

***BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR
LUTHERAN SCHOOL
PRESENTS:
PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC***
Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Parent/Student Stresses

We live in enormously complex times. Few of us are immune to the stresses and pressures that are a part the landscape of our fast-paced society.

A recent study showed that Americans, on the average, have 30 percent less free time than they enjoyed just a decade ago. Stress is no stranger to families who find themselves bound by limits on both their time and energy.

When our children become teenagers, family stress may increase even more. Parents find themselves with more to worry about - including issues like drugs, teen pregnancy, grades and even guns in the school. It is a time when some begin to doubt their ability to parent.

Teens today are also under a lot of pressure. They are in the midst of major social, emotional and physical changes that are a part of growing up. They are also faced with important decisions to make about almost every aspect of their lives.

Although we can't eliminate all pressures that are a part of our society, we can do our best to control the stress levels within our own families. This becomes possible when we realize that communication problems between parents and teens can create additional stress.

The following guidelines are designed to help parents manage and reduce stress within the family:

Respect each other's needs - The way our own parents raised us may no longer apply to today's generation of young people. Today's teenagers are encouraged to both establish their independence and stand up for their rights as individuals. Some parents, threatened by this behavior, clamp down harder, creating an even stronger need for teens to assert themselves.

Respect is a two-way street. Teens must also learn to respect their parent's needs. However, if the parent is respectful of the teen, the child can see what respect looks like.

Encourage an open relationship - Both teens and parents have limited time. However, it's a good idea to set aside time each week to talk with each other.

Communication means listening to information from teens we would rather not hear. Instead of being critical, a parent can keep lines of communication open with words like, "Even though I don't agree with you, thanks for sharing your point of view."

Parents can also use "I" messages to express their feelings. "I" messages tell teens where you stand rather than where they need to go. Mom uses an "I" message when talking to Kent: "It really bothers me when you take my car without asking. I will be happy to let you use it when I don't need it, as long as I don't have to worry about it being taken without permission."

Give up some control - Many parents make more rules for their teens at a time when there should be fewer rules. Only give your teen rules you can enforce—rules for situations that directly affect you.

Guidelines to Reduce Family Stress

- *Respect each other's needs*
- *Encourage an open relationship*
- *Give up some control*
- *Set rules only for situations that directly affect you*