

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

“Just Say No” Isn’t That Easy

If your son had the choice of either dinner with the family or a hamburger at the fast-food restaurant with his girlfriend, which would he choose? He’d probably go for the latter. That’s because friends are very important to teens. Friends are a part of most teens’ search for an identity of their own. A teen says to himself, “If I hang around with my parents all the time, do I know who I am? No!”

Wise parents understand the role friends play in their teen’s social development. They say, “I know you need lots of time with your friends. I sure hope you can find a way to do this and still get your homework and chores done.”

The Other Strong Voice

Problems arise when teens listen to their peers more than to themselves or their parents. Many think that listening to their parents proves they’re not independent. But the only other voice that’s available belongs to their peers.

Some teens have actually been conditioned by their parents to listen to this other voice! This happens when we start telling our children, at an early age, to do things our way-or else.

When teens have been conditioned their entire lives to listen to another voice telling them what to do, they really aren’t prepared to think for themselves! They simply replace their parent’s voice with the voices of their peers.

Teach Your Kids to Think!

Children will listen to their own inner voice if they have lots of chances to practice decision-making. This begins early in life with little choices like, “Would you like vanilla or chocolate ice cream?” or “Do you want to wear your red socks or blue socks?” The child then lives with the consequences of the decision. If the youngster is unhappy, the parent says, “Don’t worry, you can choose again tomorrow.” The decisions get bigger as a child gets older.

One thankful parent tells a story about his own son, Will, as an example of a teen who had important decisions to make. Will’s two closest friends were an alcoholic and a drug user. But instead of trying to forbid the friendships, this parent said to Will, “With friends like yours, you get to make more decisions than anyone in school!”

He also said in a loving way, “They are lucky to have a friend like you. My guess is that some of you rubs off on them.” Will confirmed this, saying his friends did not drink or take drugs around him.

It wasn’t easy for this dad, who wondered if he was handling the situation in the best way. But the worst thing parents can do is suggest peers will rub off on their own teens. That becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It’s normal for adolescents to listen to their peers. But we can help them become independent, by allowing them to think and make decisions, beginning at a young age. Only then, will their own strong inner voice come across loud and clear.

Help Your Child Develop a Strong Inner Voice