

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR

LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Arguing

Young people need to know their parents mean it when they set limits. Parents need to know that there are ways to say “no” without waging a major battle.

I wish your children would thank you for having the strength to set limits. But children have never been known to say, “Thanks, Dad, I feel a lot more secure now that I know you mean what you say. Thanks for loving me enough to set these limits.” Instead, they may pout, complain, stomp around, run to their rooms, whine, or talk back. This often leaves the adult angry and confused.

Why are children so testy when we give them limits that help build their sense of security and self-confidence? Children need to test limits just to make sure they are firm. Each youngster seems to have his or her own special testing routine. Some use anger, some use guilt, some are sneaky, while others use forgetting to test your resolve.

It helps parents to remember that kids hear the word “no” far too often. It seems to be a call to arms, a fighting word. A child often wages war against “no” in a very subtle way-by trying to get the parent to do all the thinking while he or she stands back and criticizes.

You can turn the tables on children by forcing them to do most of the thinking. **Just replace “no” by saying “yes” to something other than the child’s explicit request/demand.** Use “thinking words” instead of “fighting words.” For example:

Fighting words: “No, you can’t go out to play. You need to practice your lessons.”

Thinking words: “Yes, you may go out to play as soon as you practice your lessons.”

Most youngsters will try to argue when faced with “thinking words.” However, since you started the conversation with “yes” instead of “no,” you shouldn’t feel guilty or explain or justify anything. State-of-the-art arguing is now in your hands. No matter what your child says, simply agree that it is probably true. Then add the word “and.” Follow this by repeating your first assertion.

Compare these two approaches:

Teen: I need to use the car to go skiing.
Dad: You can’t use the car until you pay your gasoline bill.
Teen: But, Dad, I promised my friends.
Dad: Why don’t you make them drive?
Teen: But you don’t like the way they drive!

Here’s how Dad could guide the teen to do all the thinking:

Teen: I need to use the car to go skiing.
Dad: Feel free to use it as soon as your gasoline bill is paid.
Teen: But, Dad, I promised my friends.
Dad: I’m sure that’s true ...and... feel free to use it as soon as you pay the bill.
Teen: But I have to buy the lift ticket.
Dad: I bet that’s true too ... and ... feel free to use the car as soon as you pay ...
Teen: I know! Don’t say it again.
Easy-to-learn tools like the above example can be used to eliminate fights with your children.

There is nothing wrong with a child that a little arguing won’t make worse