

# ***BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL PRESENTS: PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC***

## ***Special Thoughts on Raising Kids***

### **Turning Bad Decisions into Wisdom**

There are many different ways to cause children to carry the lion's share of the thinking. There are many different ways to force decision-making, and there are many unique and creative ways to express genuine sadness for children who make mistakes.

A father recently reminded me of the beauty of considering childhood mistakes as opportunities to gain wisdom and experience. He related the following opportunity his 12-year-old provided for himself.

Dad received a call from the police station notifying him his son had been picked up for shoplifting. A million things ran through his mind as he drove to pickup his son.

He thought about ranting, raving, and rescuing. But he also thought about using empathy instead, to drive the pain of this lesson home. He remembered that a consequence needs to become the bad guy, while the parent becomes the good guy.

Dad met a very sheepish child at the detention center. "Don't be mad, Dad. I'm sorry. I'll never do anything this stupid again!"

"I'm not mad, son, but I really feel sorry for what you're going to have to go through. I guess you know you'll have to appear in court. Who knows what the judge will do. I'd suggest you call around to some law offices and find out how much you're going to have to pay to be represented in court."

The boy got his courage up and made some calls. Later he came to his dad in a state of depression. "Dad, do you know that the cheapest lawyer I could find wants to charge me \$600? That's a rip-off!"

"It's always expensive to hire professional help. Maybe I can help you. In this state parents can represent their children in court. If you want, I'll do it for half price. But maybe you want to think about that for a while. Let me know what you decide."

The child thought for a moment and said, "I guess I better have you represent me. But I don't even have \$300. If you do it, will you loan me the money?"

Dad said he'd loan him the money. However, the boy was in for some more big surprises. This father took his son to the office supply store and purchased a legal promissory note form. The two of them sat down together, filled out the form, and the son signed the document.

Father and son finally appeared before the judge of the juvenile court. "Young man, are you represented by counsel?" asked the judge.

"Yes sir. My Dad's not a lawyer, but he agreed to do it for me for

half price. He even loaned me the money and made me put up collateral and sign a promissory note.

"How do you plead in this matter?," asked the judge.

Dad said, "My client is pleading guilty, Your Honor."

"Fine," answered the judge. "Do you have anything to say before I rule?"

"Yes, Your Honor," offered Dad. "This is a good boy. He's never been in trouble before. He admits that he made a big mistake and does not plan to repeat this behavior. He is requesting that you consider a deferred judgement. He is even suggesting that the period of time be 12 months instead of the regular 6 month deferred judgement so he can prove to the court he can stay out of trouble for that period of time."

The judge struck his gavel and said, "So ordered. Stay out of trouble, young man. Now stand down!"

Father and son left the courtroom together, walking to their car. As they settled into their seats for the trip home, the boy looked over at his dad and said, "You know what, Dad? You were awesome in there!"

I think we would all agree, this was a time when something that could have become a tragedy, was turned into a great learning opportunity. And I bet we would all agree, this young boy has a lot more respect and love for his dad.

***Express genuine sadness when your child makes a mistake***