

# ***BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL***

***PRESENTS:***

## ***PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC***

***Special Thoughts on Raising Kids***

### **The Shy Child**

There are three major reasons that children appear shy and withdrawn. First, many children are simply built that way. They are good and responsive children who simply have never liked the attention of strangers. Such children may be shy because of their genetic make-up. Badgering can only make this situation worse.

Children may be shy because they have suffered from strangers or families. They have learned not to trust others.

Finally, children may be shy and retiring because this is a “hook” that they unconsciously use to upset their parents. Children want emotion from their parents. They’ll do almost anything to get it. If a child learns that being shy and withdrawn gets the parents goat and leads to parental frustration, the child will naturally become even more shy and withdrawn as time passes.

No matter what the cause, parents best handle the situation by accepting the child for who he or she is. The parent might say something like:

“Well, Jane, the thing I like about you is that you think things over before you say anything. More

than that, you are careful about who you make friends with. You don’t just rush in there like some children and make friends willingly. You like to think about it. Of course, sometimes you think about it so hard that you may have fewer friends. But, then again, Jane, everybody is different!”

Some children do give the appearance of being pathologically shy and withdrawn. They simply won’t talk to anybody about anything. In this situation, professional help may be needed. A thoughtful and wise therapist may be able to form a trusting relationship with a child in play therapy and help the child express him or herself verbally and have, consequently, less need to withdraw. If a child is shy and withdrawn secondary to trauma, professional help may be necessary.

Finally, it may be helpful to *encourage*, but not *badger*, shy children. Parents might say, “boy, I bet John would really be happy if you talked to him. I’ll bet that boy would like to have your friendship! I think maybe you’ll decide that you’ll want to talk to him.”

Such conversation has a much better chance of succeeding than saying, “Why don’t you talk to John. You’re just too shy.”

***It’s Helpful to Encourage Shy Children, Not Badger Them***