

ABOVE RUBIES

www.aboverubies.org

Issue: Seventy-Four

Strengthening Families Across The World

In This Issue:

Caring for older parents!

Train your children—the answer to an ordered home!

Keeping children quiet in church!

How to keep your husband happy!

The best kept secret for parenting!

Managing little ones while homeschooling!

From Our Home to Yours



I love watching spring unfold each year—and this has been an especially beautiful Tennessee spring. I revel in the brilliant white blossoms of the Bradford Pear trees, the hundreds of golden daffodils which I have planted on our land, the pink Redbuds, and then come my favorite of all, the glorious white Dogwood blossoms. When we cleared our land, we made sure we saved every Dogwood tree we could. They are blossoming everywhere we look. I could call it Dogwood Park. At the same time, I love watching the green leaves appear, little by little, until everywhere I look is rich with green. What a delight to the eyes. Thank you, Lord.

Of course, spring is the time to get started in the garden again. We have no growing soil where we live on this hill. When we started our vegetable garden eight years ago we had to bring in soil. Because we had to pay for



it, I guard it with my life! I make as much compost as I can and bring in manure to add to the garden. We also built raised

“They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also



Nancy with grand-daughter, Autumn Rose (Pearl's youngest daughter). Married daughters, Evangeline, Pearl and Serene all live on adjacent land. Their sons and families live an hour away in the city.

beds in order to protect the soil.

I planted seeds and plants for the new season in the 13 raised beds that we have including over 90 tomato plants. I will freeze and dehydrate what we don't eat or give away. None will be wasted. I may be a little eccentric, but after eating my beautiful home-grown tomatoes all season, I don't purchase any until the next harvest. I just go without!

I am often challenged by the fact that the first home was a garden. It was called the Garden of Eden which means 'delight'. God established the principle of the garden to sustain and provide for the family. Even when the children of Israel went into captivity, God reminded them to, "Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit." The Knox translation makes it very clear, "Plant yourselves gardens of your own to support you." A garden supports a family.

When God promises to bring back the children of Israel to their land, He says,

make gardens and eat fruit from them." (Amos 9:14)

Proverbs 24:27 says that it is more important to prepare the garden before building the house! "Prepare your work outside and get it ready for yourself in the field; afterwards, then, build your house."

I am aware, of course, that many live in places where it is impossible to create a garden. However, you may like to grow some plants in pots on your deck or even on your windowsill.

Gardens are truly one of the "whatsoever things are lovely" things, aren't they? Recently a friend emailed me...

"Throughout the last few years I have let the joy of the Lord slowly be taken away by all the great sorrows that have engulfed my life. I have been seeking the Lord and wanting to feel that joy again, but it hasn't come flooding in as I thought it would. Therefore, I am stepping out in faith, knowing that joy will come in the morning. I have made a special garden this year and I have a vision to make it into a "Garden of Joy." No matter what my circumstances I want to have that joy that does not depend on what is going on around me. I want to have a garden of joy for people to walk

through and be refreshed. I pray it will be a blessing to many.

It's my peaceful place. I tell the children they cannot fight or argue within the gates. I am wood-

burning a poem at the

entrance of the garden and also flowers and Scriptures on sign posts throughout the garden." What a lovely vision. I hope you are inspired as I am.

How glad I am to get this new magazine to you because we have completely run out of the last issue, #73. And back copies are like "gold" to find. Treasure every copy you have in your possession. Requests for *Above Rubies* pour in daily and I printed 140,000 of this issue.

In one of my devotions that I sent out a while ago, I wrote about catching moments to pray and read the Word of God even in the midst of mothering your little children. When raising my little ones I could not leave my children and go off and have a Quiet Time. I had to do it in the midst of noise and everything happening around me. I remember one time feeling such a need to pray. I went to my bedroom, taking my little ones with me. They played with toys while I kneeled at my bed and prayed. I was enjoying the presence of the Lord and oblivious of their noise, until I heard a loud knocking on my bedroom door. It was our boarder, who was home from work because he was sick, and

could not rest in the nearby room because of the noise of the children. I hadn't even noticed their commotion!!

