



SABBATH KEEPING YOUTH

A Newsletter by The Church of God International

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The Parents' Corner

What is your child's concept of God like? Many kids think of God as someone who is very big and really busy. Too big and busy to have anything to do with their little lives. Helping kids understand God wants to have a relationship with them is a tricky thing. It helps to use a concept they understand. FRIENDS! Use these ideas to help your child develop a friendship with God.

- Read stories about Jesus helping everyday people.
- Talk about how God makes every child special and unique.
- Pray with your children and teach them to talk to God.
- Tell your children about a time when God spoke to your heart.
- Tell your children about a time when God answered a prayer for you.
- Teach your children to keep a journal and write to God.

Hey Kids! Who's Your Best Friend?

Kids hold a special place in the heart of Jesus. The Bible tells of many times that Jesus did special things with the kids around Him. Children sat in Jesus' lap. Jesus healed a little boy. He used another boy's lunch to feed 5,000 people. Jesus told adults they needed faith like that of the children. He even raised one little girl from the dead.

All these things were wonderful, but most importantly Jesus wanted all the children to be friends with Him. The desire of Jesus' heart is to see all children become Christians so they can be in the Kingdom of God.

Imagine that! Jesus wants to be your best friend, and He wants to spend forever with you in God's Kingdom. That's even better than being best friends with the toughest bully, the most popular kid, and the smartest kid in school all at the same time.

Everyone knows you can't be best friends with someone if you never spend time with them. It works the same way with Jesus. If you and Jesus are going to be buddies, then you need to spend time together. It's easy to do. Find a quiet place, and spend a little time each day reading His Bible and talking to Him. You will be amazed at the difference being best friends with Jesus will make in your LIFE!!!



The Don't Blame Me Generation

By Patricia Dalton

I once got a call from a couple whose son, a student at an elite college, had run up a huge credit card debt. His parents realized they had a problem and called to make an appointment for therapy. I told them that I wanted to see them along with their son. But when the parents showed up, they told me that their son had refused to come. "Tell me," I said halfway through our discussion. "If you had insisted, would your child be here?" The mother answered quickly, "Well, yes." The dad paused, then said, "That's a very good question."

The incident reminded me of the Warren Zevon song:

Send lawyers, guns, and money
Dad, get me out of this.

Except in real life, it wasn't funny.

These parents weren't requiring their son to take responsibility for his actions. And he didn't respect them enough to shoulder it. The young man was in charge, not the parents.

The tendency to shirk the burden of responsibility permeates our family rooms and our boardrooms. I saw it in Vice President Cheney's belated response to the shooting incident last month. And it has characterized former Enron chairman Kenneth Lay's public statements since his company's debacle: "Of anything and everything that I could imagine might happen to me in my lifetime," Lay said in Houston in December, "the one thing I would have never even remotely speculated about was that someday I would become entangled in our country's criminal justice system."

Whether or not he is found guilty, Lay sounds like the spokesman for our culture of victimhood. It is a culture that reflects a studiously nonjudgmental attitude toward one's own behavior, while ignoring its effects on others. And it is based on a belief system like this: I am more important than most people; I am good; therefore, I am incapable of doing bad things.

The upshot?

Excuses, excuses, excuses . . .

Evasive attitudes are learned, refined and reinforced in the home. And they ultimately lead people to become so divorced from the impact of their actions that they freely take advantage of others.

My clients have included parents who shrug when they realize that their son or daughter has been stealing. One even said, "I have bigger fish to fry," referring to his true priority -- which was his child's all-important transcript for college ap-

plications. And I remember hearing about local parents who were outraged when a group of high school seniors were expelled for cheating on their SATs with the result that their prized college acceptances were rescinded.

Parents who want to raise mature young people who will contribute to society must not only have values that infuse their own lives but must also be willing to enforce them in their children's lives. Young people need to be taught, before reaching adulthood, that taking a powerful position involves a weight of responsibility to others.

What is striking today is the number of parents who seem to be uncomfortable with the role of teaching their children. They let the culture do it and hope for the best. Some even side with their children against authorities.

Take one disturbing example I heard from a friend who teaches middle school. A girl was caught drawing in her notebook during class. When the teacher asked her to stop, she looked up and kept going. The teacher then confiscated the notebook. After class, the teacher tossed the girl her notebook. She reported to the school office that her teacher threw the notebook at her, intending to hurt her. A report (mandated in cases of alleged abuse) was written up; child protective services was called in to investigate. Only after fellow students refused to go along with the girl's story was the case dismissed. All along, the parents supported their daughter and her far-fetched version of events.

A generation ago, this kind of behavior would have been almost inconceivable. Parents' tougher approach taught us lessons critical for later life -- like that lying doesn't pay and that you have to respect your boss even if you don't like him or her. Today's adults who coddle young people fail to see that they are handicapping them.

