

**PARENTING
RESOURCE**

AGES: **0-18**

TOPIC:
**CELEBRATE
PARENTS**

Celebrate Mom and Dad

.....

It's time to celebrate that difficult and incredibly rewarding work you do as a parent! On the following pages you'll get encouragement and hope in your specific role as mom or dad.



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Greetings from Focus on the Family

By Jim Daly, President of Focus on the Family



I'm delighted to present this special resource celebrating you—and the priceless role you play in the lives of your kids as “Mom” or “Dad.”

After four decades of ministry, we're more convinced than ever that children are best equipped to be godly, caring, and responsible people when they enjoy healthy relationships with their parents.

We've seen the fruit of solid parent-child bonds time and again as listeners have shared their inspiring testimonies. We've heard from moms who've gained confidence in lovingly disciplining their toddlers, dads who've realized the importance of slowing down to spend quality time with their kids, and couples who've discovered that the strength of their marriages directly correlates to their children's well-being. The Lord has transformed these parents and families as they've embraced their roles and looked to God's Word for instruction.

Jean and I have experienced firsthand the joys and blessings that come from investing in our boys' lives. They're teenagers now, but we still love catching up on each other's days at dinner, setting out on a camping adventure, or relaxing together in front of a good movie. These are the moments that our children “bank” in their hearts and minds and carry with them for a lifetime.

We want to help you create relationship-building memories with your children as well! The articles, activities, and links in this resource will remind you anew of the high calling you've been given as Mom or Dad. No one can take your place in your child's life—and you have the incredible privilege of helping shape a young heart and mind to love and follow Jesus and to joyfully serve others.



One of Focus's core principles states: “We believe that children are a heritage from God and a blessing from His hand. Parents are therefore accountable to Him for raising, shaping, and preparing them for a life of service to His Kingdom and to humanity.”

This is an awesome—and often daunting—responsibility! But I'm convinced that God strengthens and equips us for the task as we seek His leading and direction.

And thankfully, He also offers grace when we fail—and we all fail at times! Perfection is not the goal in our families. We can foster strong relationships with our children even as we admit our shortcomings, give and receive mercy, and humbly draw closer to Christ and to one another.

Be encouraged, Mom or Dad, knowing that the Lord is your divine Helper. And remember that our team here at Focus would like to assist you in any way we can as well. Simply call us at 1-800-A-FAMILY (232-6459).

Blessings to you and your entire household! ●

7 Traits of Effective Parenting



Good parents aren't perfect. And that's okay. There's no formula to follow, but there are some qualities that effective parents share. They include:

1. **Love**, despite our imperfections, is seen in daily sacrifices, sincere attention, connected experiences, and God's perfecting.
 2. **Respect** is built on a foundation of love, which requires give and take, much like a dance, recognizing through humility the uniqueness and importance of self and others through God's eyes.
 3. **Boundaries** set with love and respect are essential to attain true freedom in Christ. Discipline and limits inspire growth, trust and healthy decision-making.
 4. **Grace and Forgiveness** gives us freedom from shame so we can step into who God has called us to be, what He's called us to do and to continue His ministry of reconciliation.
 5. **Intentionality** is the pursuit of an authentic relationship with God and each other through discipline, balance and family values.
 6. **Gratitude** facilitates humility and a receptive heart—prepared to lead, guide, communicate, connect, respond and resolve conflict. Gratitude is the gateway to kindness.
- Note: See page 12–13 for a fun activity to help cultivate gratitude in your home.*
7. **Adaptability** is the ability to adjust to whatever life brings and a willingness to embrace and respond to the stress that comes with parenting.

You may recognize that some traits match up with your strengths; others might be traits you hadn't previously connected with parenting. Either way, we've got a tool for you. The idea is to use the traits to transform your family, your neighborhood and your community.

It will give you an honest look at your unique strengths, plus some areas that could use a little help. Here's what you'll learn:

- The 7 traits of effective parenting, biblically-based and backed by research
- Discover your parenting strengths, and areas for growth
- Identify the skills you need to raise healthy, mature and responsible children •

7 Traits of Effective Parenting
ASSESSMENT

Take the assessment today!

