

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL PRESENTS: PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Responsibility

I watched a man and his children in the drug store the other day. One of his girls had a sad face while he yelled, "What's wrong with you? How many times have I told you to be responsible?"

Have you ever noticed that the parents who yell the loudest about responsibility seem to have the most irresponsible children? It is also true that many very responsible parents raise children who are not at all responsible.

The most responsible children usually come from families in which the word "responsibility" is rarely used. The mystery behind this has a lot to do with a concept in psychology that education consultant Jim Fay calls, the "No Sense in Both of Us Worrying About It" syndrome. He reminds us that most of us worry very little about something if someone else will do the worrying for us.

Jim writes that at one time he never worried about how money was spent because his wife, Shirley, was very responsible about saving. He used to say, "There's no sense in both of us worrying about that. Shirley has that well in hand. However, one day Shirley discovered that she enjoyed buying things. And wouldn't you guess, Jim started saying to himself, "Oh, oh! If she's not going to worry about that, somebody better!" He became a lot more concerned about money when she stopped being careful. Shirley trained him to be more concerned simply by being a lot less concerned.

So, there you have it. Parents who raise responsible kids do it through their actions, not their words. These parents go through life being responsible about their own

jobs, demonstrating how it is done. At the same time, they spend very little time and energy worrying about their children's responsibilities. They worry more about how to allow their children to experience the consequences of irresponsibility.

No Reminders -These parents are involved with their children, but do not spend their time reminding them or worrying for them. It is almost as if their attitudes are saying, "I'm sure you'll remember on your own, but if you don't, you'll surely learn something from the experience. "

Reminders tell children we are afraid that they are not capable. Sad, but true, these implied messages have a lasting effect since children believe them without even realizing it.

Have you ever noticed that young people often live out their parents' deepest fears? Parents who constantly say, "Don't forget, " raise children who forget. Those who say, "You show some respect, " raise disrespectful children. Those who demand responsibility, raise kids who are irresponsible.

Consequences with Empathy - Responsible children are usually raised by parents who allow them to experience the consequences of irresponsible acts. These parents also help their children understand who owns the problem by being very sympathetic. "I'm sorry that worked out the way it did, I'm sure it's no fun having to do the job over again."

Most parents are pleasantly surprised to learn how effectively "consequences with understanding" develop responsibility.

Replace Words with Meaningful Actions