

MAKING CHRISTIAN VALUES WINSOME

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Theme: Teaching Christian values in the home setting.

Objective: To present a learning activity which identifies a core of Christian values, enables participants to discover their own value systems, and shares ideas for helping youth adopt Christian values.

How to Use This Resource: The ideas which follow may be used to create one or more special Family Life seminars or be adapted for Sabbath School, Adventist Youth Meetings, or the mid-week service.

Agree-Disagree Ice-breaker: To start the group thinking about Christian values, invite them to respond to the following agree/disagree statements. Do not discuss the statements now or offer your opinion. They are designed to be somewhat ambiguous and controversial with the purpose of starting people thinking.

1. A person's value system involves not only what they value, but also why they consider these values important and what they do with their values.
2. Obedience indicates that a young person has accepted certain values for himself/herself and is making choices based on principles.
3. Churchgoers should be more tolerant of others with differing beliefs than non-churchgoers.
4. Teaching young people to think and act for themselves on the basis of a set of moral principles they have personally espoused is the goal of values transmission.
5. There are universal biblical values which everyone should be strongly urged to accept.
6. Values transmission from parent to child is basically finished by the time the child leaves home.
7. Unlike the physical or intellectual development of a child, moral or character development does not move through predictable stages.
8. The highest values pertain to maintaining loving relationships.
9. Modeling is the most effective means of transmitting values.
10. Parents should make decisions for their children until they demonstrate they are capable of making correct choices for themselves.

PRESENTATION IDEAS

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that each generation is given the responsibility of both learning the principles of God's kingdom from those who have gone before and transmitting those principles to the generation which follows after. No plea in all of Scripture is more poignant and direct than that of the wise man to his son.

"Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching" (Proverbs 1:8, RSV).

Nor is any command to parents given in the Bible clearer than that pertaining to their responsibility to instruct their children.

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut. 6:6-9, NKJV).

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6, NKJV).

Most parents hope, above everything else, that their children will find the values they hold dear to be attractive and will make them part of their lives. How can parents go about increasing the likelihood that this will happen? The Hebrew verb translated "train up" provides some interesting insights. The original term meant "the palate, the roof of the mouth, the gums." It was used with two interesting connotations:

"It was the term used for breaking a wild horse and bringing it into submission by using a rope in its mouth. The word was also used to describe the actions of a midwife who assisted in the birth of a child. After the baby was born, the midwife would dip her finger into the juice of chewed or crushed dates. She would then place her finger into the mouth of the infant and massage the gums and the palate, so as to create a sensation for sucking. Next, she would take the child and place it in the mother's arms to begin feeding at her breast."—Charles Swindol, "What Does It Mean to Train Up a Child," reprinted in *Family Life Today*, October 1980, p. 5.

The two meanings come together in the Proverbs passage. Children, born with a bent toward evil, do not naturally accept and follow God's principles. In many ways, training them can be likened to the breaking of a wild horse. But in God's plan for the transmission of values, firmness and kindness always go together. So in the admonition to "train up" there is also the idea that the parental task is to create a thirst for the things of God, making His way so attractive, so winsome, that children will seek after His kingdom as eagerly as a newborn turns to his mother's breast.

"I like to think of value transmission as a huge smorgasbord where all the tempting dishes of competing values are displayed. Here the youth will eventually get to choose the items that are most appealing to them. And which will they choose? Those that are most colorful and attractive, most delectable, most tasty! It is not our responsibility to force our values upon our young people.

It is our responsibility to model our values so attractively that these youth cannot help seeing that they are vastly superior to the competition, and will freely choose them."—Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 117.

Isolating A Core of Values

What are "values"? The noun value means "something of worth." Values are those clusters of truths, attitudes, convictions, behaviors, objects, etc. which we believe to be important, especially as we are forced to make choices between these values and other alternatives by the experiences of our lives. Merton Strommen, a well known researcher of youth, writes in his book *A Study of Generations*, "Values are ideas people have about the 'good life' and about what life means. They are the ideas we use to tell whether we like something or not; whether it is important or unimportant to us; whether we are frightened of or feel good about an object, an event, a course of action, or a person."—Quoted in Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 15.

