

The Joy of Parenting

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Parenting is defined as the work of a parent in raising a child or children. God's command in creation has always been for man to raise a family and subdue the earth. Not everyone, however, has the call to become a parent. Some, for various reasons, in God's providence, hold other special places. For those of us whom God has called to parenting, we must cheerfully assume the responsibilities of bearing and raising children through the means which God has provided.

In marriage, the Lord Jehovah brings together two special mates to share the responsibilities of being faithful covenant parents. Being parents in the 20th century has both benefits and drawbacks. It is much easier to provide for the child's health today than before; but it is more difficult to develop a spiritually strong and sound child. Throughout most of history, a child was at his parents' side while he grew up. Today the family is threatened with fathers having to work away from their wives and children, and maybe even away from the sphere of the covenant. Fathers find it hard to find time to have

a big part in the instructing of their offspring in the everyday wisdom of life. Many of us, and most of our parents, have experienced growing up in a less industrialized environment. In generations gone by, the family usually stayed together, in the family farm or business in small towns; but today most of us work for wages, and the day-to-day rearing of our children is in the hands of mothers and teachers.

However, we must trust in God's grace to supply us with what we need to find joy in becoming parents and in mastering parenting. From holding a newborn infant struggling for its first few breaths of earthly air, to seeing the children off on their own — the believing parent has, every day, abundant evidence of God's blessing and mercy. The joy is unspeakable when we hear young mouths speak of a Holy God and of the love for Jesus Christ in their hearts. We must bring up our children in the fear of God — which proves to be the joyous way to live this mortal life, as we follow the light of the Word, trying never to show a lack of faith in our Creator.

God shows to us parents our

own faults, weaknesses, and strengths in the way each child behaves, how he reacts to chastisement, and how he tries to live a holy life. What our children really need is our time for listening, talking, sharing, and growing together. On the bottom line, they do not need physical things that create a "fun" time for them. They like to be challenged, to be taught the truth, and to be loved as a friend. They really don't need the latest fads, a bike, or a car, a game or whatever; but they need a heartfelt assurance of being part of our life. Take away all of their earthly things except for food, water, and shelter, and they will cling to their parents. Take away their parents, and life will mean nothing to them.

What a joy it is for us as Protestant Reformed parents to know that God has included us in His covenant, and that He calls Himself our heavenly Father, giving the promise to us and to our children. Parenthood is overwhelming at times, since our children are born in sin and struggle with it. But that is the real joy of life, knowing that we have the truth to share with them, making life so much more the richer.

How wonderful it is to see that God gives each child his special talents, and how He is pleased to develop those talents through the means of us as parents. Mothers

can go to bed dead-tired at the end of the day with a mighty peace in their hearts, knowing that the child is sleeping soundly after having grown in God's grace another day. It's easy to run out of patience, at day's end, with the task of training the little ones, and instructing the older ones with the proof of God's word; but we can sleep securely knowing that God will give strength, hope, and joy for the morrow. What a reward mothers can look forward to in heaven, having been chosen by God to labor faithfully in the home and to give themselves to serve the children given to their care in God's Holy Name.

Parenting teens poses many challenges because at times they want to run the world while they still know it all. Patience and trust in our Father's Word gets us through that time of a family's maturing in life. What memorable moments in life when our children (in their adolescent years) confess faith in the triune God and in His Word, in antithesis to the darkness of this world. I think we would gladly go through it all again for the joy of that moment. When we look back, one lifetime is like just yesterday, and the young man or woman seems to have only arrived out of the womb; but time has brought them there so quickly.

That is why we must live each day as if it were the last day we

young men and women who still profess their faith in the same heavenly Father of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God Who in His covenant faithfulness sends the Comforter to guide us in the truth and to enable us to teach it to our children. ■■■



BULLETIN BOARD

The third annual Young Writers' Day is being planned for this summer. An information sheet concerning it was distributed to the appropriate schools early in the spring. It seemed to us that it might be of interest to our readers to know what it is that is being provided; so, on our Bulletin Board today we find the scoop as it appeared on the aforementioned flyer.

Young Writers' Day

THEME: Writing to One Another

WHAT?

Young Writers' Day is sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Schools. The activities of the day will include: devotional times, writing experiences, pizza lunch, and organized play time.

WHY?

The objectives of the day include the following:

1. Provide an enjoyable writing experience.
2. Help young writers develop a positive attitude toward writing.
3. Direct young writers to communicate by means of poetry and letter writing.
4. Provide each young writer with a booklet containing the writing of all the participants.