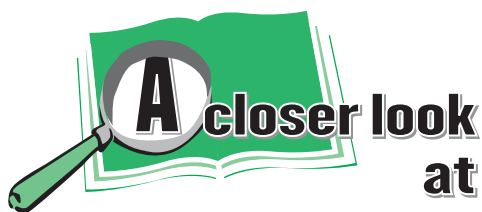
Check out the nonprofit agencies in your community and volunteer to help.

Schedule some weekly visits with one of your church’s shut-ins.

Give a day or two of service to the congregation where you vacation.

Contribute to our growing list of summer service ideas for families on the *Parents Crosslink* Web site.





Andrea Indahl

DAVID & NATHAN

The compelling story of David and Bathsheba has everything: glamour, intrigue, romance, murder. But for Christian parents, the confrontation between David and Nathan contains a powerful message about using God's law to confront sin and then reassuring the sinner with the good news of God's loving forgiveness.

It was the kind of heat that drives men to insanity. Uneasy and irritable, Israel's king stepped onto the roof of his palace. The stifling heat made it impossible for him to sleep. The open-air space adjacent to his apartment towered over the houses below. His eyes drifted to a neighboring rooftop where a beautiful, young woman bathed in a refreshing pool. David could not take his eyes off her. Oh, he knew better; God's law forbade lust and everything that follows in its wake. But David was the king. He had power and influence. He did whatever he willed. And he willed to have this beauty as his own—at least for one night.

Bathsheba was flattered. When she arrived at the king's palace, she was dressed in a seductive, white gown. The material sculpted her body perfectly, revealing its sensual contours.

When David saw Bathsheba in his private chamber, he realized she was even more beautiful than he remembered. Their eyes locked. A tentative embrace led, inevitably, to a secret night of passion.

In the days that followed Bathsheba tried to pretend that life went on as usual. But soon there was damning evidence of her dalliance with the king. She was pregnant. And the child growing inside of her could only be David's baby. She sent word to inform the king.

The news was devastating. David's first concern was for himself, and the line of thinking that he followed could hardly be considered honorable. It was aimed at covering up the sin he had committed with another man's wife.

David learned that Bathsheba was married to Uriah, a ranking military

officer. David's plan was to arrange things so that Uriah and Bathsheba could spend time together. In this way Uriah might be led to believe that he was the child's father. The plot failed. In frustration, David then issued an order that put Uriah into a battle position, guaranteeing his death. By any definition, David's order amounted to cold, calculated homicide.

Enter the Lord God . . . and his prophet Nathan.

Nathan frequently ministered to the king. He was God's choice for confronting David with his sins. The task would require an epic measure of courage. Regal arrogance had replaced the humility of David's youth as a shepherd boy. But God would provide the words capable of slashing through a proud conscience and bringing the king to his knees in repentance.

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The majestic architecture of the palace made Nathan feel small and insignificant. When he arrived, the palace guards escorted him inside and told the king that God's prophet wished to appear before the royal throne.

Face-to-face with his king, Nathan narrated a story about two men—one who had great wealth and the other who had very few material blessings. In his story, the wealthy man owned many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. The

poor man had but one little lamb to call his own. Oh, how the poor man adored that lamb! And how he cared for her! She ate from his table, drank from his cup, and even slept in his arms.

One day the rich man wanted to impress some guests that he was entertaining. He planned an elaborate banquet. Rather than choosing a lamb from his own flocks, he instead seized the little lamb from the poor man's home. Then he had the lamb slaughtered, roasted its meat, and served it to his guests.

David was enraged and at once judged the selfish, rich man: "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die!"

Nathan looked directly into David's eyes. "You are the man," he whispered. "Now listen to what the Lord God has to say: 'I anointed you king over Israel and delivered you from Saul. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why have you despised me by doing what is evil?'"

Crushed by the weight of his sin, David fell to his knees confessing, "I have sinned against the Lord." With a penitent heart, he turned to the Lord for mercy. And God forgave him. But not without consequence. The child that was born to David and Bathsheba died. Nathan had said this would happen. The baby's death caused much grief for David and his household. But this event also served as a lasting reminder of God's mercy. In spite of his great loss, David was able to see God's chastisement as a sign of his love.



Andrea Indahl lives in Omaha, Nebraska, with her husband, Scott, and their three children.

Learn how the story of David and Bathsheba applies to your life at our [Parents Crosslink Web site](#).



SUMMER READING

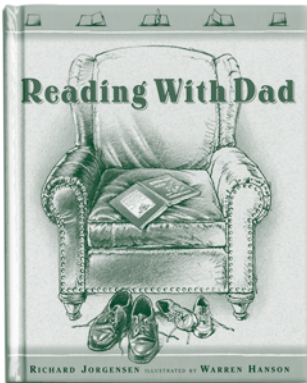
“Reading with Dad”

Written by Richard Jorgensen and illustrated by Warren Hanson

“We’re there in the photo that hangs on the wall.” In a charming story of passing on the love of reading, Jorgensen and Hanson have collaborated to create a keepsake. In gentle rhyme this book presents a multigenerational story of the benefits of reading to children. The

illustrations are spare—just enough to help you feel the moment. If you have ever thought you needed extra incentive to read to your children, this book will

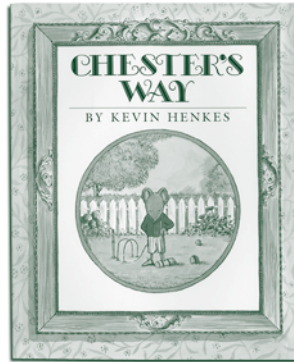
remind you why we take the time or make the time to read to them. If you had a special someone who left you with memories of reading, you might consider sending them a copy.



“Chester’s Way”

Written by Kevin Henkes

“Chester and Wilson, Wilson and Chester.” These two best friends have always done everything the same and everything together. That’s the way it always was in the past, until a new kid moves into the neighborhood. This story is a beautiful example of how making new friends doesn’t have to wreck old friendships. Kevin Henkes gently demonstrates how change can be a good thing. He also shows that friends don’t have to be identical to get along. Fun mice illustrations make the book



child friendly, and the ideas of friendships and change are nonthreatening. Children will get the idea about being nice to the new kid in the neighborhood without parental preaching.

“Mrs. Spitzer’s Garden”

Written by Edith Pattou and illustrated by Tricia Tusa

Here’s a tender story that offers a great perspective on what school should be all about. This book shows how a teacher lovingly tends her “garden” every year, nurturing each individual plant with special care as she recognizes its needs. By the end of the year each plant has grown, and she lets them go, only to look forward to the next year’s harvest. This is a book that encourages its reader to recognize the beauty in each individual and to look for opportunities to help one another grow. Colorful watercolor illustrations tell the story of the garden, with the text nudging the reader to a more complete understanding of the teaching-learning process.



Share a good children’s book online by going to www.parentscrosslink.net.

Cartoon by Ed Koehler



Parents Crosslink

DEAR READER,

Today’s parents learn from each other, sharing ideas and encouraging one another to meet the daily challenges of living in an increasingly godless society. In the context of the gospel, this is a very powerful dynamic. *Parents Crosslink* (PCL) is a response to the demand for an interactive approach to assisting parents with a biblical view of family. Please join our ongoing conversation about Christian parenting at the PCL Web site located at www.parentscrosslink.net.

Kenneth Kremer, PCL Editor

www.parentscrosslink.net

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