You can also find it online at FocusOnTheFamily.com/MomAndDad

Why Children Need Both a Mom and a Dad



Mothers and Fathers Parent Differently

God created humans in His image, male and female, each with their own unique and complementary qualities. And, He established marriage to connect a husband and wife with any children they have.

Different Is Good

Much of the value mothers and fathers bring to their children is because they are different. Generally, fathers tend to encourage children to take chances and push limits, while mothers tend to teach cooperative play and living within boundaries. Each approach is essential for a child's healthy development. When either parenting style is extreme, it can have an unbalancing effect on children, but together, Mom's and Dad's different approaches are balanced to nurture the child, expand his experiences and give him confidence. Mom and Dad—you are doing important, God-ordained work.

Kids Need a Mom and a Dad—That's What Research Shows

The world's leading scholars have published a mountain of academic studies about how married mothers and fathers impact child well-being. In fact, few social science topics are supported by such vast and diverse documentation.

Focus Has a Heart—and Tools—for Single, Foster, Adoptive and Stepparents

Children can—and do—thrive in families without both a biological mom and dad when they have extra support. If that describes your family makeup, you're doing admirable and challenging work! To come alongside you, we offer many resources for single parents and foster, adoptive and blended families. We've also responded to God's command to care for orphans through the Wait No More® program. ●

Research Shows ...

Children who live with their own married parents:

- Live longer, healthier lives both physically and mentally
- Do better in school
- Are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college
- Are less likely to live in poverty
- Are less likely to be in trouble with the law
- Are less likely to drink or do drugs
- Are less likely to be violent or sexually active
- Are less likely to be victims of sexual or physical violence
- Are more likely to have successful marriages when they are older

Read the full article and research highlights at
FocusOnTheFamily.com/MomAndDad





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Finding Joy in Motherhood

By Jim Daly, President of Focus on the Family



Author Arlene Pellicane describes the average mom's frenzied day like this: "We wake up, and we're Mary Poppins. 'Let's do this thing!' we say. But by the time we go to bed, we're Cruella de Vil."

A lot of moms might describe themselves with words like "busy," "stressed," or "tired."

One word you don't often hear from moms is "happy." Maybe that's because, by and large, mothers have settled into the notion that busyness, work, and falling into bed exhausted are "just the way it is."

Arlene's discovery of what a happy mom is began with a personal encounter that illustrated to her what a happy mom isn't.

While out shopping, Arlene noticed a mother who shuffled up and down the aisles with little children underfoot. Arlene could tell the mom was struggling to keep them all corralled. Then, without warning, the 6-year-old ran up to Arlene and kicked her right in the shins.

The mom was apologetic but, later, when Arlene saw her in one of the checkout lines, she was still struggling with the boy and crying. That incident got Arlene wondering: What mom—most of whom are pulled in too many directions at once—faces the daily challenges of motherhood and thinks, "This is everything I hoped for. I'm so happy."

What Does a Happy Mom Look Like Anyway?

She isn't a woman who lives in luxury or whose life is without difficulty. She's not the mom who gets a spa treatment every Saturday ... although that could probably help. And it's not the woman running up debt on her credit card for new outfits

FOCUS^{ON}THE FAMILY[®]
BROADCAST

Assuring Moms in Their Parenting Journey

In a discussion based on her recent book, *The 20 Hardest Questions Every Mom Faces*, Dannah Gresh offers encouragement and biblically-based wisdom to moms who are facing uncertainty and anxiety as they wrestle with difficult questions.

LISTEN NOW
FocusOnTheFamily.com/MomandDad

she can't afford, so she can impress other people. The Bible tells us happiness is found in seeking the Lord—that includes moms, of course. There is tremendous power when a mom asks, "God, how can I glorify You in motherhood?" When that prayer reflects the desire of her heart, it will become the thrust of her life and the motive for all she does. And joy will be the result.

