

Single Parent Networker

Ascension, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit,
Corpus Christi, St. Anne, St. Mary, St. Joseph,
Christ the King, and Spirit of Life

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Developing Your Child's Self-Esteem

Healthy self-esteem is like a child's armor against the challenges of the world. Kids who know their strengths and weaknesses and feel good about themselves seem to have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures. They tend to smile more and enjoy life. These kids are realistic and generally optimistic.

In contrast, kids with low self-esteem can find challenges to be sources of major anxiety and frustration. Those who think poorly of themselves have a hard time finding solutions to problems. If given to self-critical thoughts such as "I'm no good" or "I can't do anything right," they may become passive and withdrawn. Faced with a new challenge, their immediate response might be "I can't."

WHAT IS SELF ESTEEM?

Self-esteem is similar to self-worth. This can change from day to day or from year to year, but overall self-esteem trends to develop from infancy and keep going until we are adults.

Self-esteem also can be defined as feeling capable while also feeling loved. A child who is happy with an achievement but does not feel loved may eventually experience low self-esteem. Likewise, a child who feels loved but is hesitant about his or her own abilities can also develop low self-esteem. Healthy self-esteem comes when a good balance is maintained. Patterns of self-esteem start early in life. The concept of success following effort and persistence starts early. Once people reach adulthood, it's harder

to make changes to how they see and define themselves.

So, it's wise to think about developing and promoting self-esteem during childhood. As kids try, fail. Try again, fail again, and then finally succeed, they develop ideas about their own capabilities. At the same time, they're creating a self-concept based on interactions with other people. This is why parental involvement is key to helping kids form accurate, healthy self-perceptions.

SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY AND HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem fluctuates as kids grow. It's frequently changed and fine-tuned, because it is affected by a child's experiences and new perceptions. So it helps to be aware of the signs of both healthy and unhealthy self-esteem.

Kids with low self-esteem see temporary setbacks as permanent, intolerable conditions, and a sense of pessimism prevails. This can place kids at risk for stress and mental health problems, as well as real difficulties solving different kinds of problems and challenges they encounter.

Kids with healthy self-esteem tend to enjoy interacting with others. They're comfortable in social settings and enjoy group activities as well as independent pursuits. When challenges arise, they can work toward finding solutions and voice discontent without belittling themselves or others. For example, rather than saying, "I'm an idiot" a child with healthy self-esteem says, "I don't understand this." They know their strengths and weaknesses, and

accept them. A sense of optimism prevails.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

How can a parent help to foster healthy self-esteem in a child? These tips can make a big difference:

Be careful what you say. Kids can be sensitive to parents' and others' words. Remember to praise your child not only for a job well done, but also for effort. But be truthful. For example, if your child doesn't make the soccer team, avoid saying "Well, next time you'll work harder and make it." Instead, try "Well, you didn't make the team, but I'm really proud of the effort you put into it." Reward effort and completion instead of outcome.

Be a positive role model. If you're excessively harsh on yourself, pessimistic, or unrealistic about your abilities and limitation, your kids might eventually mirror you. Nurture our own self-esteem and they'll have a great role model.

Identify and redirect inaccurate beliefs. It's important for parents to identify a child's irrational beliefs about himself, whether they're about perfection, attractiveness, ability, or anything else. Helping kids set more accurate standards and be more realistic in evaluating themselves will help them have a healthy self-concept.

Inaccurate perceptions of self can take root and become reality to kids. For example, a child who does very well in school but struggles with math may say, "I can't do math. I'm a bad student." Not only is this a

false generalization, it's also a belief that can set a child up for failure. Encourage kids to see a situation in a more objective way.

Be spontaneous and affectionate. Your love will help boost your child's self-esteem. Give hugs and tell kids you're proud of them when you can see them putting effort toward something at which they previously failed. Put notes in your child's lunchbox with messages like "I think you're terrific!"

