

SUMMER 2007 Parents & Crosslink

Summer is for . . .

David Scharf

Ah, summer's finally here! Time to take a deep breath, kick back, and relax. Finally, a chance to put away schedules, obligations, and the endless trips to and from school. For kids it's a time to break from the routine, play kick-the-can in the driveway until the streetlights come on, drape a raggedy quilt over Mom's clothesline for a makeshift tent, lie around in the backyard dreaming about what they want to be someday, and conjure images from the shapes God makes in the clouds . . .

Not So Relaxing!

Yeah, right! Maybe when you were a kid! For most of us summer represents a change in routine but not a break from schedules. After all, there's soccer practice, piano lessons, baseball under the lights, summer camps, ballet, dance, swimming lessons, early football practice, basketball camps, hockey—yes, hockey, even in the summer! Is your chest tightening up and the air being sucked out of your lungs just thinking about what lies ahead? Why do we do this to ourselves?

Take a deep breath. It'll be okay. Let's think about it. What drives the urge to have our kids involved in so many scheduled activities? Why do we need to keep them so busy?

Well, for starters, we want our kids to experience and learn all they can. We want them to succeed. Nowadays sport camp is almost a prerequisite to playing a sport in many of the larger high school programs. If you want your child to participate in organized sports, you need to make use of the summer programs to hone their skills. The same is true for several other areas of special interest. Band programs, for example. Some parents see these summer activi-

ties as an inexpensive form of child care, a way to replace the regular child care called *school*. Some parents feel like failures if their kids don't succeed. Some may just want to keep up with the Joneses—"Hey, everybody else is doing it." Some parents fear their children will get bored.

No one can see into your heart to know what your motive is. You are the only one who can answer the question. The rationale is probably different for every individual. And the Bible says we are not to judge one another in this regard. But the question still lingers: *How much is too much?*

What Does God Say?

First, let's ask the question that every Christian parent needs to ask: "What does God say about it?" Proverbs 22:6 urges parents, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Summertime schedules should include spiritual training.

A very scheduled and busy woman flew from one end of the house to the other with hurricane force. She had to get everything just right. An honored guest was having dinner with the family. Things needed to be ready. The woman's name was Martha. Jesus observed that she was "worried and upset" about many things (Luke 10:41). But only one thing was important. Her sister, Mary, chose that one important thing. She was at her Savior's feet, listening. Mary was being trained in a spiritual way that pleased God. Not a lot of structure. No hectic schedules. No fear of failure. Just Jesus.

This is the attitude we want our kids to have for life. In a long list of essentials for life, it isn't so important that they have the ability to hit a curveball or be able to play the great piano works of

Franz Liszt. But, no matter what, we want our kids to know that they belong to Jesus, that he loves them very much.

Time Is of the Essence!

So how much structured activity is too much? If you would sooner skip a family devotion than miss a scheduled sports practice—then, *Martha*, slow down and relax. If the thought of missing a game is like imagining what the end of the world is going to be like—then, *Martha*, slow down and relax. If you'd sooner holler from the stands than whisper the wonders of God in your child's ear—then, *Martha*, slow down and relax.

How do you do this? It takes practice and time—especially time spent with your child. As a veteran teacher once told me, "For kids, love is spelled T-I-M-E" When you slow down and take time with your child, you will discover many new opportunities to teach your son or daughter things that are important. Stuff about relationships

**KIDS NEED FREE
TIME IN SUMMER
TO PONDER THE
WONDERS OF LIFE.**

(Continued on page 2.)



Illustration from Shutterstock



(Summer is for . . . cont.)

and appreciation for the many gifts that come from God. You will be able to help your child understand how both failures and successes can be reflections of Jesus' love.

God does not outline how parents should structure each activity in their child's life. We are free to exercise our wisdom in making such choices. But he has made it clear that he wants the truth of his Word to be central in our lives, and in the lives of our children: "Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie

down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 11:19,20).

No matter how jam-packed or laid-back you decide your family's summer schedule should be, make time to be together with your kids. And while you're at it, make sure they have some free time just to ponder for themselves the wonders of life as a child of God. Provide opportunities to succeed and fail as they try to discover who they are and how they fit into their world. Give them time to grow as individuals, and then support them. When you discover that some of their interests do not agree with the dreams you've had for their success, give them the freedom and the

opportunities to do some exploring on their own. And, no matter what, keep Jesus in their lives, . . . every day, because beyond anything else that happens this summer, the most important thing—*your child's relationship with Jesus*—never changes.