It's amazing what we can do with little ones all around us isn't it? And it trains us to be able to cope. I now accomplish *Above Rubies* with grandchildren ambling

that after lunch her mother would read Bible stories to the little ones and then they all would kneel together at the sofa to pray before their afternoon nap. I could picture this beautiful scene in my mind. What a blessing it would be if this could be repeated all over our nation.



Evangeline preparing her garden for planting, with all the children helping (l. to r. from back)—Arrow (7), Evangeline and Iqara (1), Rashida (12), Tiveja (5) and Sahara (3), Jerh (8), Zadok (15)—now taller than his mother who is 6' and still growing by the day, Crusoe (10) and Sharar (14).

in and out, my daughters coming in and talking loudly and demonstratively, the phone going non-stop and everything happening at once. This is how I edit *Above Rubies*. If I waited for a quiet moment, you'd never see a new magazine!

Don't despair, dear mother. God created you with the ability to do many things at once! You can cope! The only thing that stops you coping is your negative thinking! Believe that you can do it. Rejoice in everything that is happening. Embrace your motherhood and have a great time!

I have been speaking at many *Above Rubies* retreats already this year—Alabama, West Washington, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Texas, Canada and East Washington, and more to come. On the Sunday morning at our retreats, we love to have a Testimony Time where women can share about their lives. We certainly need lots of tissues at this session! Recently, when in Canada, a grandmother got up and shared. Her daughter and grand-daughter were also at the retreat—I love it when we have three generations together! This grandmother, one of 19 children, talked about her godly parents. She said that at the end of each meal that all the family would kneel together around the table when they prayed. She also mentioned how

I receive emails and letters daily of how *Above Rubies* is changing lives. Here's one to share with you in this editorial:

"I discovered *Above Rubies* only two months ago, but the change in my life has

continued on page 5



Evangeline's daughter, Tiveria Life Johnson (5 years).

ABOVE RUBIES

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Above Rubies is a magazine to encourage women in their high calling as wives, mothers and homemakers. Its purpose is to uphold and strengthen family life and to raise the standard of God's truth in the nation. The name has been chosen from Proverbs 31.10 AMP, "A capable, intelligent and virtuous woman, who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far ABOVE RUBIES or pearls."

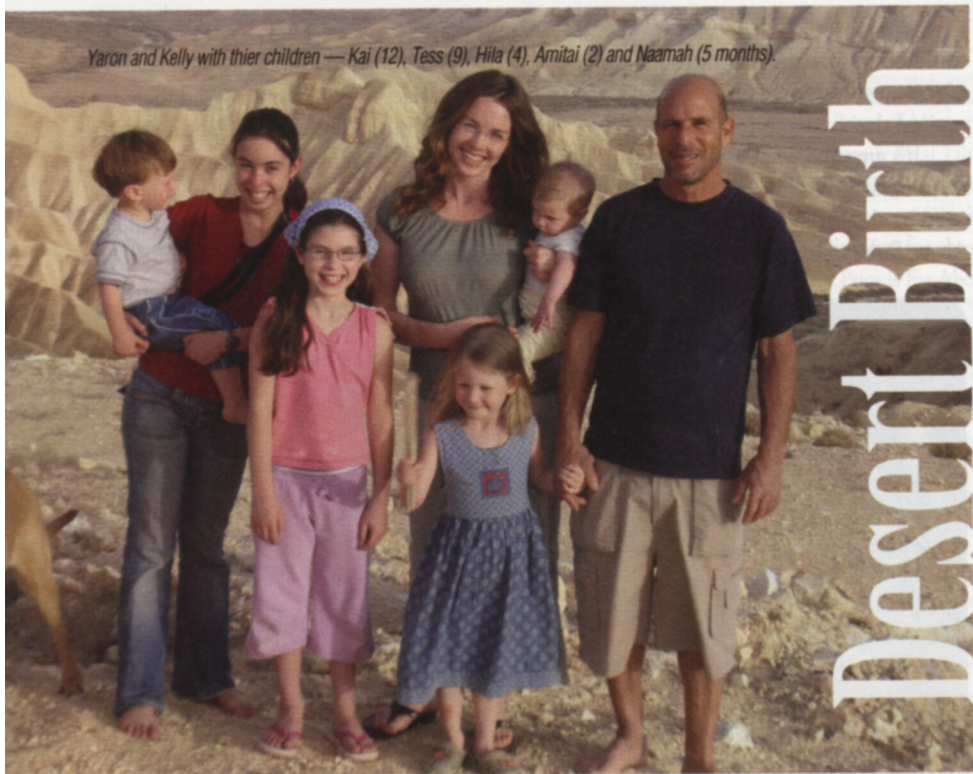
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COVER PHOTO: Cedar Ivan Allison, Sam and Serene Allison's 5-year-old son. His second name, Ivan, is after his great-grandfather, Ivan Bowen who was featured on the front cover of *Above Rubies* #73. Photograph by Brooke Parsons.

