

Jeeu♥tsau! TO CELEBRATE LIFE!

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EDITORIAL

Parenting Your Teens

- Fr. Ashwin Castellino

All parents want what is best for their kids no matter what their age, we want them to have the best we can possibly offer. Parenting teenagers however, is a different kind of challenge. Not only we are sometimes unsure about what is the best, we are dealing with teens, who often have strong ideas of their own about what is best for them. The art of successful parenting of teenagers is the relationship we form with them. Building a relationship of mutual respect, love, understanding, provide support, consistency, structure and limits – these are the foundations of effective parents. A survey carried out by the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health reported that “teenagers who have emotional attachment to their parents and teachers are much less likely to use drugs and alcohol, attempt to suicide, engage in violence or become sexually active at an early age...feeling loved, understood and paid attention by parents helps teenagers avoid risky activities, regardless if a child comes from one or two parent family.” I would like to share with you three ‘R’s to help raise your teens with love and understanding.

Respect – the word respect comes from the Latin word ‘*respectere*’ which means to look again. It is to see him or her, not for the behaviour, or the action, or the things that infuriate you, but for the person inside, the person that God made with love. Both parents and adolescent want and need respect. We are children of God. We have an inherent dignity. Teenagers feel respected when you listen to them, take them seriously and treat them with dignity and worth. Teenagers hate it when parents say “What do you know? “You are so young” comments like this discount them. It is true that they do not have much wisdom and life experience as adults do. However, they do know their reality, they have their feelings and they are formulating their own separate opinions.

Reconciliation– The word reconciliation comes from the Latin word *reconcilio* which literally mean to walk with again. When we or our kids do something to hurt the relationship, there is distance between us to walk with again. Reconciliation involves admitting your mistake. It includes asking for forgiveness of those you have wronged, as well as forgiving those who have wronged you. Reconciliation is a Sacrament of rebirth which acknowledges that all of us are imperfect and in need of healing. Initiating reconciliation is not a sign of weakness, but a statement of hope and love. By admitting your mistake, you let your kids know that your authority is not based on being a perfect

parent. We can do this by initiating a dialogue, honestly say I am sorry and talk about what you have learned and what you are willing to do differently next time.

Role-model – Myra Barbeau once said “The really tough thing about being a parent is that you have to be the sort of parent you want your children to become.” The word parent comes from the Latin word *parens* which means source. We are the source to our children’s biological being. We are also the source of much of what they know about the world and how they view it. Albert Schweitzer was asked what advice he would give about being an effective parent. “I can give you three words of advice” he replied, “The first is ‘example’, the second is ‘example’, and third is ‘example’.” By our ‘example’, we are teaching our kids constantly. Teaching with words is very important, but it is not enough. When our words and actions are congruent, when what we do matches what we say we are sending our children a very strong message. If we want our kids to use less social media and phone time, how much time are we spending on the phone and social media applications?

Parenting is like gardening. By cultivating the soul of your relationship with your teenager – by adding more of the nutrients of love and care which is done with respect and reconciliation and the sunlight of a positive role model – you will experience a fruitful harvest.

Fr. Ashwin Castellino is an Assistant Parish Priest at St. Michael’s Church, Mahim and a Counsellor at Snehalaya Family Service Centre.



What makes children happy at home and at school

Ninette Lobo

The very bedrock of our Christian faith is enshrined in the fourth commandment that unequivocally tells us to “honour your mother and father”. In the Old Testament, this is the only commandment in the bible that provides a reason for why we should observe it: “That your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you” (Exodus 20:12). Jesus, too abided by this for He too was obedient to his parents.

We are therefore obliged to honour & respect all those whom God for our good has vested his authority in.

The commandment is addressed expressly to children in relationship to their mother and father because not only is this relationship the most universal, it is the only one that can help provide a happy and stable environment for children and their needs.

This commandment also includes the duties of parents and teachers as well.

The Christian family is a communion of persons. In the procreation and education of children, it reflects the Father's work of creation.

The relationship within the family is an affinity of feelings, reflections, and interests that rises from members and their respect for one another. The stability within the family is the foundation for freedom, security and fraternity within society. The family teaches children moral values from childhood.

Children in the family should therefore live in a way that its members learn to care for the young, old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor. They should most importantly be given the freedom to profess one's faith with the necessary means & institution.

Children should be brought up to respect their parents and superiors. They should seek their advice and accept their admonitions.

Teachers too have a great deal of responsibility in shaping the character of their pupils both morally and academically. Since children spend a great part of their time in school, teachers are duty bound to discipline children by making sure that they not only comply by the rules of the school in studying and working hard, but that they instil moral values of honesty, care, love, patience, respect and kindness. These values help in character building so that children can carry with them these values not only when they are young but later when they go ahead in shaping their careers and having families of their own.

The family therefore is a core institution to raise well rounded children who will then grow towards becoming purposeful and grounded individuals in the world. Parents play a primary role in instilling good qualities in their children from the time they are young, by setting moral examples and guidelines for children to follow. It is necessary to have a value - based system whereby the child learns values of kindness, generosity, care, love, patience, honesty and politeness from parents and reciprocate those values towards parents and those around them. True happiness whether at home or at school stems from values both parents and teachers inculcate in children. Education without any morals or values is a sure path to ruin, which can completely destroy a child and impede on their path to finding meaning and happiness.!

