

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Bossy Children

Is it any wonder that bossy parents often have bossy children? Parents who order their youngsters around like boot-camp recruits end up with children who want to be drill sergeants.

However, it's not always the parents who are at fault. Even non-bossy moms and dads have bossy youngsters, on occasion. Oftentimes, these children are simply addicted to having their own way. Bossing others is one way to accomplish that goal.

Occasionally, these control-conscious children will even turn their demanding mouths on their parents. One way to handle this is to be prepared with a well rehearsed one liner.

When children become bossy, our first response is a nice, extended smile. This unexpected turn of events gives them time to think, to wonder what in the world is going on. Then, quietly, we say, "Nice try, Sarah. What do you think happens in this family when people get real bossy? Does it help or not? Please don't answer that now. Just give it some thought." And then we break eye contact and walk away.

The behavior is dealt with in an unemotional and straight forward manner. We deal with bossy children without emotion because emotion just gives them ammunition to turn on us. Parents who lay into their children with, "Don't you dare order me around!", "suddenly find themselves hooked into a power struggle.

However, when children begin to boss other kids, the problem becomes the child's, not the parent's:

Mom: "Sarah, I notice that you're kind of bossy with your friends. Do you ever worry about losing their friendship because of bossiness?"

Sarah: "Aw, they'd still be my friends. "

Mom: "Well, good luck. I'll be interested to see how it works out."

Chances are somewhere along the line it won't work out well. The real world will drive the lesson home-being bossy can cause you to lose friends in a hurry. Other kids happily provide learning experiences for bossy kids like Sarah.

Then, when Sarah returns to Mom's side with her problem, Mom should express the sadness of a true friend:

Mom: "Oh, so that really didn't work out?"

Sarah: "No. "

Mom: "That's sad. What do you suppose you'll do to get your friends back?"

Sarah: "I don't know. "

Mom: "If you would like me to share some ideas with you, let me know and I'll be glad to talk with you about it. If anyone will give it some thought, I'm sure it will be you."

Bossing our kids around by telling them not to be so bossy only perpetuates the problem, and the bossiness will continue. Children find their own solutions to this problem when parents keep the burden of the problem on the child's shoulders and are nearby with a word of advice. And remember, our advice is only heard when it has been requested.

Children become bossy only when they know it works