Yaron and Kelly with their children — Kai (12), Tess (9), Hila (4), Amitai (2) and Naamah (5 months).



Desert Birth

Four of my five babies were born in Israeli hospitals. Three were inductions due to being overdue. I had heard of home birthing somewhere along the way in my motherhood journey but lack of confidence, peace and husband's approval prevented that choice.

Pregnant with our fifth child, we moved from Northern Israel to the Negev desert. This was after years of seeking God's will for our lives in this crazy land. The Negev called us and the moment the door opened for us to live there, we felt His peace and a connection to the very stones and open spaces that make up the area.

My husband was still working in Central and Northern Israel to provide for the family while we made connections in the South and adjustments. By the time I was due, he was away working in Tel Aviv. The nearest hospital was 45 minutes away and I had asked neighbours to be on standby should I go into labour. However, I was pretty sure that I would have to be induced again, though I desired a natural labour, without all the pain! Yet, I had this firm peace throughout the pregnancy that all would work out well!

Passing my 40th week and full of energy, I felt that we had all the time in the world and birth was not around the corner. Another Shabbat passed and I kissed my husband goodbye as he drove

off to Tel Aviv to work another week. Tuesday morning I was greeted with a stomach virus. I threw up and had horrible gripes all day long. By the end of the day feeling weak and awful, I finally decided to eat a dry cracker and found myself sitting up, feeling better.

At 8.30 pm I was sitting on the sofa, chatting to my husband, when I suddenly noticed my Braxton Hicks contractions (which I feel all the way through my pregnancies) were coming on stronger. I half joked to him that maybe he should meet me at the hospital in Beersheva for the birth! Fifteen minutes later he called to chat to our bachelor neighbour, Dani, who lived upstairs. By now I felt that something was happening. I would have a shower, cup of tea and then let him know if he should start driving from Tel Aviv to Beersheva, which is about a two hour journey.

I called Dani to the phone and quickly told him that I might need to go into hospital. I jumped into the shower while my 11 year old made some tea. Two seconds into the shower I realized that I might not finish the shower! The contractions were coming fast and furious and "what on earth was I doing taking a shower?" I jumped out, wet and dripping, and told my daughter to dump the tea and call Dani quickly. At the same time I called my close friend, Karen, and she offered to

come with me. "You have two minutes to get ready," I told her.

I frantically searched for my ID book, some clothes and whatever else I thought I needed, kissed my children, ran for Dani's car calling my husband to meet me at the hospital. We picked up Karen on the way out. She had grabbed towels and sheets. She immediately started praying and Dani who hadn't realized we were believers was dunked in the deep end with our "Thank you, Yeshua's" and "Hallelujahs!"