Ultimately, values determine everything we do. Important choices always call values into action. When we are confronted with situations where we cannot behave in a manner in keeping with all of our values, we are forced to prioritize our values and choose among them. "Teaching youth the

process for making these choices and resolving these conflicts lies at the very heart of value transmission between the generations."—Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 24.

Group Activity Option #1: Read the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl from Matthew 13:44-46. Then read the following scenario:

Assume for a moment that your house is on fire. The people and pets in the household are all safe. You are informed you have two minutes when it will still be safe for you to run through the house and gather up the most important things in your life. Imagine yourself running through every room, grabbing the things which are of highest value to you. Consider size and weight no problem. When you are safely outside, take inventory of what you have gathered. Jot down a list of the things you have saved from the flames.

Allow approximately 3-5 minutes for the first part of the exercise, then ask participants to look at their lists again and place the following symbols beside appropriate items in their lists.

O has recently become of value to me

< will likely go down in value to me in the next 5 years

> will likely go up in value to me in the next 5 years

+ to get this item I would risk returning to the house

x its loss would seriously affect my life and lifestyle

* would come the closest to being the "pearl of great price" in my life right now

P would probably be on my parents' list too

F would probably be on my friends' list too

The most valuable part of this exercise is the potential for discussion. For discussion in small groups: Consider your list of treasures again.

Are you happy with your choices?

Why did you make the selections that you did?

If you could go back into the house again, would you choose differently?

What was the most difficult choice you had to make?

What do your choices indicate about your highest values?

What underlying principles do you think prompted your choices?

Group Activity Option #2: For this activity, each participant is supplied with [Handout #1 Value Auction Sheet](#) and a pretend bank account of \$5,000 (You may need to adapt to local currency). Give participants a few minutes to familiarize themselves with the values up for sale and to budget the amounts they think they would be willing to bid for the ones they would like to buy. The leader (or someone he has chosen) serves as the auctioneer. Participants bid on each value, with sale made to the highest bidder. Participants may wish to record the highest amount they actually bid on each item and its final selling price to help them remember the level of interest in that particular value. However, they deduct the sale price from their "bank account" only if they are the highest bidder and the sale goes to them. Each participant may purchase as many values as his bank account allows.

The most valuable part of this exercise is the potential for discussion following the auction.

Are you happy with the values you were able to purchase?

Why did you choose to spend your money the way you did?

If you had another chance to bid, what would you do differently?
What was the most difficult choice you had to make?
What do the amounts that you bid for each item indicate about your highest values?
What underlying principles do you think prompted your choices?

Sources of Values

The source of ones values is one factor in determining their level of importance. For example, Christians would elevate values rooted in a clear "thus saith the Lord" (i.e. biblical value statements like Matt. 5:3-9, 6:25-33, 16:24-26, Phil. 4:8, Heb. 11:24-26, etc.) above other values which they hold that come from their particular culture or personal preference.

Group Activity Option #3: Give participants a few minutes to make a list of the most important values they desire to pass to the next generation. For discussion:

Have we truly placed greater emphasis on passing biblical values on to the next generation than we have cultural or personal values?
Are we having difficulty sometimes separating the two?
What other factors influence the level of importance we place on particular values?

The level of our spiritual maturity, the experiences of our lives, the quality of relationships we have known, the alternatives open to us, are also among the factors which determine the level of importance we place on particular values.

When Jesus was asked by the religious leaders to sum up biblical values in a nutshell, He replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt. 22:37-40). In His mind, love is the value which overarches all others. Timeless, self-emptying, covenant-keeping agape love which is born of God. (See John 3:16, Phil. 2:5-8, 1 Cor. 13, 1 John 4:7-21). In truth, the transmission of religious heritage begins and ends at the cross. There, teacher and student, parent and child, husband and wife, believer and non-believer may behold the Lamb of God and be drawn to Him by the winsome call of the Spirit. There we may return every day of our lives to bask in the full assurance of abundant salvation, secured forever by His sacrifice. At the cross, all the truths of Scripture come alive in the God-Man Jesus Christ whose covenant with us is from everlasting to everlasting and who calls us into an intimate relationship with Himself and others in our circle. We cannot but be drawn toward holiness in response to the loveliness of His character and His unconditional love, even as we cling to His robe of righteousness which alone can make us right with God.