Arlene offers an acronym to help moms remember the ingredients for genuine happiness. Each letter in the word "happy" stands for one part of that recipe. ●

H is for **healthy**. It's important for moms to be healthy—physically, spiritually, emotionally, and in their relationship with their husbands and children. It's like the oxygen masks in an airplane. You take care of yourself first, so you're able to care for others.

A is for being **action oriented**. Happy moms let their actions speak louder than their words. They have to follow through when they say, "Do this," or "Don't do that, and this is the consequence." You cannot reason with a 2-, 3-, 4- or 5-year-old. Even teenagers understand action. That could mean no video games, no TV, no smartphone, or no friends.

P is for **prayerful**. Instead of calling on God, moms often seek answers elsewhere. Google can certainly provide moms with a wealth of helpful and practical answers (and I think you'll find a lot of the information you're looking for right here at Focus on the Family), but it can become an unhealthy substitute for seeking the Lord.

P is for **perseverance**. Parenting is a marathon, not a sprint. You're not raising a child; you're raising an adult. Understanding that will help you dig in and persevere when things get tough because you're thinking long term.

Y means striving to be a **"yes"** mom. It's okay for moms to have hobbies and interests outside of their children. Of course your children need you, but you need refreshment, too. Think of the things that really give you energy, that you love, and do them. Those activities could be with or without your kids.

Another **"yes"** is the yes to service. Look for activities that encourage your family to focus their attention outward onto others. Even a simple idea can help put another layer in your life that brings joy.

And let me add another one. I'd say think of **S for slow down**. As someone once told me, "If you have children, don't blink." One day you're celebrating their fifth birthday and the next you're watching them graduate from high school.

Adapted from the book *31 Days to Becoming a Happy Mom*, published by Harvest House Publishers.

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Embracing the Joy and Pain of Motherhood

By Joannie DeBrito, Director of Parenting and Youth



I think parenthood was wired into my brain and infused into my genetic makeup. It runs in the family. After all, my father was a pediatric dentist, a career one wouldn't choose unless he really loved children. At a very young age, I picked up his affinity for kids.

At seven, I began working alongside my mom in the church nursery. Too small to rock the crying babies, I remember cradling them on my outstretched legs as I sat on the floor, rocking them left to right as I stroked their cheeks. As a teen, babysitting trumped dating. In college, dreams of motherhood trumped dreams of climbing the corporate ladder. As girlfriends ran from domestic chores and crying kids, I ran toward them with great joy, intent on comforting and gently disciplining little ones.

The Peaks of Joy

My husband and I were overjoyed to become parents in our mid-twenties. As a mental health professional, I've walked with clients through the grief of infertility, the loss of children and broken family relationships. From that perspective, I've celebrated the gift of motherhood every day—even the most difficult times. I've cherished the special mother/child bond. And the joys of watching God's special gifts bloom in our daughters far surpassed the struggles and the pains that accompany the tough seasons. More recently the thrill of being in a supportive role as a grandmother has been hard to put into words.

The Depths of Pain

Recently, a life-threatening health crisis nearly took the life of our oldest daughter. We assumed each holiday would be the last we would spend with her on earth. Every day for nearly two years, I



retreated to my closet for a conversation with God, pleading for healing, crying myself breathless and preparing for life without her.

I recalled her sleeping near me as a baby. I recounted her progression from preschool playgroups to Brownies to swim team to college. I silently rejoiced for the girlfriends that became like adopted daughters. I couldn't imagine going on without her.

Her sister often called with similar sentiments. I had no wise motherly advice, no idea of how to comfort her in the midst of my own pain.

In my weakest moments when I felt the sadness turning to despair, I would hear a quiet voice say, "Be still and know that I am God." And through the distress, a parallel thought kept me from >>>

descending into a pit of depression: “I am so grateful to have been blessed with this beautiful daughter and our love will never die.”

The experience taught me that every day with my children is a gift from God. And I believe any mother who’s been through a similar experience would agree.

Thankfully, God answered our prayers for healing.