Karen timed the contractions and said they were two minutes apart, one strong and one weak. Having given birth to her five babies at home and judging from my behaviour, she thought that I had plenty of time to make it to hospital. I thought if this means I have plenty of time, it will get worse! Can I go through this?

Out of the gate we sped, Dani asking how fast he should go. "Fast, but safe please!" Karen, remembering red wine slows down a birth asked if he had some red wine at hand. Surprise! He did, having just returned from Europe. No! I couldn't think of opening wine and drinking it at that moment in time! Just DRIVE!

I can remember managing to text a couple of messages to the family to pray before throwing the mobile into my bag. I had about seven contractions from where we live until we got to the Ramat HaNegev junction, 20 minutes into the drive. I had one contraction that was different from the rest, the one where you feel you need to push! I begged Dani to stop, that I needed to go to the toilet (that's what it feels like!) and he screeched to a halt at a bus stop near the junction. Karen told him to call an ambulance and we searched for an appropriate place.

The brightly lit, littered bus stop was unappealing. Even for the toilet! But for birth we needed something else! I managed to walk down a slope and in the almost full moonlight, found a secluded spot next to a hill. The night was warm and the sky bright, but we were sheltered by the moonlight shadow from the hill.

Karen spread the sheet and for the first time I could finally do what my body always wanted to do when labour was in full progress ... squat! With the next contraction I really wanted to push. Karen told me to feel what was happening. I felt

the baby's head! I reached down and eased the head out. Karen caught the baby as it slipped out with the next push. Karen held my newborn desert baby and tried to clean its face. She commented that she thought it was a girl! She then passed her to me, still attached to my body, wrapped in a towel to hold and kiss. I felt her and realized that she indeed was a girl, our fourth daughter.



I can remember praising God aloud and thanking Him for His faithfulness—that He allowed me to give birth under desert skies, in the moonlight, naturally, almost pain

free and without any intervention! Who would have thought He would have answered my desires to that degree! Talk about natural birth! And fast! From the first signs of labour to the time she was born—we are talking about ONE HOUR!

Meantime Dani had shouted to us from the road several times, but we hadn't heard of course until after the birth! He came over to see the baby after we finally answered and shouted that all was well! The ambulance came about 10 minutes after the birth and cut the cord. I found out later that it is good for the baby to delay the cutting. I called my husband who was still driving to the hospital to tell him he had a beautiful baby girl!

Adonai gave me Karen, the perfect friend, to share my birth with. The birth took place at the entrance to the Upper Negev, a symbolic picture of what He is doing in our lives and other believers in the area—bringing new life to the Negev, hope and promises to the land which the Bible predicts will blossom and flourish.

We named our little girl Naamah, which means pleasant as that is what the Negev has been to us since we came—a peaceful, quiet, pleasantness that is deeply rooted in our souls.

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From Our Home to Yours *continued*

been nothing short of miraculous. In November last year I was hospitalized for severe post-natal depression. It absolutely took me over and wiped me out. For six months I tried to lift myself out of it but it was beyond my control. Finally, I went in to hospital.

Two months later, I came out a different person, but there was something missing. I wanted the answer to the question for which I had been praying for the last seven years of my marriage, "How do I become a happy at-home mum and a submissive wife?"

I was crying about this when a Titus 2 woman came to minister to me after leaving hospital. I told her how frustrated I was at not knowing the answers to these questions. She replied that she knew how I could learn and gave me every *Above Rubies* magazine printed since 1979!

I have devoured these magazines every spare minute and have had almost all of my questions answered, my position as a mother at home validated and even stamped with JOY. I see my family differently. I see my husband through completely different eyes. I have changed our fami-

ly's eating habits due to Serene's recipes and health articles. God has used you to bless my life and change my home atmosphere so that my family's lives are also changed."