David Scharf is pastor at Immanuel in Greenville, Wisconsin. He and his wife, Beth, have three children.



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

www.parentscrosslink.net.

When I hear other parents talk about raising their teenage kids, I worry about how I will be able to parent my nine-year-old when she becomes an adolescent. What kind of adjustments will I need to make?

Part of training is gradually giving more opportunities for your child to practice what you've taught and then learn from her mistakes. If the extra freedom appears to be more than she can handle, tighten up until she proves she has learned to make wise decisions.

Begin to adjust the way you communicate with your daughter. Ephesians chapter 6 tells parents not to exasperate their children. Adolescents become exasperated if they feel adults are talking down to them. Instead of telling your daughter what to do, talk less and listen more. Provide a simple rationale for the decisions you make. Avoid lecturing. Ask questions that will teach her how to think through things on her own. Eventually, her answers will show you that she is capable of making sound, God-pleasing decisions.

Adolescence is a difficult time in life. Your daugh-

ter will want to be treated like an adult, but she will also doubt herself. Apply law when she needs to see her sin, but then remind her of God's grace and her Savior's love for her when she is repentant.

When a child is misbehaving in front of me, I feel it is my duty to correct him or her. Apparently not everyone agrees. Setting ground rules of behavior for other people's children in your own home is reasonable, but should this extend to other venues?

Christian discipline is deeply rooted in love. The Holy Spirit gives us a longing to share godly wisdom as it has been shared with us. If we witness a child hitting a sibling or destroying property, we feel motivated to correct the behavior. Jesus reassures us, "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him" (Luke 17:3b). Let us all pray for the strength to rebuke and the willingness to forgive, as we have been forgiven.

However, situations involving adiaphora (actions neither commanded nor condemned by God) are rockier terrain. Perhaps we disagree with some parents' handling of table manners. We might even be inclined to rebuke their child for chewing with his mouth open. But here the question is, Are we motivated by love or by a prideful desire to be right? Table manners are a cultural development. How easily our actions can grow from a seed of self-righteousness,

sprouting into prickly weeds of judgment! In our search for God-pleasing disciplinary attitudes, we can ask: Am I as quick to encourage as I am to rebuke? Spiritled discipline will always be solidly planted in the holy desire to see faith, of child and adult alike, mature into full bloom.

What is the best way to prepare my children for the death of a loved one?

Parents can begin by dismissing two common myths: **1. Children will see death as I do;** and **2. children can be protected from ever dealing with it.**

First and foremost, be honest, open, and straightforward with your children. Avoid euphemisms. Death is not a part of the never-ending cycle of life. Death is, in fact, a very real enemy. Jesus died and then rose from the grave to defeat it.

Encourage children to share emotions and allow them to grieve. Children are amazingly resilient. You can respectfully use humor to help them process their grief. Drawing and letter writing can also help them express their pain or relieve anxiety. Reassure children with hugs, and offer to help them share their grief.

Ultimately, children need comfort from the truth of God's Word. Remind them that life on earth is only temporary. Explain how faith in Christ gives us sure hope of life forever in heaven, where there is no pain or sadness.



Why do you have to be so... Three?

Paula Sulzle

That's the question I asked my three-year-old son one day when he was acting very three-year-oldish! To tell you the truth, I can't even remember what he was doing to make me respond in such a way. Probably wrestling with his little sisters or pursuing his own agenda rather than what I had asked him to do. Or maybe he had just spilled a glass of milk. Weeks later it doesn't even matter. What matters is that ever since that day, I think of that question every time he's acting like a three-year-old.

As parents, what do we expect of our children? We want them to behave, do nice things for others, say nice things, pay attention and work hard in school, and excel at sports or music. Each of us wants the perfect child. Oh, and they are all so far from that, aren't they? They throw fits in church. They say "No!" as emphatically as they know how when we direct them to do something—especially in public places where there are lots of witnesses. They throw rocks at the park. They push, shove, kick, and bite to express themselves. They scream when an hour-long grocery shopping trip occurs during nap time. It's at times like these that I ask, "Why do you have to be so three?"