The Circle of Life

During that same time, my only remaining aunt and uncle died, and then, as if to stoke the fire of loss, my mother died unexpectedly after a long, healthy life. Though that loss was hard, I was grateful she

“

Love is patient and kind;
love does not envy or
boast; it is not arrogant
or rude. It does not insist
on its own way; it is not
irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice at
wrongdoing, but
rejoices with the truth.
**Love bears all things,
believes all things,
hopes all things,
endures all things.**

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

and I had no unfinished business, no unresolved conflicts. We had long ago forgiven one another for past hurts and built an adult relationship of respect and trust.

And while I never want to feel that unrelenting grief again, I also recognize that God never left my side and that my longing for answers and comfort fostered in me a deeper and more mature dependence on God.

Joy and Pain—Both Part of God’s Design

In retrospect, I see both joy and suffering are part of God’s design for motherhood. Anyone who has given birth can attest that motherhood begins with pain. And adoptive moms can attest to the struggle of connecting, initially or caring for children who have been impacted by trauma. And that is just the beginning of a cycle of parenting with love through the highs and lows.

Love is not synonymous with joy. 1 Corinthians 13:7 tells us that in addition to love being patient and kind, love “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Bearing and enduring refer to persevering through difficult times.

The goal of Christian parenting is to raise children who know and love God and want to serve Him. It is in loving children through all circumstances that a mother can honor the biblical instruction to teach her children to put their hope in God and follow His commandments (Psalm 78:5-7). While it is true that joyful moments with our children are exhilarating and rewarding, it is often those painful circumstances in motherhood that remind us and our children that our only hope for eternal joy is in God and that the path to freedom from pain is full dependence on the Divine Creator and gratitude for His son’s sacrifice for us all. ●

Gratitude—One of the 7 Traits of Effective Parenting



Neuroscientists have discovered that the brain is changed by gratitude. Prathik Kini of Indiana University led a group of researchers to look at the effects of gratitude on the brain. They found the more a person practices gratitude, the more his or her brain naturally responds gratefully. It's like working out. The areas of the brain that help with being grateful grow and develop lasting connections. The brain develops resiliency in response to disappointment, adversity, and loss. This is brain growth that can happen at any time in life.

Paul takes gratitude to an extraordinary level. He says in Romans 5:3-5 that “we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” •

Moms!

Share this **Adventures in Odyssey®** episode with your kids.

Expect the unexpected—great conversations are sure to follow!



In “My Favorite Thing” nothing goes as planned when the Washingtons try to take Mom out to dinner for her birthday!

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A Fun Way to Cultivate Gratitude with Your Kids



Here's a fun way to spend time with your children and teach them about gratitude at the same time. Clip these coupons and give them to your kids to express gratitude when you see them exhibiting noble behavior, good character or kind service to others.



LET'S CELEBRATE YOUR

- Good Behavior
- Good Character
- Kind Service to Others

This is what I noticed:

This coupon is good for 30 minutes of special time with Mom.

LET'S CELEBRATE YOUR

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- Good Character
- Kind Service to Others

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A Mother's Superpower: Changing the World, One Child at a Time

By Brenda Ostlie, Program Manager of Parenting and Youth



Let's face it, there are times when mothering can be a pretty thankless job. It's easy to get caught up in a daily hamster wheel, churning through your responsibilities as nurse to every ailment, psychologist for daily traumas, activities director, chauffeur, cheerleader, chief chef, and the list goes on.

It's exhausting, especially considering the fact that you're typically doing it on a fraction of what's considered a good night's sleep. Most days it feels like your kids demand more than you can give.

But what if you look through a different lens? What if you jump off the rotating wheel, draw a big red hypothetical "S" on your chest and see yourself as the superhero you are? That's not to say you can, or even should attempt to "do it all." (That'll get you back on the hamster wheel.) So, what exactly is your superpower? As a mom, you have the ability to change the world, one child at a time.

Does it seem like a stretch—changing the world... raising a child? What's the common thread? I would reason that changing the world starts at home, by raising unspoiled, victimless, emotionally healthy children.

Not every kid will grow up to impact the world like Mother Teresa, Steve Jobs or (fill in your favorite world-changer). However, God willing, children will grow up. They'll shape the world around them. They'll vote on laws. They'll raise your potential grandchildren. And they'll help care for you when you're incapable of caring for yourself.