I pray that God will pour out His blessings upon your family—His blessings of peace and joy. May you be a family that draws near to the Lord. Psalm 148:14 talks about "the children of Israel, a people near unto Him." That must have been in a good time, because many times they were turned away from him. However, that was, and still is the greatest testimony that Israel could have. It is the greatest testimony that we can have over our lives and our family. Let's pray and do everything we can to be families that are near to the Lord. There is no greater blessing that we could have than to have His nearness and presence in our homes.

NANCY CAMPBELL

Founder & Editress
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Colin and Nancy have six married children, 33 grandchildren and have also adopted teenagers from Liberia.

Caring for OLDER PARENTS



Aleck and Christi with their children, Brittany (20), Matthew (19), Michael (17), Samantha (15), Timothy (11), Abigail (9), Benjamin (7), Nathanael (5) and Rachael (1.5).

Blessed Memories

In August 2005 my 78 year old father-in-law came to live with us. That experience that will forever be etched in my heart and mind. I am forever changed. He was a healthy man but starting to forget things. He would tell the children, who up until this point had not spent a lot of time with him, all kinds of stories from WW2 stories to stories of his growing up an only child with a full-blooded Greek daddy and Irish moma in America. He loved the country and was active in the American Legion. He

was the epitome of a gentleman.

I enjoyed taking care of him the best way I could, by cooking and serving him meals and keeping his fruit basket stocked. He was still independent and capable of doing for himself but couldn't afford to live alone anymore. I enjoyed his company on the long days with homeschooling the children and tiredness that came with a new pregnancy. I enjoyed our evenings around the fire with him as he curled up in his housecoat over his clothes to stay warm.

On the day before his 79th birthday he went into the "big city", where he had lived and thrived for 74 years to do some

business. He never came home that night. He was in a car wreck and died due to the trauma suffered from the wreck. While watching him take his last breath in that ICU room, tears flooded from the very depths of my husband's and my soul—tears of joy, memory, pain, sorrow and love. We will always hold the time we had with him in our home in our hearts forever.

CHRISTI ANTONION

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P.S. The happy ending to this story is that our daughter was born in July 2006. She was a balm to our grieving souls. She is a delight, in the truest sense of the word, to our whole family. She is number nine, so far. She will never have the opportunity to meet or love on her grandparents this side of heaven.

God's Prompting

My father lived on his own in low income housing. One evening, seven years ago, my husband suggested he move in with us. My dad was very much able to care for himself — cook, clean, shop and everything else people do on a day-to-day basis. However, we did not want him to be alone. A month later Dad moved in with us.

We live in an 800 square foot two bedroom home but we had no children at the time. Many friends warned us against our idea. We were told that our lives would change, that newly weds should not have to take care of aging parents and that we were lining ourselves up for really hard and unfair work. I remember thinking it was really sad that society viewed parents in this light.

My father living with us only blessed us. The only truly difficult time came when my Dad passed away five years after moving in with us. We still miss him. We did puzzles and played many games together.

er. He provided jokes and laughter, personal man-to-man discussions and was a late night talking friend for my husband. They became so close that my husband actually felt lonely when he passed away.

My Dad was with us for the bringing home of our first daughter, Agnus Dei, and helped care for her. Even though he died when she was five months old, he had a very special relationship with her. They spent so much time together and he witnessed so much of her development.

Because we were open to taking my Dad into our home, he lived a wonderful life in his last five years. He had a comfortable warm home and no bills to worry about. He was able to buy himself a nice car and felt like a million bucks! He came to know God closer and made a home of his church where he made many friends and followed some strong mentors to learn more about God.

Having my dad with us absolutely blessed us. I am so glad we did not listen to the prompting of our friends but, rather, followed God's prompting.

DEBBIE CRESPO

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John and Debbie's little ones are Agnus Dei (2) and Church (4 months).