Now that the question has been lingering out there for a while, I'm beginning to acquire some perspective on the whole matter. *He is three*, I finally told myself. There will be times that he will act like a three-year-old. And with this new understanding, I immediately began

to grasp how my heavenly Father looks at me. He sees me take care of my own agenda instead of his holy and perfect will. He sees me spill a glass of milk and get angry. He knows when I'm not paying attention in church. He sees me lose patience with my spouse. He hears me complain when things don't go as I had planned. And he says, "Why do you have to be so human?"

**IT HELPS ME TO
REMEMBER THAT
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What does my heavenly Father expect of me? He expects me to behave, do nice things for others, say nice things, know and study his Word faithfully and diligently. He wants me to be his perfect child (Matthew 5:48). And I fail . . . miserably.

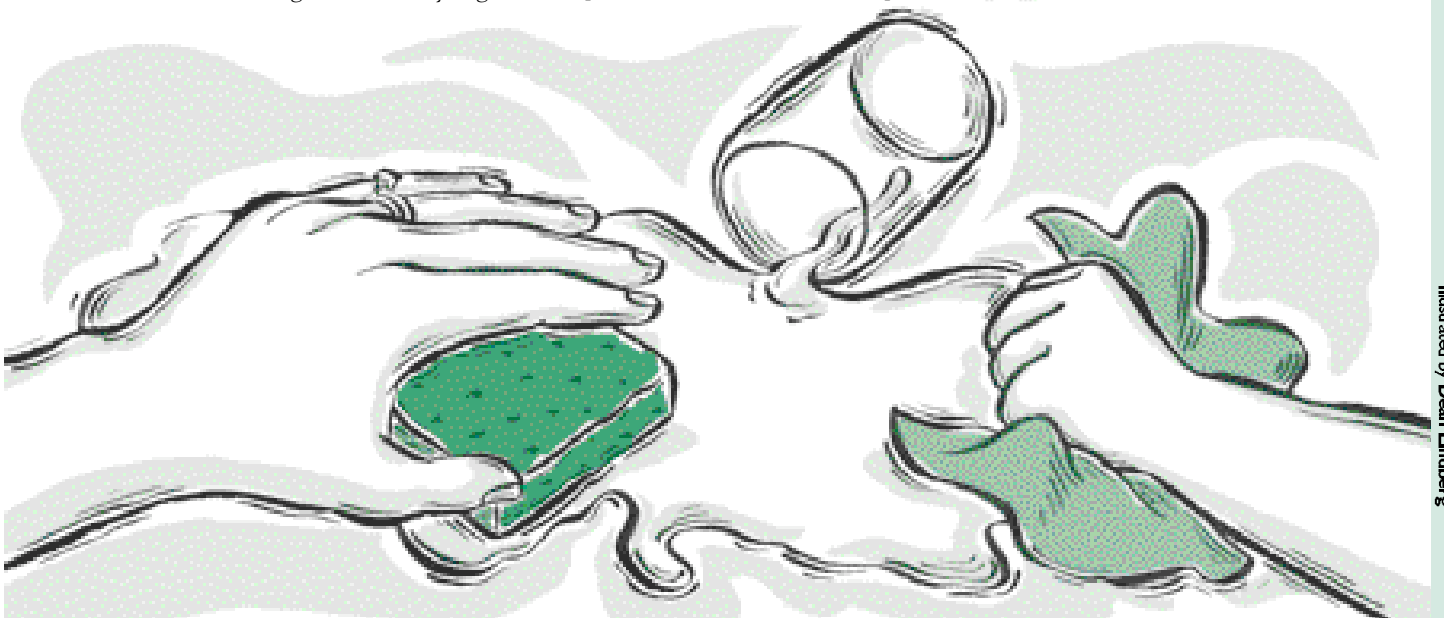
Of course, we have a wonderful and loving heavenly Father who has the power to step in and do something about the messes we make of our lives. Where we have been imperfect, he looks instead at his perfect Son who lived the perfect life for us. For the times we rebel and act in complete disobedience to his will, God has punished his dear Son in our place.

Thank God for giving us a brother who sacrificed everything for us!

It's when I think of this sacrifice that I can really focus on my new understanding of my three-year-old's behavior. Surely, after all my heavenly Father has done for me, I will strive to be a more patient, loving, and caring parent. I will remember, then, that children do not, by nature, know how to behave. On their own, they do not know how to do nice things for others. They have no experience in expressing their feelings in a way that will not hurt others. These are all things that our children need to learn. It's up to Christian parents like us to teach them these things.