So, while your child may not singlehandedly change the course of world history, she'll impact the world around her.

Check in with Your Power Source

Superman gets his power from the yellow sun of Earth. That doesn't begin to compare with the power source of a Supermom, which is the Holy Son of God.

Jesus provided the perfect model. Through his signature style of servant leadership, he trained up a ragtag group of disciples. When He was done with them, they took what they learned, and powered by the Holy Spirit, began a movement that became the world's largest religion.

If you're a Christ-follower, you've got the same power. The power to intercede on behalf of your kids with the Author of history past and history future. The power to demonstrate the grace of Jesus Christ. The power to speak truth in love. And the power to send them out to change the world.

So, mom, you get to decide: hamster wheel or Superhero? It may be just a matter of perspective. ●

A Prayer for the Supermom

Heavenly Father, you are the ultimate parent. You provide the perfect example of patience, grace and loving correction for those who belong to you. Help us to do likewise with the children in our care. Lord, give us the eyes to see the power you've entrusted to mothers and the wisdom to apply it in every circumstance. In your Son's name we pray. Amen.

A Craft for Moms and Kids of All Ages

Painted Wings by April Dawn White



Gather

- coffee filter
- watercolor paints
- paintbrush
- paper plate
- clothespin
- glue
- pipe cleaner
- googly eyes

Go

1. Dampen coffee filter with water.
2. Paint coffee filter with watercolors. The colors will bleed, making a tie-dye effect.

Tip: For bolder colors, place a paper plate under the coffee filter before you paint. Let the filter dry on the plate.

3. Paint clothespin a solid color for the body.
4. Set painted filter and clothespin in the sun to dry.
5. Pinch coffee filter in the middle to create wings.
6. Open the clothespin. Attach wings with a dab of glue.
7. Bend a pipe cleaner in half to form antennae and glue to clothespin.
8. Shape each wing by pinching edge. Secure with a dab of glue.
9. Glue on googly eyes.
10. Make two butterflies: one to keep and one to share.

This article first appeared in the May 2016 issue of *Focus on the Family Clubhouse™* magazine; used by permission.



Crafts and Recipes

Find more fun crafts and recipes to make with kids or go online to clubhousemagazine.com/mom.

Mother's Day Treat

Hey, DADS AND KIDS, you might want to go to that site to make a craft or prepare a special treat for Mom on Mother's Day.



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How About a Little Father's Day Gift Reversal?

By Danny Huerta, Vice President of Parenting and Youth



Every Father's Day we dads get to hear we're great. Number one. Best dad in the world. How sweet those sentiments. Being a dad is an honor and a privilege. But it requires focus, energy, sacrifice, self-care, time, humbleness and a lot of emotion. I don't always have a full tank of those things. And I have to admit there are times when I'd love to call in a sub from the bench.

Being a dad boils down to learning to love beyond ourselves. I believe that's what propels us to that number one position in the eyes of our kids—just connecting, being present, attentive, involved and encouraging. And that's the gift we fathers can provide to our children. I think deep down, we sense our impact. Research from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology found a father's love is essential in a child's development—as much, or in some cases, more than a mother's love. Yet, the realities of life can distract us from our best intentions of loving our kids well.

So what happens when we don't take fatherhood seriously? The same researchers cited above found that rejection from a father can greatly contribute to a child's social anxiety and insecurity and can lead to behavior problems. Children have a hard time making sense of rejection and apathy from a father, and in the process, dads also miss out on the potential life-giving bond God creates between a dad and his child.

You are God's Gift, Literally

As fathers, there's another gift we can give our kids. In our broken and imperfect way, we can provide an earthly image of our Heavenly Father's steadfast love. I remember a few years ago when my daughter said my love helped her understand God's love for her. Wow. I rarely feel like I measure up. But her comment reminds me of the incredible privilege it is to give my kids a glimpse of God's love for His children.

God's love is steadfast, unwavering, unrelenting, faithful, and immovable. Imagine a home, a city, a nation filled with dads who have the courage and focus to give their kids steadfast love? This world would be transformed! >>>

Dad, You're Important!