Time to Give Back

When our children were both little, my mother-in-law became seriously ill with cancer. We drove down from Michigan to North Carolina to help bring her home from the hospital on their 51st wedding anniversary. While there, the hospice nurses taught us how to help take care of Mom. They showed us how to help move her, give her meds, etc. We knew that her time left on earth was fairly short, so we decided to come back for another visit over Thanksgiving. When we returned, Mom was clearly in her last days. We had to feed her, bathe her and brush her teeth for her.

One of the most memorable things for me was when I rubbed bag balm into her feet. Her feet were dry and cracking and she loved having someone massage and lotion her feet. It seemed like such a simple thing to do, yet brought so much joy. I was



Will and Cheryl's family, Nathaniel recently married to Sandie and Kaycie (18)

incredibly honored to be able to do something so basic for someone who meant so much to me.

I cherish those days as some of my most precious memories. My mother-in-law was my image of the perfect mother-in-law and I felt it was such a privilege to be able care for her. She passed away while were there and now many years later, I still am thankful for the opportunity I was given to be able to give back to her some of what she gave of herself in raising a son who later became such a wonderful husband.

When it is hard to see our parents deteriorating, we need to look at it as a time we can bless our parents and care for them as they cared for us when we were helpless. I trust that others will be as blessed by their experience as I have been.

CHERYL SUSAN

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Find Ways to Serve

Lenore, my lovely mother-in-law, was a person who loved visits and wanted to talk rather than let you help her. Being five minutes down the road and desiring to help, this was frustrating as I could see needs and wasn't able to help as I would have liked. I sought my husband's for his desires and he said, "Do a little baking for

them." I did this over the latter years, and if I fruit, I'd do a little box for my in-laws, or if I bought from a bakery I'd share with them.

The children coloured pictures or verses and we always shared photos as able, as well as visiting. We invited Grandma to school activities as she was able. When she became sick, it was lovely to be able to visit her and do little things for her.

Sometimes we can't help in ways we would like to, but we need to pray and seek our husband's advice on what we can do for our in-laws. By doing this God opens little doors of surprises along the way.

My mother in law went to be with her beloved Saviour 23rd January 2008. Now we have to work the same with my father-in-law and seek ways in which God wants us to serve him.

My own parents are miles away, so serving them is different again.

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Gordon and Susan's children are Susan (14), Reuben (13), Isabel (11), Esther (10), Naomi (8) Josiah (6).

"All that is not eternal is eternally out of date."

C.S. Lewis

As a mother of six children, seven years and under, I have learned how difficult it can be to keep a house organized and running smoothly. However, I have found a secret. Can I share with you a few thoughts I wrote down a few years ago...

I have just watched the neatest production ever. The amazing thing is that it wasn't in a theatre or on the television. Believe it or not, it was in my kitchen! I was laying in the living room on the couch because I was having contractions. I'm 33 weeks pregnant with my 5th child! We will be blessed with five children under five.

Two years ago when I was pregnant with my third child, I often wondered how

I would survive with having children so close together. I'm learning the secret. **TRAIN THEM!** The production I watched began with my boys (five and three years old) emptying the dishwasher for me. Joshua proceeded to get cereal for himself and his younger brother and sister. Cereal is not the best evening meal, nor is it a regular one since I love to cook. However, with four children under five, I've learned that sometimes we moms have to bend when the wind blows!

While serving cereal, the milk jar ran out. I overheard Caleb asking Joshua what he was doing and he responded, "This is what mommy does." He filled the empty jar up with water so it would be easier to clean. I had not taught him that. He simply watches my every move very closely. They learn more from us than we could ever realize.

which allows them to empty most of the dishwasher. Anything that goes in the upper shelves is placed on the countertop. They work so hard and do such a great job! When they are finished it only takes me a couple of minutes to put the remaining dishes away and put the rinsed dishes in the dishwasher.