Thoughts of Him push their way into our consciousness and infuse our relationships and activities with meaning and purpose. Our hearts burst with personal testimony of the miracle of conversion and growth. We cannot help but worship; we cannot help but share the good news. So we become part of the braided cord of humanity called by God's name, who, by His grace, will declare "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" for all eternity. To write this story into the heritage and experience of every man, woman and child alive is at the heart of values transmission.

The Challenge of Passing On the Torch

Judges 2:6-12 presents one of the central challenge of values transmission:

"After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance. The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt."

Studies regarding the passing on of values in a society, organization, or religion verify that the first generation which determines the values of the group knows exactly why they have chosen these values over others. For example, in Adventism our pioneers knew exactly why they believed what they believed. They participated in the process of earnest Bible study and prayer which established these values and they determined to make them their own. The second generation, for the most part, adopts the values of the first generation, but primarily because of the role-modeling of their parents, although they understand some of the reasons that precipitated the development of their system of values. However, by the third generation, the young have largely lost sight of the principles behind the values. Most of them will, nonetheless, go along with the behaviors that reflect those values out of habit. Unfortunately, in the generations which follow, habit too tends to break down, and unless the young are involved in a "first generation" experience, the values may be lost altogether.

Understanding Levels of Moral Development

Human beings pass through successive stages of moral development which are as predictable as the stages of physical or intellectual development. Understanding these stages makes it possible for parents and teachers to accommodate their approaches to values transmission to the readiness of the child.

"These things should be explained to the children in simple language, easy to be understood; and as they grow in years, the lessons imparted should be suited to their increasing capacity." —Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 495.

An early student of moral development was Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist who worked for more than 30 years before anyone paid much attention. He brought to light the fact that moral development and intellectual development are very closely linked and was the first to chart the developmental stages of moral growth in ways which were similar to the mapping of child growth in other areas.

His work triggered a number of different studies, and other names like Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard University began to appear in the literature. Two who followed in the aftermath of Piaget's work were Robert Peck and Robert Havighurst. We will look at their outline for the stages of moral development since Peck as a Christian has insights meaningful from our perspective and recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit.

Peck and Havighurst designed a longitudinal study to look at the moral development of one group of children over an eight-year period. In their attempt to describe growth in moral or spiritual development, they have outlined five developmental stages of moral behavior through which people pass:

1. Amoral (infancy)

The infant does not have a conscience. He doesn't think about what's right or wrong. He views himself as the center of the universe and tries to get what he wants immediately with no regard for the welfare of others. It is silly to think of explaining to a baby who awakens and cries at 2:00

a.m. that his parents are tired and it would be really nice of him to turn over and go back to sleep! The child of this age can begin to learn what mother and father approve and disapprove, but for this period he cannot distinguish right from wrong on any higher plane.

2. *Expedient (early childhood)*

The child in this stage is still primarily self-centered. He considers the welfare of others only in order to gain his own personal desires. He does what will win him favor and approval. He also wants to avoid unpleasant discipline. He lacks internal controls or conscience to govern his own behavior. When the parent or teacher is out of sight, his behavior may quickly degenerate. He needs parents and other adults to be conscience for him. As Ellen White puts it,

"These little ones cannot discern what spirit is influencing them, and it is the duty of parents to exercise judgment and discretion for them."—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 93.

3. *Conforming (middle-later childhood)*

This child's one general internalized principle is to conform to the rules of his group. He wants an authority for everything. You frequently hear him say, "My mother says . . ." or "Teacher said . . ." But it tends to be a blind reliance on the authority rather than a conscious, rational decision that the authority is right. He sees rules as black and white with no gray areas and no exceptions. This is the boy who reads every rule before playing a game and considers them unchangeable. It would never occur to him that a group playing the game could decide together to alter the rules. He lives by the letter of the law and not the spirit of it. He differs from the expedient child because he accepts the rules even when they are contrary to his desires. He differs from the amoral child who feels no guilt or shame when his behavior violates the law.

