

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

“They’re Calling Me Names”

Parents are understandably concerned when their children are called names or teased for being different. Oftentimes, parents wonder, “why does this happen? Why are children so mean to each other?”

Children call each other names, not to necessarily make others feel bad, but to make themselves feel good. As nationally known educational consultant Jim Fay explains, “children who are hurting inside want to make others hurt on the outside so that they can feel better about themselves.”

Two ways of dealing with name-calling

When children are teased about being different, parents may handle it in two ways. First, some parents protect their child and talk to the children doing the teasing. This may be helpful in the long run, but it may covertly say to the child being teased, “You can’t handle the situation and you need help.”

It’s often better to strengthen the child, rather than try to lighten the load. Listening with empathy, as your child explains the situation, is a good way to start. Then teach the child “I messages” or ways to express how he/she feels, rather than telling what the other person needs to do.

A conversation with your child might go something like this:

Parent: What would happen if you told these children who pick on you to “Cut it out!” Are they going to like you or get mad at you?

Child: Get mad at me.

Parent: Right. The trick is to tell them how you feel inside, not to tell them what’s wrong with them. You might say, “that makes me feel pretty bad.” Does that say there is something wrong with them or just tell them how you feel?

Child: How I feel.

Parent: Right. that’s called an “I” message. “You know how “I” feel.

Child: OK

Parent: There’s also a “You” message. And “You” messages make people feel madder. If I say to you, “Hey I don’t like what you’re doing,” is that a “You” message or an “I” message?

Child: “You” message.

Parent: Right. Tell them how you feel inside. Be nice about it. But tell them exactly how you feel. So you are going to send what messages?

Child: “I” messages.

Parent: And you’re not going to send...?

Child: “You” messages.

Nothing we say to our children can take away the hurt of their being teased. However, we can help them cope, with and handle, the hurt appropriately. We let them know that there will be many other hurts in their lives and we are certain that they will be able to cope with those too.

***When your children are being picked on:
Listen with empathy - Teach the use of “I” messages***