



TEACHING CHILDREN RESPONSIBILITY

by Dana Dorch, KidMo 123 Director

Several years ago, when our kids were in the rigorous Middle School years, one of my daughters was experiencing some anger and frustration. When I asked her what was going on and why she was behaving that way, she said it was all related to some drama among friends. I avoided jumping to the conclusion that she had been wounded by one of her friends and instead simply listened as she told me her story. Then I asked, "What role did you play in this situation?" I wanted her to understand that her actions could have contributed, either in part or in full, to the situation that caused her anger and frustration.

As parents, we have the opportunity from the very beginning to train our children to be responsible within the family, as individuals in a community, and as Christians living out their faith. Teaching children to be a responsible member of your family can happen through the simplest things such as stewardship, generosity and serving.

"Every good and perfect gift is from God. It comes down from the father. He created the heavenly light. He does not change like shadows that move." - James 1:17

Everything we have is a blessing from God and belongs to God. Children are able to understand the simple fact that, because of God's love for us, He blesses us. We take that a step further and teach them that not only are possessions a gift from God, but that we should be good stewards by taking care of those possessions and sharing with others.

"Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be free of pride. Think of others as better than yourselves." - Philippians 2:3

Children are "me" focused by nature. However, they can learn from a young age to consider others before themselves. As a part of our KidMo123 yearly curriculum on Loving Others, we teach the Golden Rule: "Do to others as you want them to do to you." (Luke 7:31). How basic is that? Could it be any easier? Basically, God is telling us to treat those around us with kindness and respect. He made it sound simple, so why does it seem so hard to do?

"Two people are better than one. They can help each other in everything they do." - Ecclesiastes 4:9

What a great picture of family! Russell and I have a large family which means numerous chores. For example, our yard needs a great deal of landscaping. To some who may drive by and see all the kids bent over pulling weeds, pushing the wheelbarrow, or picking up rocks, it may seem like we're punishing them, but we have always come together to get chores done. We didn't give them a choice in the matter. We simply wanted to teach the kids that being a part of a family was a privilege and with that comes the

Virtue of the Month

Join us this month as we pray **RESPONSIBILITY** for our children.

Prayer:

Lord, instill in <child's> heart an understanding of what it means to fulfill her obligations. When she is asked to take on new responsibilities, give her discernment in her choices. Grant <child> the wisdom to realize that in carrying out her responsibilities, her actions - good or bad - will affect other people.

Scripture:

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 4:10 (NASB)

What's Happening?**AUGUST & SEPTEMBER:****Cell Worship**

Wednesday, August 19
6:30-8:30pm, Student Center W
All-student Worship Service and Celebration to kick off the school year.

Equip

Saturday, August 22
1:00-3:00pm,
Bentonville Public Library
For Parents, Caregivers and Educators of ADHD Children. Contact [Denise Maxwell](#) for more information.

Townhouse Kick-Off

Wednesday, August 26
6:30-8:30pm, Host Homes
Townhouses are where students meet in host homes for their small groups (based on age and city of residence).

GAP: Grandparents as Parents

Wednesday, August 26
6:30-8:30pm, The Lodge
*Orientation Meeting
Register on [myFellowship](#)*

Fall Retreat (for 7th-12th graders)

Friday, Sep 4-Monday, Sep 7
Camp War Eagle
Register on [myFellowship](#)

Family Camp

Saturday, Sep 5-Monday, Sep 7
Mt. Sequoyah, Fayetteville
Register on [myFellowship](#)

Parent/Child Dedication

Saturday, September 26
Contact [Susan Thomas](#)

responsibility of working together to take care of family needs. They also knew that if we all worked together, the burden was shared, and then came the bonus: chores were finished that much faster and the privilege of 'fun' came sooner.

"Here is the command God has given us. Anyone who loves God must also love his brothers and sisters."- 1 John 4:21

We know that the world can be rough; that we will be faced with situations and people that are difficult. Loving other people isn't easy at times, but knowing that God commands us to love other people helps us understand that He has a greater plan. It's only through His power that we can be responsible for the tough things we face. Back to the story about my daughter: if she had a role in the negative drama surrounding her friendships then she needed to know that it was her responsibility to make the situation right. It is up to us to take ownership of the roles we play in our lives, yes even the nitty gritty and yucky roles.

One final idea that was always prevalent as we started raising children was that of "keeping the reins tight." To us it meant that privileges weren't given out very easily and they most definitely had to be earned. As a child was given the opportunity to make good decisions, follow through with tasks, and show consideration for the family, boundary lines grew. They were proving themselves trustworthy and consequently allowed privileges that lined up with their level of responsibility.

As our children grow and start spending time outside the boundaries of our homes we always hope that they are conducting themselves in the ways in which they were taught. I am sure that I have tired my children of this statement, but before they went on their way I would say, "Remember who you are representing" (Of course I got the humdrum response of "I know, Mom").

It is important that they are always mindful of the fact that a Christian is a representative of Jesus Christ. So first and foremost they are representing our Lord and secondly they are representing the family. It is our job as parents to teach our children to take responsibility for this. The choices they make as they go through life are a result of the investment we have made into them as parents. We have the choice to allow Jesus to guide us in our journeys. If we are trusting Christ to do the things that we cannot, then we are living out our lives and our faith responsibly.

RESOURCES

Book - [Cleaning House: A Mom's Twelve-Month Experiment to Rid Her Home of Youth Entitlement](#)

Article- [Age-Appropriate Chores for Children](#)

CD - [Responsibility \(Adventures in Odyssey Life Lessons\)](#)

Connecting Church and Family

**FAMILY
MINISTRY**