4. *Irrational conscientious (adolescence)*

During this stage the young person moves from conformity to a group code to conformity to a code he has internalized and believes in. An act then is "good" or "bad" because he defines it as such within his personal system of values. He has a definite and distinct conscience, and values that he holds absolutely firm, but his value system may not all be in harmony. One belief may contradict another. His values tend to be isolated in water-tight compartments—one set for home, one for school, one for when he's away and nobody knows him. The adolescent also tends to be very hard on adults in whom he perceives hypocrisy, but much easier on himself when he violates his internal code.

5. *Rational-altruistic (adulthood)*

The rational-altruistic person describes the highest level of moral maturity. He lives to bless others. He has a stable, well-integrated set of moral principles by which he lives. He decides how to act on the basis of these principles and a consideration of the effects his actions will have both on himself and others. His decisions rest on what is "right" in the light of careful study rather than what is pleasurable or the popular thing to do.

These stages have been described simplistically, as though children progress through them as naturally as their legs lengthen, but the process is far more complex than that. A few adults, known as sociopaths, never develop beyond the amoral stage and never develop a conscience. Many other adults have for one reason or another stalled out in their moral development and have never grown beyond the stages of early childhood. In any group of adults, for example, you will have those who make decisions primarily in terms of the effects these decisions will have on them personally. Others will always want to know what the "official position" or the church is on this matter. Some others will behave in confusing ways in that the stand they take in one instance seems in conflict with a strong opinion they express on another. A few are able to deliberate issues on the basis of the spirit of the law and broad spiritual principles, seeking decisions that will be for the best of all concerned.

No one operates in one stage all the time. Adults tend to move, as do children, back and forth

through the stages, making strides forward only to retrogress again. It is the lifetime process of sanctification that is being described here, growing toward Christlikeness. However, we must be careful to separate salvation and the gospel from growth in Christian living. We need not strive to be like Jesus in order to be saved. We can rest in the full assurance that Jesus has already attained moral perfection, and that "in Him" we are accounted righteous. We want to be like Jesus, not to obtain favor with God, but because we have known His look of love and experienced His grace. We want to be like Him because we have beheld the beauty of His character and recognized His agape love to be the highest principle we could choose to govern our lives.

Parents should not be discouraged to find their children at stages of moral development appropriate for their ages. To tailor our approaches to their developmental level, is to capitalize on opportunities which may eventually pass. For example, our recognition that during the "conforming stage" what authority figures do and say carries heavy weight in the lives of children, should cause us to carefully guard our influence and use every opportunity this stage presents us to show them what we believe and why. At the same time, we must continually seek avenues to gently encourage them toward higher levels of spiritual maturity.

Success Secrets for Effective Values Transmission

1. Maintain positive relationships

Think about the person or persons most responsible for what you believe personally. Who influenced you the most as you were carving out your own personal identity? How did they convey values to you? Why did you accept their values for yourself?

Chances are these significant people in your life were people with whom you shared a positive relationship. Children—even adults—tend to be interested in the beliefs and ideas of others with whom they share a warm relationship. Notice the endearing relational terms "best friends," "dear children," "loving interest," "companions" that appear in the following paragraph about making Christian values winsome:

"As the very best friends of these inexperienced ones, they [parents] should help them in the work of overcoming, for it means everything to them to be victorious. They should consider that their own dear children who are seeking to do right are younger members of the Lord's family, and they should feel an intense interest in helping them to make straight paths in the King's highway of obedience. With loving interest they should teach them day by day what it means to be children of God and to yield the will in obedience to Him. Teach them that obedience to God involves obedience to their parents. This must be a daily, hourly work. Parents, watch, watch and pray, and make your children your companions."—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 496.