According to the research—and there's a lot of it—fathers provide the following benefits:

- Self-control—fun and playful roughhousing teaches kids self-control and emotional control (Fathers and Families Research Program, Australia, 2011)
- Healthy risk-taking to mature into adulthood (*Journal of Human Development*, 2004)
- Persistence—dad's involvement and teaching of persistence is a great predictor of whether their teen "sticks with it" when things get difficult (*Journal of Early Adolescence*, 2012)
- Higher IQs—dads involved in nurturing and play have kids with higher IQs (Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006)
- Higher grades—stepdads, adoptive dads and biological dads being highly involved in their children's lives resulted in a 43 percent higher likelihood of mainly A's in school (U.S. Department of Education, 2001)
- Sexual self-control—teens who had a good relationship with their father were more likely to delay having sex (*Journal of Pediatrics*, 2012)

How well are you loving today?

Love has different levels of maturity that have nothing to do with your years on this earth. Read and honestly assess where you land today.

1. Loving yourself for your own benefit

We all start here as infants with self-preservation. Some adults get stuck here when there's been abuse or an absence of love in their past.

2. Loving others for your own benefit

In this level, you push for others to fill your cup. Toddlers get their needs met by loving in this way. As adults, it shows up as needing affirmation, care and/or praise in order to feel loved.

3. Loving others for their benefit

This is where you pour into others to fill their cups. It's sacrificial love, which is great but can quickly drain you if you aren't taking care of yourself along the way.

4. Overflowing with love for others

This is the ninja level. It involves learning how to fill up your cup to overflowing to bless others. God says we get free refills of His love any time. When you have times of renewal with Him, you refill. When you take time to rest or do things you enjoy, you refill. And when you have meaningful relationship moments, you refill.

You may fluctuate between stages, but answer honestly, where do you spend most of your time?

None of the levels make you a bad person. Each simply gives you knowledge you can act upon. The goal is to be aware and find ways to regroup and replenish so you can engage your family with a full tank.

My children have no doubt that I would give my life for them. (Are you with me?) But I also get to give them the gift of knowing on a daily basis how God's love feels and who He created them to be.

When my daughter says, "Dad, can you just hold me?" and my son just wants to "hang out together," they just want reassurance of my love. And isn't that what we all want daily from God?

On Father's Day, what if you became a gift to your kids? Go for the ninja love and watch how it begins to transform your family! ●



The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

The Power of Fathers

By John Blase



As I watched the movie with my children, there were the usual suspects: a cute little girl, a dog and a father who didn't know he had a daughter but was about to get his chance at redemption. Throw in some Elvis Presley tunes and competitive professional sports for dramatic effect, and you've got one of those feel-good movies that tugs at your heartstrings while tickling your funny bone.

Throughout the movie, the main character kept saying, "the power of the father." What started out as a phrase to help him stay focused in his newly discovered role became something more: the belief that a father has the power to give his children something that no one else can. And, while this film was no *Old Yeller* or *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, it did manage to successfully ask, "Do children really need a father?"

Even in the midst of Hollywood dips and turns, the answer was clear: Yes, there really is a power >>>

Connect on Their Terms

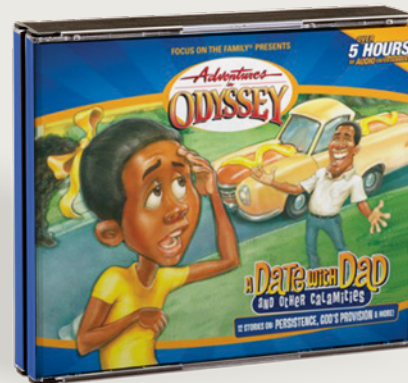
Intentional parenting means making a purposeful decision to spend time connecting with your kids. This helps your child in several ways:

- Valuing family time
- Valuing rest
- Valuing communication
- Balancing time and priorities
- Learning character formation and serving others

Dads!

Have fun with your kids and naturally open up teaching moments.

Listen to this Adventures in Odyssey® episode together!



