



Family Matters



A Christ-center resource for families and teachers

Vol. 17 No. 3 November 2012

Helping Your Child to “C”

Discovering ways to impart critical skills and values in your child’s life and family setting.

Compassion

Perhaps you have heard the saying, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” The point is obvious. Care, compassion, concern — however you term it — trumps knowledge, insight and experience. Personal relationships are what matter most, and within the context of a personal connection the care factor is huge!

No parent wants their child to be bullied and, certainly, no parent wants their child to be the bully. The antidote for bullying is care. People who care for one another don’t bully each another. Raise the level of care and love and concern among people, and the issue of bullying starts to fade away.

We can raise the level of compassion within our children through our example of showing care. For adults and maturing youth, the idea of care comes in two forms:

Anticipated Care: This is when we see the need coming. We know when a moment for compassion is coming upon us. It’s inevitable. It could be a debilitated person, for whom assistance is rendered regularly. It could be a sick grandparent in the hospital or care facility. It could be when care becomes a way of life, where we show compassion and in regular manner.

Unexpected Care: This is a sudden incident, a moment demanding our care and concern that seems to come out of nowhere. We react with compassion to someone hurt emotionally or physically. It is immediate, and our expression of care takes priority over other events and activities in our everyday lives.

When these moments arise, children notice them. They may not understand all the details, but they know something is going on, be it anticipated or unexpected. Children will watch the adults around them and learn what compassion is from the compassionate people in their lives. They will



learn the words to say, the actions to give and how to pour out their heart for someone in need. Compassion teaches compassion.

In our crazy and fast-paced world, not everyone we expect to care will care for us, but we may discover care from unexpected sources. Compassion starts with the heart — a heart filled with love for others, a heart filled with God’s love, which motivates us to love because we have been loved by Jesus first. It is a love that overflows from the Father to the Son to all of us as His followers. It is a love that we can pass along to the next generation by the way we show care and compassion to others.

Compassion — it happens in expected and unexpected ways. We teach our children compassion by showing it ourselves within the family setting. We teach our children respect for others by respecting all people. In doing simple and tangible things to help those in need, we not only bring others support and a message of hope and love, we also send the message that they are of value.

Let’s get out there and show compassion for others, knowing that our children are watching and learning.

FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Gather the family together and follow the steps below. Make sure to have a Bible.

Begin with a prayer.

Opening Question: “Who are our neighbors here, where we live?”

Bible Story: Read Luke 10:25–37.

Discussion Questions:

1. What happened to the man going down the road to Jericho? (He got beat up.)
2. What happened when the first two men came by? (They walked on by and didn't help him.)
3. What did the next man do? (He took pity on him, stopped, bandaged his wounds and took him to an inn, where he paid for the innkeeper to take care of him for as long as needed.)

4. Which of these men showed the most compassion? (The third man)
5. Who showed the same kind of compassion to us? (Jesus)
6. What does Jesus want us to do? (To go and do likewise. To help those in need.)

Concluding Questions:

1. Who do you know who could use some care and compassion?
2. What can you do to help them in their time of need?

Closing Prayer: Close with an echo prayer. (Have an adult read the following prayer, and everyone else in the family echo the words aloud.)

Dear heavenly Father, Thank You for loving us. Thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You for taking care of us when we get hurt. Help us to care for others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

TIPS FOR PARENTS: Here are a few suggestions to follow to help in developing character within your child.

1. Give children responsibilities for helping care for the family pet.
2. As a family, sponsor a child through a special care or ministry organization.
3. Take children along with you on care trips to visit a sick friend or someone in the hospital.
4. Keep a family prayer chart, and pray regularly for those who are ill.
5. Let children have a special potted plant or yard plant that they have the responsibility to care for.
6. Have children make special cards and take them to homebound people in your family, church or community.
7. Save up recyclable items and then use the money to support a special organization that cares for people.

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Vol. 17 • No. 3
November 2012

“Family Matters” is published by LCMS School Ministry (Office of National Mission), 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295
(314) 965-9000 • www.lcms.org

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