

THE CHURCH OF Jesus Christ

Our Children

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

Our children, a precious gift from God, are one of life's greatest joys! On the day of their birth, the parents and family experience feelings of wonder, the miracle itself, and behold the grand beauty of their little baby. The Church also participates in the joy of this moment as they welcome yet another newborn child into their spiritual family. As we hold them in our arms we begin to realize that they truly are our children. In that brief moment we completely experience and appreciate the joy of the Lord's creation of mankind.

All of us then realize and take very seriously that beginning with the day of their birth we have the obligation and responsibility to raise them so that they will become successful, responsible, and good citizens. The parents, *The Church of Jesus Christ*, and, eventually, the children themselves will all share in this duty. Taking some time to answer the following basic questions will help us determine goals to achieve these desirable results:

What do we teach them?
Why do we teach them?
How do we teach them?
When do we teach them?
Where do we teach them?

Then, "What objectives do we employ to attain these goals?", and "How do we individually and collectively engage in this great responsibility?"

Parents realize that rearing children is a daunting task that sometimes requires the assistance of others. This may include grandparents, other relatives, neighbors, the schools, and *The Church of Jesus Christ*. Certainly, each participant has a specific role and concern for a child's upbringing. Church personnel recognize that they will need to support families and offer religious education and spiritual guidance to the children. It is imperative that together we all work in unity to allow our children to reach their full potential, to help them know the Lord God, and to understand the multitude of His tender mercies.

The scripture continually reminds us that we must take every opportunity to teach our children the commandments of the Lord, the blessings of the Lord, and the ways of the Lord. God said to Moses, "...thou shalt teach them [God's blessings and commandments] diligently unto thy children...." (Deut 6:7) Solomon recommends to, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov 22:6) King Benjamin strongly suggests to his people, that "ye will teach them [the children] to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another." (Mos 4:15) Alma urges his son to declare glad tidings to his people and have them "prepare the minds of their children to hear the word...." (Alma 39:1) The Apostle Paul said to Timothy, "that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim 3:15) When Jesus visited the Nephites, "he did teach and minister unto the children...." (3 Nephi 26:14)

The following suggestions are very important, but certainly do not comprise a complete list.

Parents and *The Church of Jesus Christ* must TEACH the children:

1. About a knowledge of the scriptures.
2. About obeying the commandments.
3. About the love of God.
4. About Jesus Christ, our Savior.
5. About eternal life and the joy of the saints.
6. About prayer.
7. About the power of God.
8. About sin.
9. About temptation and not yielding to it.
10. About asking for forgiveness.
11. About living righteously.
12. About the Gospel.

The Church of Jesus Christ holds services (Sunday School, Sunday service, MBA, VBS, camps, etc.) where the children are provided the opportunity to learn all of the above. Parents can take advantage of these opportunities by bringing their children to the Church. In addition, parents should supplement that effort by teaching their children the ways of the Lord at home. Specific time must be devoted with our children in prayer and in providing spiritual education. Holding discussions with them regarding moral issues, including problem resolution about life's issues as they relate to the scriptures, are also very beneficial.

At this past October 2011 General Church Conference, a dream was accepted as a revelation from God giving all of us the understanding that we need to be vigilant in providing our children with the necessary tools to protect them from evil as they proceed through life. You may have already heard the particulars of the dream. However, the details may be frightening to some children, so caution must be made in the telling and sharing of the details. However, the dream does deliver a warning to the Church and to parents to be on guard. Most certainly, every parent, from the beginning of time, has had to deal with this concern. It appears that today we are living in very perilous times...perhaps more so than at any other time in history. The scriptures report many instances where the power of evil did influence people to fall into error. There are cases recorded that some of the children who were raised in the fear and admonition of the Lord also fell into sin as they grew older.

Jesus gave us some very important advice when He stated in Matthew 6:13 that we should pray in this manner, "...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...." James 4:7 states, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." It is of utmost importance to teach the children to ask God to keep them out of the way of temptation, to depend upon the Lord for His help, and if they find themselves in a dangerous zone of evil, to ask God to free them and deliver them.

The temptation of evil seems to be at the root of falling into sin and departing from the presence of the Lord. Therefore, if we can help them to know what is evil, how to avoid evil, and what to do if they fall prey to its influence, then we will have been successful in helping them save their souls in the kingdom of heaven realizing true joy, the joy of the saints.

This is the ninth of a series of messages to *The Church of Jesus Christ*. For more understanding of what we believe please visit our web site to obtain resource and contact information:

www.thechurchofjesuschrist.com.