I've also found a great tool for helping them sweep my kitchen and large dining room which is tiled—the "Swivel Sweeper". It's a lightweight cordless vacuum with a handle that can be shortened. It doesn't do as good of a job as the broom, but as I said, "Sometimes we have to bend when the wind blows!"

The children are also learning to help with the laundry. They bring me a basket of clean clothes and put their clothes away after they are folded. I purchased rolling plastic drawers for the children's clothes and placed these drawers in the laundry room. Now all the children's clothes are downstairs in one room.

Many things have changed in our lives over the last couple years. Baby #5, our miracle baby, Benjamin, was born with two syndromes, VACTERL and Mobius. These syndromes have required extra time including special feedings, physical therapy and slow development. You can read more about Benjamin at his website: www.caringbridge.org/visit/benjaminrockey He is such a special gift from God!

We have also moved into a smaller house losing almost 1,000 square feet. I love my new house! A smaller house takes less time to clean. I no longer use a family closet because the house is one level and the bedrooms are so close to the laundry room. Living in a smaller house is really not as bad as some might think! As my children are getting older I enjoy getting them involved in more activities (secret word for work). My youngest, Justin was born when Benjamin was only 13 months old. I'm now homeschooling so that adds another challenge. I often wonder what God's thinks I'm capable of and it seems once again he knows the exact amount. His Grace IS sufficient.

DAWNA ROCKEY

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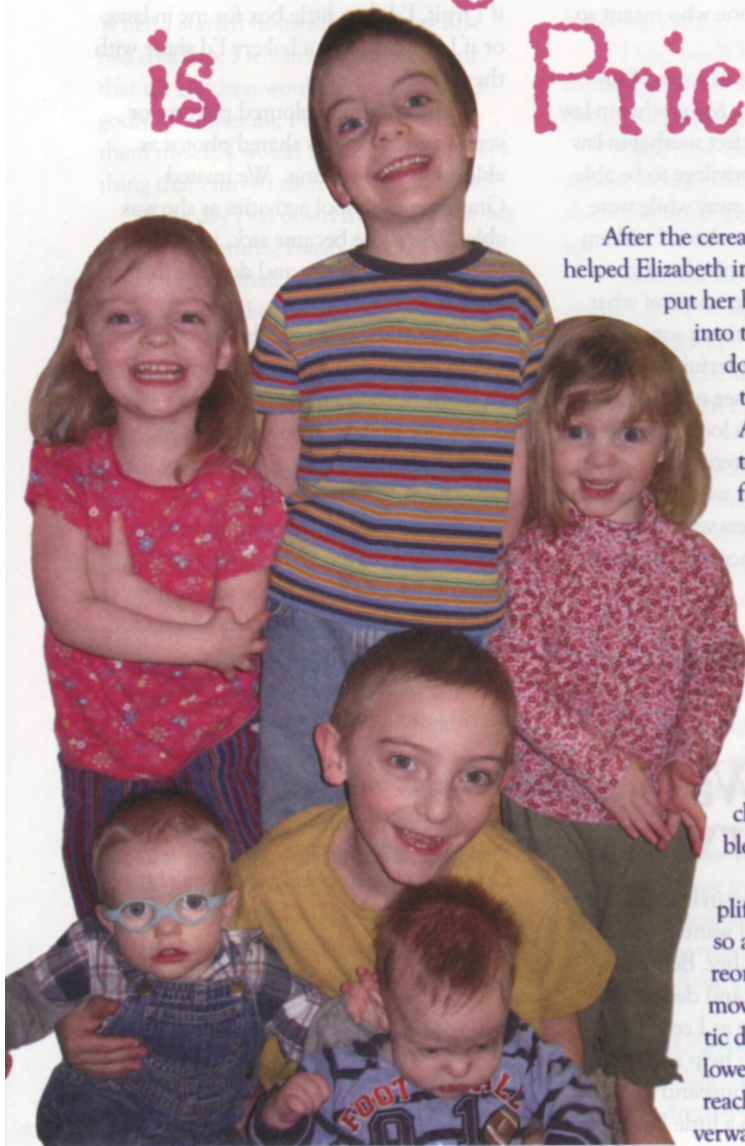
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Craig and Dawna's children are Joshua (7), Caleb (5), Elizabeth (4), Gracie (2), Benjamin (18 months) and Justin (6 months)