Group Activity Option #4: How are warm, positive relationships developed and maintained? Share memories you have of significant others in your life with whom you have shared warm relationships and who made Christian values so winsome and attractive you wanted to be like them and make their values your own. ([Handout #2 Evangelists in the Home](#) provides further illumination on this section.)

2. Model your faith

Children watch the people around them. They study their actions, their words, their overall demeanor. They observe how they treat others and are keenly aware of their feelings and attitudes toward them personally. Over time, they decide who they like, and who they don't like, and after whom they will pattern their lives. Children do not "learn" values, they imitate people. They do not make lists of values they wish to accept, they identify with people who live those

values.

Ellen White comments, "Parents must see that their own hearts and lives are controlled by the divine precepts, if they would bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 67.

It can be frightening to realize the extent to which our children emulate our behavior. To hear your daughter scold her doll in a tone of voice that sounds all too familiar, to see your son control his friend with anger, to see your foibles take shape before your eyes in the person of your child, can be overwhelmingly discouraging. Our homes, our family relationships, we must confess are far from perfect.

But there is hope. For modeling as a means of transmitting values does not require perfection. Our task is not to raise perfect children who have no need of a Saviour. Rather, we who have found the perfect Saviour are given the privilege of bringing our children to Him for healing and restoration. Modeling means showing our children what Christians do when they have made mistakes, how followers of Jesus seek and offer forgiveness and find the courage to begin again. Modeling also means demonstrating how Christians handle their disappointments, that it's okay to experience discouragement and doubt, how Jesus can bring comfort and peace and reassurance. Modeling means being real, allowing our children to see God at work in our lives, making new people for His kingdom out of the brokenness of our lives.

Group Activity Option #5: Read the following passage from the book *Education* by Ellen White. Then share in small groups experiences when personal testimonies—perhaps of a father or mother or close family member, or of some other significant person have made a dramatic impact on their lives. Some may wish to share a time when they shared their testimony with a child. Why are testimonies important in a family? in the life of the church?

"In his childhood, Joseph had been taught the love and fear of God. Often in his father's tent, under the Syrian stars, he had been told the story of the night vision at Bethel, of the ladder from heaven to earth, and the descending and ascending angels, and of Him who from the throne above revealed Himself to Jacob. He had been told the story of the conflict beside the Jabbok, when, renouncing cherished sins, Jacob stood conqueror, and received the title of prince of God.

...
"By communion with God through nature and the study of the great truths handed down as a sacred trust from father to son, he had gained strength of mind and firmness of principle."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 52.

3. *Establish your family altar*

Family worship has surfaced in many studies as a key factor in values transmission. (See "The Role of Family in Faith Development: A Look at the Valuegenesis Report," Family Ministries Planbook, 1992, p. 4.) Family worship provides opportunity for:

- covenant renewal
- rehearsal of religious heritage
- testimony sharing
- values exploration and instruction
- relationship building

Ellen White offers these guidelines for family worship. It should be:

- short and spirited (*Child Guidance*, p. 521)
- pleasant and interesting (*5 Testimonies*, p. 335)
- the most enjoyable time of the day (*7 Testimonies*, p. 43)

Group Activity Option #6: Invite the group to share memorable family worship experiences they have particularly enjoyed. Compile a list of ideas. (You may wish to prepare [Handout #3 101 Ideas for Family Worship](#) for participants to take home.)

4. Involve your family in thinking more deeply about moral issues and dilemmas

Human beings do not progress through the stages of moral development simply because someone tells them they should or because they are "taught" good moral values. The call of Scripture is to think critically for oneself (Isa. 1:18). Growth is encouraged when we are challenged to think more deeply about moral issues and dilemmas. Occasion to wrestle with questions and to allow the expression of differing perspectives also promotes faith development. A prime opportunity for growth occurs when a person encounters situations—either in real life or in a values learning experience—for which his/her belief system is inadequate or needs some rethinking. No matter how good or right the values may be that we are trying to pass to our children, ultimate success will lie in our children's internalization of these values and their capacity to put them into real-life action.

"Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. . . . It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 17.