It helps me to remember that these children are not mine; they are God's. He's entrusted them to me for a time. During that time he tells me, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). What an awesome responsibility! With such responsibility comes an answer to the question, Why do you have to be so three? The answer is, Come here, my child, let me teach you.

Paula Sulzle is a work-at-home mom. She lives in Rapid City, South Dakota, with her husband, Peter, and their four children.



Temper

Tantrums

John Juern

Ten minutes ago Zoe was a happy, smiling toddler. Now it's hard to believe that such floor-pounding kicks and ear-shattering screams could come from a little tyke like Zoe. Just five minutes ago she was sitting quietly on your lap as you finished reading the last bedtime story. Now she is so loud that you're becoming concerned that the neighbors might wonder what is going on. It all started when you said, "Now it's time for bed." You find some small consolation in thinking that this is happening at home and not in the checkout lane of the grocery store. That was yesterday!

What does a temper tantrum look like?

Almost all toddlers have temper tantrums at one time or another. Some have more than others. Tantrums are as common in girls as they are in boys. A

temper tantrum is an intense, irrational, and emotional reaction to frustration. It is a toddler's way of expressing anger. Tantrums usually start around age 1 and continue to occur until ages 3 or 4. These outbreaks may include kicking, stomping, crying, hitting, whining, and perhaps even breath holding. Parents know when a full-scale tantrum is in progress; the child leaves little in doubt with regard to his emotional state. Later, as a child learns to express emotions through words instead of actions, the frequency and severity of tantrums usually decrease. But during the years when a child is prone to having tantrums at the drop of a hat, the frustrated and embarrassed parents are left to wonder what to do next.

What causes a temper tantrum?

While the sinful nature is behind any misbehavior, there is no single cause

for the temper tantrum phenomenon. They frequently seem to be related to frustration, being tired or hungry, and a child's inability to communicate feelings.

During these formative years, toddlers are constantly learning new skills that allow them to become more independent—to feel *in control* of certain aspects of their lives. As they learn to walk, they choose where to go. As they learn to dress themselves, they can participate in selecting colors and things to wear. They decide which toys they want to play with and which ones to discard. As they acquire new skills, they are also learning how to make choices and decisions for themselves. When choices are taken away from children, they get upset. They want to be in control. The I-can-do-it-myself kind of thinking is very strong and easily irritated during this life stage.

Toddlers, like adults, are more likely to get upset if they are tired, hungry, or feel uncomfortable. It is just harder to

bear a problem when dealing with one of these other irritating factors.

Another cause for temper tantrums is related to the stages of language development. During developmental years, children are learning to recognize the sounds that make up their language. As language develops, children learn to identify and know the meaning of certain words. They learn quickly, for example, what *stop*, *no*, and *don't touch* mean.

Their listening vocabulary is growing rapidly. But at this point in their development, their speaking vocabulary is usually struggling to keep up. Consequently, they are still unable to put their feelings into words. Since they are unable to verbalize their reactions, they express their feelings the only way they know—physically.

Think about the last time you tried to program an electronic device. Unless you're really handy with electronic devices, it probably did not go well. You felt frustrated. You may even have complained about unclear instructions or a poor diagram. But you had a few options. You could have decided to work on the problem at another time. Or you could have asked someone who is good at doing such things for help. The point is that you had several *tools* available to help you solve the problem. The only tool a young toddler has in his toolbox is to act out on the frustration.

How can a parent respond to a tantrum?

Since tantrums will occur, consider the following reactions and responses:

- ✓ Realize this is a normal event. You are not a bad parent.
- ✓ Remain calm. Reacting with emotion to your child's emotion will only make things worse. This is a good time to pray for patience and wisdom.
- ✓ Do not give in to the tantrum. If you give in, the tantrum may stop but the tantrum behavior is reinforced.
- ✓ Try to distract your child with a different activity.

- ✓ If a child is determined to have a physical display of anger, you may have to allow it to pass. You really can't stop the behavior anyway. Move things out of the way so your child doesn't get hurt. Tell the child you are going to ignore him until the tantrum is over.