It is not uncommon to see parents who are responsible themselves but put up with manipulative behavior from their kids. I once saw a pair of hard-working parents whose child refused to comply with the limits they put on his computer game time, telling them, "You can't make me." Rather than move the computer, they had just given up. They didn't see this as part of their son's larger problem with authority at school and in sports.

Parents have two serious responsibilities. The first is to love their children without worshipping them. Such adoration is a

big danger in today's smaller families where parents' pride and dreams are divided among fewer children. The second responsibility is to discipline children -- to hold their feet to the fire. Parents must be able to tolerate the distress that real discipline causes their offspring.

To do so, they have to quit worrying so much about damaging their children's self-esteem. When I asked one set of parents why they let their daughter call them obscene names, they looked at me blankly. Later the father told me, "We want to understand her. And we don't want her to feel worse about herself than she already does." Incredible. Especially since it has been my experience that it's behavior like gratuitous disrespect toward parents that actually makes kids feel bad.

Recently, I spoke with a grandmother who remarked that her grown children, who were doing very well financially, had lives that revolved around their kids. She said, "They spend every waking moment giving, giving, giving to their children. They are living for their kids." Another grandmother told me that there is nothing she can give her grandchildren that they don't already have. "Manicures and pedicures are old hat to these kids."

Parents can stop the indulgence -- or at least put some limits on it. They also have the power as well as the responsibility to insist that their children see the dark as well as the light side of themselves -- the capacity for evil as well as for good that we all have. The last thing our children need is to internalize the sense that they are victims who are not responsible for their actions, echoing the powerlessness that Zevon parodied:

I'm an innocent bystander
Somehow I got stuck
Between a rock and a hard place
And I'm down on my luck.
Yes I'm down on my luck.

Allowing children to evade responsibility may cost parents a lot. But it's nothing compared with the cost to their kids: misery that lasts a lifetime.

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Jesus and Children

Mark 10:13-16

Jesus loves children! He even tells adults to be like children. “The greatest person in the kingdom of heaven is the one who makes himself humble like this child.” (Matthew 18:4) What is it about children that Jesus loves? Children are trusting, humble, accepting, honest, obedient, kind, happy, pure and love unconditionally. These qualities of children is what Jesus wants us all to have.

Children would follow Jesus and they loved to sit with him. They knew He loved them very much. Jesus would watch the children play games and He would tell them stories. One day when Jesus was speaking to a crowd of people, parents brought their children to Jesus to be blessed by Him. His followers were annoyed by the interruptions so they told the parents to stop coming. The disciples said that Jesus did not have time for their children.

Jesus heard this and was very upset because that was not true at all. He scolded His followers and told the parents to bring their children to Him. Jesus wanted to see the children. “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these children. I tell you the truth, you must accept the kingdom of God as if you were a little child, or you will never enter it.” Then Jesus took the children in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them.” (Mark 10:14-16)

Jesus always has time for children. Don’t feel that you are too small to talk to Jesus. He loves you!

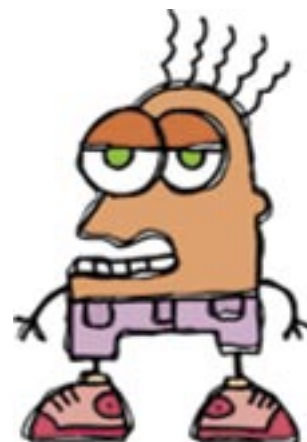
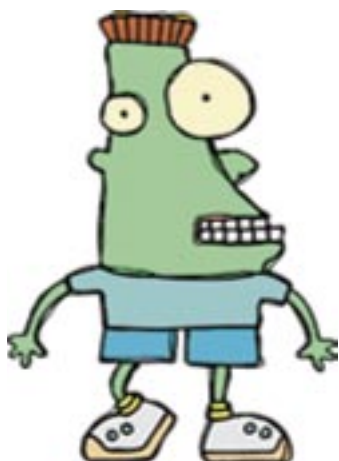


New SKY Website!

The SKY Website has been re-designed. Visit us online for games, activities, Bible fun, and past SKY Newsletters. Plus, create an account for the new SKY Forum. Here you can find pen pals and connect with old friends.

Visit www.cgi.org/sky

Psst! There's resources for parents too!



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Jesus and Children

Find some important words of Jesus. Write the definitions of the words on the lines. Write the letters on the spaces below.

A symbol of love..... 1 2 3 4 5

It shines in the day.... 6 7 8

Something to read..... 9 10 11 12

A present..... 13 14 15 16

Secret writing..... 17 18 19 20

A tree branch..... 21 22 23 24



“ 21 2 5 16 1 2

21 14 16 5 21 2

17 1 14 21 19 4 20 8

17 18 23 20 16 18 23 2

3 8 19 19 18 8 18 16

1 14 8 19 2 4

16 1 2 23

15 11 4 16 1 2

12 14 8 13 19 18 23

10 15 12 18 19

9 2 21 11 8 13 6

16 19 6 7 17 1

3 6 16 1 2 6 20

Noni McVey
Youth Director
Church of God International
P.O. Box 223675
Carmel, CA 93922