"Bring up Dads" is a very funny episode that highlights what dads go through when they realize their kids are growing up.

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that only a father brings to his children. Any time I see a film that even remotely acknowledges such a truth, I'm thankful. Much of our media do not believe a father to be necessarily beneficial, and those that include dads in a script often portray him as an absolute idiot. It's sad, really. Actually, it's a disgrace.

The pattern established in the beginning was this: For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

A man would leave his father and mother and take a wife. They would be fruitful and multiply. The children would benefit from both parents, as each one would bring different and necessary facets to the child's life. This was the pattern, the divine design.

I realize the phrase "power of the father" might stir up less-than-desirable reactions from some. Power is a word that can be used for good or evil. But just because some have and will abuse the reality behind the word, there's no need to write it off.

God's Word clearly indicates that men—fathers—bring power to the parenting relationship. The woman brings life; the father brings strength. There will be days when a mother brings strength to things and there will be days when a man brings life. But the abiding pattern, the divine design, gives power to the father. The question, as always, is, "How will the power be used?" ●

Effects of Fatherhood

"Even from birth, children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, be confident to explore their surroundings, and, as they grow older, have better social connections ...

Children with involved, caring fathers have better educational outcomes. The influence of a father's involvement extends into adolescence and young adulthood. Numerous studies find that an active and nurturing style of fathering is associated with better verbal skills, intellectual functioning, and academic achievement among adolescents."

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/fatherhood.pdf>

This article is from the series, "Power of Fathers."

To see more articles in this series, go to

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Staying Involved with Your Kid's Life

By Jay Payleitner



It's easy to enter the world of a young child. As a dad, all you have to say is, "Hey there, kiddo. What's up?" Better yet, you can offer to do something together—read a story or show how to use a few tools in the garage. Promise your kid a dash of your attention, and he'll pretty much drop everything to spend time with you.

But that all starts to change sometime in middle school. Sure, kids still want to be with Dad, but they're also building protective walls and figuring out how to make their own decisions. That's all a part of growing up, but it can make entering your child's world a little trickier, requiring some cunning and resourcefulness.



Because borders are being drawn around certain areas of your child's life—the classroom, the practice field, the youth group or just that off-limits zone your child sets up wearing headphones—you may need a creative reason to interrupt your child's self-absorbed world. Here are a few possible strategies for interrupting your son's or daughter's privacy—without seeming like an interruption:

Give Yourself a Mutual Mission

Asking a young person's opinion can be both surprising and empowering. Together with your child, brainstorm gift ideas for Mom or plans for Grandpa's big birthday celebration. Take your child along when you shop for new patio chairs, discussing features, styles and prices together. Let her help design a flyer for the neighborhood block party. If you're raising high-tech whiz kids, respect their growing knowledge, by seeking input on iPhone apps or asking them to help with family computing tasks.

Volunteer at an Event

Initially, your child may not be thrilled that you signed up for a chaperone assignment, church event or fundraiser for his sports team. But if you keep to the task at hand (and try not to embarrass him), your child will be glad to see you involved in his life. One tip: Give your kid some time to process your participation at the big Christmas party or weekend retreat, letting him know ahead of time about your plans and the extent of your involvement.

Get Their Attention

Most of the time, being frugal is the best choice for a dad. Kids need to see a model of good stewardship, and they need to understand that, >>>

despite what other families do, they don't always need the newest and the shiniest. But once in a while, you need to get your kids' attention by... splurging. Imagine yourself saying the following: "Banana splits for everyone!" "Hey, when that movie based on your favorite book comes out, let's take your friends to see the midnight showing!" "Sunday afternoon, we're all going on a hot-air-balloon ride!" "Don't know what got into me, but I just bought a discount pass for horseback riding!"

Knock and Pray

I'm betting you already do bedtime and mealtime prayers with your kids, trying to model a reliance on God's will and plan for your life. But I urge you to try something a bit less repetitive, and a bit more inspired: some unannounced prayer with your

child. Knock on her door, and ask if you can come in and pray. And then pray ... big. Pray together for your family, your wife, stresses you might have, a neighbor or your community. Finish with a prayer for your child, who is sitting there with you. As time passes, relationships with children often will come full circle.