**God gave
the gift of
emotion;
he also gives
the gift of
self-control.**

- ✓ When the tantrum is over, assure your child of your love and forgiveness. Remind her that anger is sin but that Jesus died for that sin and loves us even though we get angry.
- ✓ Follow through on the task that triggered the tantrum. The child still needs to go to bed, pick up toys, or not have a piece of candy.
- ✓ At times it is also helpful to acknowledge your child's feelings. Statements such as "I know you are upset; I know you want to keep playing" may be helpful.

What can you do to decrease the frequency of tantrums?

The following strategies may decrease the frequency of your child's tantrums.

- ✓ Help your child learn how to identify his feelings. Teach simple vocabulary words for those feelings. Help your child understand that words are preferred over actions.
- ✓ Look for times when your child doesn't express frustration as you had imagined she would. Compliment her on showing good control. It is always helpful to catch a child being good.
- ✓ As much as possible, maintain regular daily routines for such activities as bedtime, mealtime, playtime and chortime. Structure, routine, and consistency are always important.
- ✓ Allow your child to have plenty of opportunities to make choices in routine matters. "Would you like your milk in the green cup or the blue one?"

Can temper tantrums be indicators of a more serious problem?

Usually temper tantrums become less frequent and less severe as children leave the toddler stage. You may want to consult a professional if the following occur:

- ✓ The tantrums get worse with time.
- ✓ There is not an identifying event that initiates the tantrums. They seem to be unpredictable and happen at random and unexpected times.
- ✓ The child also has a speech delay or speech deficiency or disability.
- ✓ The child seems to want to brood over negative things. This brooding eventually erupts into a tantrum.
- ✓ During a tantrum, the child deliberately harms him- or herself.

Dr. John Juern is a licensed psychologist who serves schools in the greater Milwaukee area.



Look for Dr. Juern's popular new book, *Patient Parenting: Raising Your Kids in the Shadow of the Cross*. To order your copy go to www.nph.net or call 1-800-662-6022.

Viewpoint

Set the Right Path

Julie Storm

As the next political cycle comes into view, we begin to see how the 2008 campaign is shaping up. According to political commentator Dick Morris, this may be the nastiest campaign in recent history. As things heat up, some have asked, "Can Christians be politicians?" The question should give us pause. How can we teach our children to be God-fearing citizens with all this negativism? How do we explain why personal attacks cloud serious discussions of the issues?

As a gift of God,
government represents
a responsibility parents
have to model godly
citizenship.

Communication is the key. Start early; practice often.

While my daughter was growing up, she was a competitive roller skater. We drove 25 minutes each way to her daily practices. In hindsight, these times together were our best. We learned to communicate with each other, discussing friends, school, religion, and politics. She later attended a liberal Lutheran college where she remained steadfast in her beliefs, even in the face of a certain amount of peer pressure.

Secular progressives often challenge Christianity with the observation, "Look at the terrible things Christians have done in the name of religion." It's true; there are events in history for which Christians cannot be proud. But children need to know history.

Christians were the early scribes of our civilization. They built colleges, schools, hospitals, and orphanages. They placed high value on human life, convincing Roman Emperor Valentinian to outlaw abortion, infanticide, and child abandonment. Teach your children to appreciate the influence of Christians in history.

Government is a gift from God. As such, it represents an important responsibility parents have to model godly citizenship. Thank God that some Christians are involved in politics. Christians, following God's directive, are obedient to their government, but they also speak out for godly action when governments oppose God's will.

Finally, parents, teach your children to know the candi-

dates. Help them understand that it's not enough to vote merely by party affiliation. Informed voters need to look at each candidate as a person. This includes the candidate's character and leadership skills, as well as what range of professional experiences qualify the individual for public office.

Children are our nation's future citizens, but it's their parents who must set them on the right path to good government.

Julie Storm has served in the Minnesota House of Representatives and was appointed to the Minnesota Board on Aging. Julie and her husband, Chuck, have three children and four grandchildren.



Little Boys or Future Fathers?

David Kehl

My neighbor had asked me to shovel her sidewalk. And as I rushed to finish the job, a father with his eight-year-old son stopped by. The man asked if they could take over so that he could teach his son a lesson. As I watched him demonstrate scraping and tossing the snow, I thought of my own son's training. I wondered if I had taught him enough about what it means to be a father. At times I may have only thought of correcting childish behavior. Yet so much of a son's preparation for fatherhood comes from what he sees his own dad doing.