Give praise often and honestly, but without overdoing it. Having an inflated sense of self can lead kids to put others down or feel that they're better than everyone else. Which can be socially isolating.

Give positive, accurate feedback. Comments like "You always work yourself up into such a frenzy!" will make kids feel like they have no control over their outbursts. A better statement is, "I can see you were very angry with your brother, but it was nice that you were able to talk about it instead of yelling or hitting." This acknowledges a child's feelings, rewards the choice made, and encourages the child to make the right choice again.

Create a safe, loving home environment. Kids who don't feel safe or are abused at home are at greatest risk for developing poor self-esteem. A child who is exposed to parents who fight and argue repeatedly may feel they have no control over their environment and become helpless or depressed.

Also watch for signs of abuse by others, problems in school, trouble with peers, and other factors that may affect a child's self-esteem. Encourage your kids to talk to you.

Help kids become involved in constructive experiences. Activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition are especially helpful in fostering self-esteem. For example, mentoring programs in which an older child helps a younger one learn to read can do wonders for both kids.

When promoting healthy self-esteem, it's important to not have too much or too little but "just enough." Make sure

your kids don't end up feeling that if they're average or normal at something, it's the same as not being good or special.

Finding Professional Help If you suspect your child has low self-esteem, consider getting professional help. Child and adolescent therapist and counselors can help identify coping strategies to help deal with problems at school or home in ways that help kids feel better about themselves. Therapy can help kids learn to view themselves and the world more realistically and help with problem solving. Developing the confidence to understand when you can deal with a problem and when to ask for help is vital to positive self-esteem.

Taking responsibility and pride in who you are is a sure sign of healthy self-esteem and the greatest gift parents can give to their child.

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Holy Week Forgiven

"For this is my blood
of the covenant,
which is poured
out for many for the
forgiveness of sins."

Matthew 26:28



Parenting Pointers

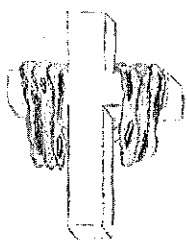
618. Apr. 3: Good Friday. On many days parenting is a joy, but on some days it certainly can be a cross. Let the cross have purpose by looking beyond it and believing that your child will overcome his or her difficulties.

619. Apr. 10: April is child abuse prevention month. If you haven't already, alert your children that they should tell you when ANYONE touches them inappropriately. Sexual abuse by those in authority is tragic.

620. Apr. 17: Next Wednesday, April 22, is Earth Day. In preparation, why don't you and your children clean up some of God's creation. Pick a park, a street, a place of nature to clear of litter. For inspiration check out: [Daniel 3:57-81](#)

621. Apr. 24: "A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10:11) A good parent is like a good shepherd. We spend our time, money, and worries on our children. In essence, we lay down our lives for their good. Remember that you as a parent also have The Good Shepherd who cares for you in the same way.

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ALLELUIA

Alleluia

Alleluia

He is not here. Christ is risen indeed!"

Today do something good out of love for our risen Lord!

Easy and Fun Easter Baskets

Ingredients

4 cups chow mein noodles
1/2 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup sugar
3/4 cup peanut butter
36 jelly beans



Directions

In a large bowl break chow mein noodles into small pieces; set aside.

Combine sugar and corn syrup in large saucepan.

Cook on medium heat until the sugar is melted and there are bubbles at the edge of the pan.

Add peanut butter and stir until smooth.

Pour peanut butter mixture over crunched up noodles; toss until completely coated.

Let cool slightly to avoid burns.

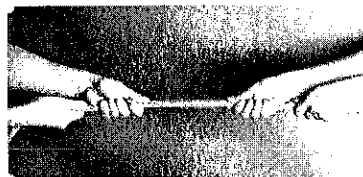
Butter hands lightly and use approximately 1/4 cup mixture to form a compact ball.

Make indentation in the middle of each ball to resemble a bird's nest.

Place on waxed paper and let cool completely.