Your child will eventually be at a place where he can openly ask for your wisdom and advice regarding the weighty (and trivial) issues facing young adults. But in the meantime, you have some years ahead of you in which you'll need to step up and initiate those relationship-building opportunities—even if it means interrupting your child's world. ●

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This article is from the series, "Dad Time."
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Let Your Kids See How Fun It Is to Spend Time with You



Here's a fun way to teach your children about the importance of spending time together. Clip these coupons and give them to your kids to let them know you recognized their good behavior, good character or kind service to others.



LET'S CELEBRATE YOUR

- Good Behavior
- Good Character
- Kind Service to Others

This is what I noticed:

This coupon is good for 30 minutes of special time with Dad.

LET'S CELEBRATE YOUR

- Good Behavior
- Good Character
- Kind Service to Others

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Create a Family Crest

Family Flag by Jesse Florea



Gather

- markers or fabric pens
- white fabric
- wooden dowel
- glue

Go

1. Talk about activities, character traits or objects that describe your family.
2. Decide how you want to decorate your flag. Do you want to draw a tree, a cross or a horse?

Use colors and stripes to stand for important characteristics:

Green = Hope

Blue = Truth

White = Purity or Peace

Gold = Generosity

You can use a star to represent each person in your family. Maybe have triangles stand for your pets. Be creative.

3. Attach your flag to a wooden dowel and hang in your home. Then your family can see it and remember to stand strong together.

This feature first appeared in the June 2008 issue of *Focus on the Family Clubhouse Jr.*™ magazine. Photo © Focus on the Family.



Crafts and Recipes

Find more fun crafts and recipes to make with kids or go online to clubhousemagazine.com/mom.

Father's Day Treat

Hey, MOMS AND KIDS, you might want to go to that site to make a craft or prepare a special treat for Dad on Father's Day.

Faith-Building Tools for Kids and Related Resources



The award-winning Clubhouse and Clubhouse Jr. magazines help your kids learn, laugh and grow closer to God. FocusOnTheFamily.com/KidsMags



For more than 30 years, kids have enjoyed the adventure, discovery and excitement of the Adventures in Odyssey® audio dramas while learning lasting truths through their stories. Resources, appropriate for ages 8–12, also include books, videos, activities and more. Whit'sEnd.com



Brio meets teen girls where they're at, exploring culture, body image, social media, boys and more through the filter of shared faith in Jesus Christ. BrioMagazine.com

We've handpicked our favorite books that celebrate your role as mom and dad. Find them at FocusOnTheFamily.com/Store!

Books

- *Raising Kingdom Kids: Giving Your Child a Living Faith* by Tony Evans
- *Be the Mom: Overcome Attitude Traps and Enjoy Your Kids* by Tracey Lanter Eyster
- *Raising a Modern Day Knight: A Father's Role in Guiding His Son to Authentic Manhood* by Robert Lewis
- *Raising a Modern Day Princess: Inspiring Purpose, Value, and Strength in Your Daughter* by Pam Farrell and Doreen Hanna
- *Be the Dad She Needs You to Be* by Kevin Leman
- *What a Difference a Mom Makes* by Kevin Leman
- *When Parenting Isn't Perfect* by Jim Daly with Paul Asay

Christian Organizations that Serve Moms and Dads:

Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS)
www.mops.org

Proverbs 31 Ministries
www.proverbs31.org

Mom and Mom Ministries
www.momtocom.org

Mom Heart Ministries
www.momheart.com

One Million Dads Ministries
www.onemilliondads.com

Promise Keepers Ministries
www.promisekeepers.org

Wingmen Ministries
www.wingmen.org

References

For links to the research referenced in the "Why Do Married Mothers and Fathers Matter?" please go to FocusOnTheFamily.com/MomAndDad.

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Page 6 research is a 2011 summary of findings from a diverse team of family scholars working collectively from the universities of Texas, Virginia, Minnesota, Chicago, Maryland, Washington, UC Berkeley and Rutgers.

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