Today too many boys grow up without healthy models of fatherhood. Generations of people suffer when patterns of neglect or abuse are passed on from father to son. Paul said, "Fathers, do not exasperate your [boys]; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Fathers, what might you do differently if you could see those mischievous little boys of yours as the future fathers of your grandchildren? How would you model faith and love for them so that they would carry faith and love on to the next generation?

Life may be busy, but there's nothing more important than being the kind of dad your son can imitate.

David Kehl works with the Wisconsin Synod Board for Parish Services as the administrator for the Commission on Adult Discipleship. Pastor Kehl lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with his wife, Joan, and their four children.





TWO WOMEN OF LYSTRA

Her name was Eunice. She wore simple clothes. Her hair was as black as coal, and her chiseled features were warm and inviting. Inherited from her mother's side of the family, her bright, walnut-colored eyes flashed an expression of tenderness and joy. Her movements about the small family dwelling were efficient and elegant. "Good-bye, Mother. I'm going to the market." Eunice stopped and leaned toward a youth sitting quietly in a corner of the room. "Timothy," she whispered, "look after your grandmother." The resemblance between Eunice and her son was striking.

From the other side of the room, a white-haired woman interrupted, "I can hear you, dear. And don't think that I need looking after." A teasing, toothless smile appeared on the older woman's wrinkled face. Her name was Lois. The telling grin reflected her deep love for her daughter.

"We'll be fine, Mother," said Timothy. "Grandmother wants to finish our studies on David's reign while you're gone."

Eunice's feet knew their way down the narrow path from their humble home to the market. Her mind wandered as she scanned the horizon. To the west stretched a vast and rugged mountain range. To the east were the mysterious plains. "I praise you, God, for this beauty," she whispered solemnly. "How is it that people cannot see you as the Creator of this magnificent land?"

The devout woman continued to pray as she made her way to the market. "It has been lonely living in Lystra. So many people here do not love you, O Lord. Yet through all the years, you have remained faithful. How my mother rests her faith in the Hebrew Scriptures and your promises! She says, 'What joy to know God! What greater joy to share him with those you love.' There have been no other family members to encourage her.

Only you, O Lord, to hear her prayers. How many times she recites the words of Psalm 121: 'I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.' As a child, I looked to her for strength. As I became a young woman, I saw that she looked to you, O God. Now I want my son to do the same."

**"WHAT JOY TO
KNOW GOD!
WHAT GREATER
JOY TO SHARE
HIM WITH THOSE
YOU LOVE."**

Eunice had married and given birth to a son she named Timothy. Even before her son could walk, she and his grandmother Lois had taught little Timothy to know the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob from the Hebrew Scriptures. Now he was almost ready to take his place in the community as an adult. That time had indeed arrived. "What a beautiful faith he has!" continued his mother. "One that devotes him to reading the Scriptures daily, that trusts in the promises of his heavenly Father, that makes him eager to share his faith with others. His grandmother and I pray now that God would provide a spiritual mentor. Then Timothy can grow even more in his understanding and make use of his gifts and the zeal he has exhibited for God's Word."

The narrow path widened. Today the marketplace seemed busier than usual.

For a reign dialects echoed throughout the crowd. Eunice asked a street vendor, "What's going on?"

"Two men came from the north, preaching about a man called the Christ. They say this Jesus is a descendant of David's line. They speak of him as the Jewish Messiah."

Eunice moved closer through the gathering crowd. A stranger identified the speaker as a Jewish scholar named Paul. "How curious is God's way of doing things," she thought. "Here is a Jew who seems to genuinely care about Gentiles." Eunice listened intently.

The preacher's message was filled with hope. He spoke of a Savior for Jews and Gentiles alike.

When Eunice returned home, she shared her news with her mother and son. They prayed that the scholar's words were true and God's promise to send a Messiah had been fulfilled.

When Paul returned to Lystra, he was introduced to Timothy. The apostle was immediately impressed with Timothy's spiritual upbringing. He recognized Timothy's godly training as a wonderful model for other parents and grandparents to emulate. Eventually, Timothy even accompanied the great missionary on journeys to the far-flung corners of the known world. Along the way, Paul continued to train young Timothy. His considerable gifts for sharing the gospel were put to good use. And the prayers of two God-fearing women who lived in Lystra were answered. From a distance they marveled at how God's Spirit had worked . . . even in the heart of a child.

Andrea Indahl lives in Omaha, Nebraska, with her husband, Scott, and their four children: Sydney, Emma, Jackson, and Anika.



