

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Handling Friends

If you're unhappy about the company your son or daughter keeps, the secret is an open mind. In the long run, if we maintain a strong and loving relationship with our children, they will generally choose friends we approve of and some we even genuinely like!

Preserve Your Relationship

Our relationship with our teens has a major effect on the friends they choose. Love and open lines of communication are by far the best ways to ensure our children will make wise and reasonable choices.

For a short period of time, it is both normal and natural for a young person in the early teen years to seek friends whose values seem to be the very opposite of our own!

But sadly, some parents overreact by trying - usually without success - to control the friends their teenagers prefer to "hang out" with. Not only does this jeopardize the parent/teen relationship, it's also a waste of time.

No Criticizing

As parents, we should never criticize or judge people we don't know-and that includes our teen's friends. Our teenagers will eventually just ignore our thoughts and opinions. It's also well worth our time to get to know their friends and accept them as much as we possibly can. Sometimes, we end up pleasantly surprised and wonder why we were so concerned in the first place!

Our children often find good in others that we simply can't see - until it's too late. One mother laments, "To think I wouldn't let my daughter date a boy in high

school that later became a Rhodes scholar. How was I to know he'd turn out so great!"

Nonjudgmental Communication

Although it's unwise to criticize our teenager's friends, we certainly have the right to express our concerns. But our opinions should only be given in a loving and nonjudgmental manner. Example:

Joan's mother remains accepting and trusting - even when inside, she'd prefer that her daughter stay home rather than go out with friends she disapproves of. "Joan," she says, "I sure hope that some of you manages to rub off on Cindy and Jan. Sometimes I think those kids need you and are lucky to have you around. Maybe you're a good influence on them. Have a good time tonight, honey."

Parents might also say, in a gentle way, that they would probably choose a different type of person for their own friend, but then acknowledge that everyone has to make their own decisions in life.

Last Resort

We know it is generally useless to try to control who our teens are with when they're away from home. As a last resort, however, it is within reason for a parent to forbid certain friends of their teens to visit their home. But this decision should only be made when less severe options have been tried—since such harsh action can harm the relationship a parent has built with their son or daughter.

***A Loving Parent/Teen Relationship Is
the Best Insurance That Our Teens
Will Choose the Right Friends***