Ninette Lobo is the Director of the Archdiocesan Human Life Committee of the Archdiocese of Bombay

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Parents Teach By Example

Dr. Jeanette Pinto

Children are God's most precious and beautiful gifts to their parents, who love, enjoy and do everything to make them happy. Parents however must also play a key role in shaping and moulding their minds. Children grow to imitate their parents looking up to them as role models. Parents have the tools namely love, respect, acceptance, appreciation, and understanding to teach their children by example. Firstly, teach about the importance of God in their lives, it gets them grounded in Faith. These basics help parents to nurture and raise happy children.

Children must feel safe and happy with their parents around. It is important to give them some structure to follow. In this role parents must give direction, impose rules, use discipline, set limits, establish and follow through with consequences. All this must be done with love, respect, tolerance and encouragement. They should hold their children accountable for irresponsible behaviour and teach values. It is necessary to find a balance between how and when to nurture and when to provide structure. Any change has to begin first with and within the family. A good balance between these roles results in healthy happy human beings.

Interestingly, every year for nearly a century, TIME magazine chooses the "Person of the Year," to feature and portray on their cover page. This surely is a daunting exercise for their reporting staff. Surprisingly, TIME magazine's child champion for the year 2021 was Orion Jean. Congratulations to him!

In an interview, he said that he sees himself as 'an ambassador for kindness', jumping in wherever he sees a need. Orion, just 9 years old, won a student kindness contest and donated his \$500 prize money to a local children's hospital. What a beautiful noble thought! Most children his age would have had a long wish list of toys, clothes and goodies they would want for themselves.

In addition to this, Orion, collected an unthinkable number of books, meals, and toys for those in need. Orion also launches big efforts to fix problems like food insecurity and lack of access to education. He inspires others to join him, bringing local communities and

governments together to reach out to the neediest. In a world that is disturbed and divided by divisive issues, there is a positive note in the air with the next generation.

For the USA - Thanksgiving 2020, he organized a donation of and delivery of 100,000 meals to food-insecure families across the country. Over the summer break he got 50,000 books to give children to their homes. That's truly unimaginable and amazing! One wonders how did a child of nine do this? He would have to get inspiration, motivation and support, all of which he got from his parents. They were open to his ideas, guided and helped him fructify them. Kudos to them!

Parents can play an important role in sensitising their children to the world of today. They can help them make good choices firstly by modelling and showing respect for one another. They could suggest inviting less privileged friends to their birthday parties. Why not invite a friend with a disability to the Christmas luncheon, perhaps pack a snack for a hungry child? Allow for acceptance, show compassion and empathise with someone going through a tough life. Show them how to be non-judgemental, respect all peoples, be gentle, and loving to all.

Do parents talk to their children about the presence of God in their lives? Why not? He is our Creator, and Master. We owe God our very life, and everything we have. Over time children mature physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially. To raise happy children, parents should also provide them with the anchor of prayer and acquaint them with them with values of humanity.

Dr. Jeanette Pinto is the founder Director of the Archdiocesan Human Life Committee of the Archdiocese of Bombay

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My Parenting Journey

- Sharon Pretto

Writing about my learning and experiences as a mother is a tremendous responsibility. What do I say? How do I share the million little things that I have learned and continue to learn? Have I been a good mother till now? What is the benchmark for being a good mother?

Well, guess what? There is no benchmark, except the one we set for ourselves. Nearly every parent wants the best for their child and tries to do their best with whatever resources they have. Each of us also carries with us the experiences of our own childhood, the happy memories as well as the traumatic ones, as our parents have, before us.

Imagine these multiple experiences influencing how we raise our children, imagine passing on the negative, hurtful, painful memories to our children, through our behavior, in the way we discipline or counsel them, the standards we set for them, our expectations of them. I did all of this unconsciously as a new parent and I am sure many of you must have done the same.

It has taken years of introspection, self reflection and a growing self-awareness, to accept my own faults and shortcomings, a willingness to work on and change my limiting beliefs, the silent undaunting support of my spouse and a deep faith in God to be able to challenge old patterns and create new ones.

The Word of God gives us precious lessons to guide us through this journey, modeling the Holy Family, yet we often find it difficult to relate the Gospel to our lives in the crazy urban rat race of our times. This Christmas, let us be willing to pause, reflect, recalibrate, learn and transform ourselves as parents and therein transform our families.

Sharon Pretto is a Life Skill Coach and the mother of three teenagers.

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Celebrating Life – A Workshop for the Night School Students of Canossa Night High School, Mahim

- Sr. Jacinta Pinto

Canossa Night School students benefitted from the Informative sessions from these workshops conducted by the Archdiocesan Human Life Committee. It was enlightening for all our students. There was a lot of participation and eye opener for our students. The students were empowered and were aware of the new insights gained through all this trainings. In all 156 students attended the sessions which were on two weekends in November.

The following session were held:

Ms. Sharon Pretto on Anger Management & Goals in Life – Study and Career.



Ms. Maria D'silva - Peer Pressure & Bullying



Ms. Ninette Lobo on Pornography



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Dr. Enid Prabhu on Sexuality



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Fr. Robin Fargose on Healthy Relationships



Mr. Rajiv and Team Childline on Sexual Abuse



The Archdiocesan Human Life Committee wishes you and your families a blessed and joyous Christmas !!