How to GET ALONG with your neighbor

Michael Albrecht

Most kids lack the natural instinct for social interaction. This has to be taught. Here are six great ideas to help parents train their children to get along with classmates and friends.

Stick to the facts. People are quick to speculate. For example, "I bet Peter is faking being sick today because there's a test." Such assumptions contradict Luther's words to *take things in the kindest possible way*. Sticking to the facts means trusting that Peter is really sick. It means that we avoid making any judgments of our own. Speculating about the motives of others can lead to all sorts of slanderous rumors. When your children speculate about classmates, stop them. Teach them instead to do everything they can to help preserve a neighbor's public image and integrity.

Use a friendly tone. Sometimes *the way* we say things is as important as *what we actually say*. A gruff or rude tone of voice, or a challenging smirk, can turn a mild discussion into an ugly confrontation. A polite reply, on the other hand, can diffuse tension. You can teach this skill by modeling an appropriate tone of voice in your own interpersonal communication.

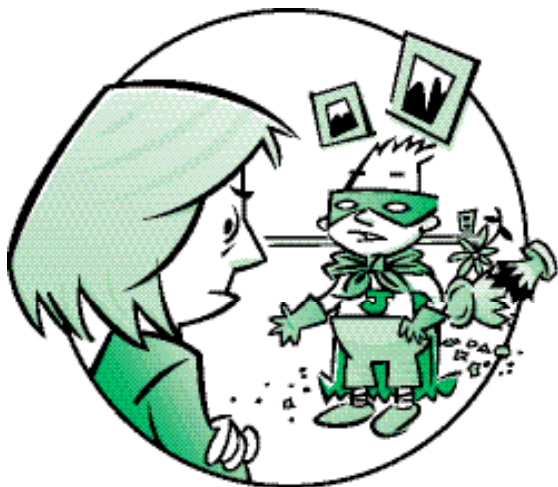
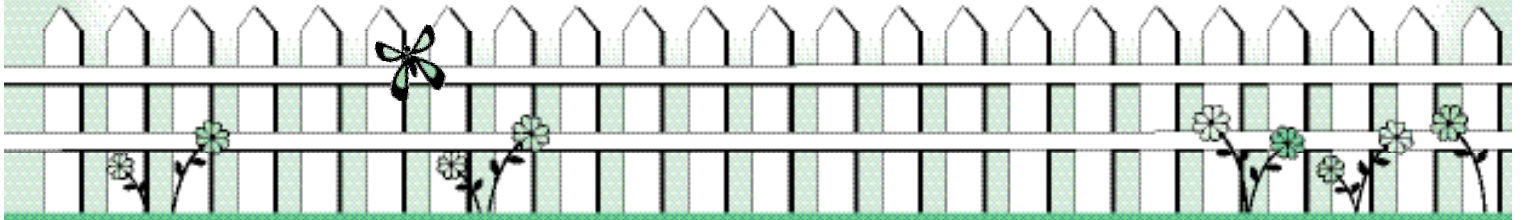
Be tactful, not cruel. Today's children often speak their minds. This can cause conflict even when there is no substance to a disagreement. We can teach our children that there are times when we just need to back off, swallow hard, and remain

quiet. Make a distinction between those times when it is appropriate to speak out and when it's better to be the strong, silent type. And emphasize that it is neither appropriate nor God-pleasing to get in another person's face for any reason.

Avoid gossip. One of the biggest deterrents to healthy relationships is gossip. Gossip clouds our minds with muddled versions of the truth. That poisons relationships. Teach your child to refuse to even listen to gossip. Use the opportunity to teach that gossip is a sin. Have your child learn to ask the question, Would you be saying this if the person you are speaking about were here?

Skip the sarcasm. Sarcasm can be so easily misunderstood as meanness. This is especially true for written communication such as e-mails or instant messages. It's better to eliminate sarcasm from our communication all together. Sarcastic humor can too easily deteriorate into a form of verbal abuse.

Offer honest compliments. Compliments build relationships instead of tearing them down. As long as we are not overly effusive and false with praise, compliments and positive thinking reflect our Christian love for a neighbor. Have your children practice this by beginning suppertime conversations with a positive statement about another individual sitting at the table.



Cartoon by Ed Koehler

"Don't you realize that Super-Jeffrey cannot be contained by time-outs?!"

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

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