"All too often we are giving our young people cut flowers when we should be teaching them to grow their own plants. We are stuffing their heads with earlier innovation rather than teaching them to innovate. We think of the mind as a storehouse to be filled when we should be thinking of it as an instrument to be used."—John W. Gardner, *Self-renewal*, pp. 21, 22, quoted in Dudley, p. 67.

"Instead of giving young people the impression that their task is to stand a dreary watch over the ancient values, we should be telling them . . . that it is their task to recreate those values continuously in their own behavior, facing the dilemmas and catastrophes of their own time" (*Ibid.*, p. 126, quoted in Dudley, p. 67).

Group Activity Option #7A: Read several current newspaper clippings and discuss the values revealed in the words and actions of those involved. How do you feel about the values implied? What would you do in the same situation? On what biblical principles do you think the people in the news may have based their actions? Are there other biblical principles which support what you would have done? Here are a couple starters.

"A father gave his life to save his son's here today, following a blood exchange operation. The son, 11-year-old Robert Bruce Lawrence, probably will recover, physicians said. He has nephrosis, a kidney disease, and needed a complete change of blood. Sidney E. Lawrence, 40, the father, volunteered for the operation. The bloods were of matching type. He was told that in such an operation, there always is some danger to the donor because of foreign material he is

taking into his own system. 'Go ahead,' he said. The three-hour operation was performed several days ago. Today the father died."—Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 18.

General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, at 83 years of age—just three months before his death, said: "While women weep as they do now, I'll fight; while little children go hungry as they do now, I'll fight; while there yet remains one dark soul without the light of God, I'll fight—I'll fight to the very end!"—Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 57.

Group Activity Option #7B: Consider the following situations. What are the main character's choices? What would each choice reveal about their values? Are there any biblical principles involved? Put yourself in the main character's place. Try to feel the pressures they are feeling. What would you do? Why?

Susan has worked very hard in her English class. There are several students who have asked her to help them prepare for the final examination. She understands the material and could help them, but the teacher will give high marks only to a few students who get the highest scores.

Tammy knows that her brother is taking drugs, but he promised her he would quit if she wouldn't tell. She has evidence that he hasn't kept his promise, but she knows her parents will be terribly hurt if she tells them and that her brother will probably be expelled from school if they find out.

5. Involve your family in service

Service provides opportunity to put values into action. Make a list of possibilities for families to become involved in service in your church and community, as well as in the home. A few starters are listed below. ([Handout #4 101 Ideas for Involving Families in Global Mission](#) provides a take-home idea source.)

- start an "adopt a grandmother/grandfather program"
- make cheery cards for placement on food trays in the hospital and nursing home
- volunteer at a local soup kitchen or shelter
- clean up a park
- write ADRA for project ideas
- rake leaves, cut grass, etc. for elderly
- bake cookies and send to students away at school
- provide a Sabbath School in the home of a shut-in
- give each member \$1.00 to help someone, share stories

A Closing Word of Encouragement

"Jesus spoke words of encouragement to the mothers in reference to their work, and, oh, what a relief was thus brought to their minds! With what joy they dwelt upon the goodness and mercy of Jesus, as they looked back to that memorable occasion! His gracious words had removed the burden from their hearts and inspired them with fresh hope and courage. All sense of weariness was gone.

"This is an encouraging lesson to mothers for all time. After they have done the best they can do for the good of their children, they may bring them to Jesus. Even the babes in the mother's arms are precious in His sight. And as the mother's heart yearns for the help she knows she cannot give, the grace she cannot bestow, and she casts herself and children into the merciful arms of Christ, He will receive and bless them; He will give peace, hope and happiness to mother and children. This is a precious privilege which Jesus has granted to all mothers. . . .

"These precious words [Matt. 19:14] are to be cherished, not only by every mother, but by every

father as well. These words are an encouragement to parents to press their children into His notice, to ask in the name of Christ that the Father may let His blessing rest upon their entire family. Not only are the best beloved to receive particular attention, but also the restless, wayward children, who need careful training and tender guidance."—Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home*, pp. 274-276.

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