Place 2-3 jelly beans inside each nest.

Serve on a bed of green-tinted coconut.



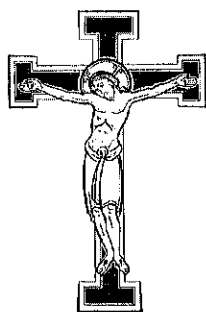
Dealing With Family Tensions

Family tensions can develop as adults and children enter new phases of their lives. Children grow from infants to preschoolers to school age children to adolescents to adults. Parents respond to the changing needs of their family, workplace, and social life. Learning to handle family tensions, either between parents, between children or between parents and children is critical to family survival.

Here are some ideas to try and deal with the tensions in your family:

- Allow a "cooling off period" if one or more of the family members are too emotional, continuing the discussion at this time may be counterproductive. Discuss the problem when things have calmed down.
- Listen calmly in the heat of an argument. Anger, excitement, and self-interest may prevent you from clearly hearing and understanding what the other person is saying.
- Hear the other family member out without interrupting or saying, "Yes, but . . .".
- Avoid power struggles between individuals. Focus on treating family members as responsible people.
- Expect and encourage family members to settle their own disagreements. Avoid being drawn into fights as either a referee or judge.
- Set reasonable limits for behavior.
- When possible make sure that you and your former spouse agree on acceptable behavior. Follow through and be consistent with your discipline techniques.
- Tell your children how their behavior affects others.
- Attach negative consequences (i.e., withdraw privileges) to undesirable behavior. Reward desired behavior with positive consequences (i.e., new privileges).
- Model the desired behavior you expect. Actions do speak louder than words.

Some amount of tension within families is inevitable. When two or more individuals live in close proximity, there are bound to be conflicting needs and desires. The goal is to learn to minimize tensions and resolve conflicts in a fair manner to improve the quality of family life.



Holy Thursday

Be of service—It is lowly and difficult. We prefer to be served. So Jesus showed us what to do, He washed the feet of the disciples.

Good Friday

Put yourself in God's hands—Accept and submit rather than fight. Jesus accepts his unjust conviction and puts Himself completely in God's hands.

Easter

Believe that Jesus' spirit lives among us—It is very important to help children connect the significance of the cross with the resurrection. Jesus' death has no meaning without his subsequent rising from the dead. The death of Jesus was not the end, but the beginning.

Be glad and shout for joy. 1Peter 4:13

Beginning Experience:

Separated, Divorced, Widow
Tara at 701-426-8303

Level I—Charity Lutheran

Level II—Faith Lutheran

Level III—Good Shepherd

Each level is 10 weeks. All levels run concurrently. See website below.

Children's Beginning Experience:

Susan at 1-701-258-3152

Free Preschool for 3&4 year olds for eligible families; contact BECEP at 701-323-4400 for school year.

Caring for Children Program—health coverage to uninsured children. 1-800-342-4718. www.ndcaring.org

Single File Newsletter

For information
www.bismarcksinglefile.com

Parish Information:

Cathedral—222-2259

St. Anne—223-1549

Ascension—223-3606

St. Mary- 223-5562

Corpus Christi—255-4600

Spirit of Life-663-1660

Christ the King -663-8842

St. Joseph -663-9562

Office of Family Ministry—Diocese of Bismarck—

Joyce McDowall 701-204-7209

Toll Free 1-877-405-7435

www.bismarckdiocese.com

jmcdowall@bismarckdiocese.com

If you would like your name removed from the mailing list, please call your parish coordinator

Parents Forever-Education for Families in divorce Transition, call NDSU Parent Resource Center, 667-3342 or 667-3340

WEBSITES THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST:

- www.celebratesimply.com
- www.bereavementmag.com
- www.beginningexperienceofwesternnorthdakota.org
- www.vibrantfaithathome.org
- www.usccb.org

www.fambooks.com/moms.htm

www.singleparents.about.com

www.bridgetobenefits.org