Training is Priceless

After the cereal was ready, Joshua helped Elizabeth into her booster seat, put her bib on and pushed her into the table. He then sat down in his chair and led the little ones in prayer. As I watched all of this, tears came to my eyes. I find it hard during my pregnancies not be able to do everything I want to be doing. I have hard pregnancies due to injuries in my early years. It is a sacrifice on my body, but a sacrifice well worth it. My children are such a blessing.

I am learning to simplify my life. A month or so ago I took the time to reorganize my kitchen, moving the children's plastic dishes and cups to a lower shelf for them to reach. I also moved the silverware drawer a little lower



Prepare Beforehand

While getting ready for church, we talk about how to prepare our minds, hearts and bodies to be in God's house. My three year old fills in the blank ... "quiet, reverent, which means respectful, we pray ... etc." Sometimes she throws in anecdotes about how she's not to play with her sister during the liturgy. We don't roughhouse before church and there's no TV.

In recent weeks, I've begun looking up the Scripture readings for the Sunday, telling the story, and/or printing out something for my three-year-old to color regarding the reading. For instance, last Sunday was about the Prodigal Son. I read them that parable and printed out a picture of the Prodigal Son for Kayla to color. She is then familiar with what's being read at church and is excited to be a part of it!

Additionally, once we get to the parking lot of the church, we talk again about how we are "quiet, prayerful, respectful of God's home, etc."

Something else that has been really helpful to me is to leave all the toys and snacks/drinks at home. We used to bring them to church, until Kayla was about two years. Do we take snacks, fictional books and drinks with us while we prepare to receive Holy Communion? No! We pray, sing, give thanks and prepare our hearts. Why would we want our children to behave any differently? I decided to put away the "stuff", bought the girls a book that is basically liturgy for children, with pictures, and expected them to behave properly. You know what? Kayla does. She's awesome in church! She knows what's expected of her.

Don't get me wrong! There are times when I have to take Kayla outside because she's behaving improperly, or Emily, because she's being too loud. My minister even suggested taking a break half way through the service to let the girls walk around outside, if need be. But, for the most part, it's been much easier than I thought it would be.

JILL MARY MACHADO

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Jill's children are Kayla (3.5) and Emily (15 months).

Children in Church?

How can you keep them quiet?

I recently posted this question on my email newsletter.

I know you will be blessed by some of the responses on this subject.

You will read differing and opposing ideas which makes it interesting.

You can take what you feel will help you in your situation. Nancy

Drawing Boards

I find that small drawing boards, the ones with a magnetic pen attached with a string are great for keeping little ones quiet in church. They can quietly and easily erase their drawings, ready to draw new ones. There are no crayons to drop and roll under the chairs/pews, and no arguing over whose paper/pens/stickers/crayons belongs to whom! You don't have to worry about bringing paper and the mess that goes along that! And no crinkly, tearing noises!

We also have our children bring their story Bibles to read while we are looking up verses in our big Bibles.

ERIKA MITCHELL

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Kelly and Erika's children are Micaiah (4), Lilia (2) and Benjamin (7 months).

Daily Worship

The biggest blessing we have found is regular, daily family worship! We teach our children to sit and behave appropriately at home! We require our children to sit still and fold their hands during family worship (usually 1/2 hour) and during church (at least one hour).

We also teach our children to be quiet during other parts of the day in short periods. These training times help them in church because they are accustomed to sitting still already. We know it is not easy for children to be still and quiet when young. We pray with and for our children, talk to them about the importance of showing our Lord reverence and reward them with lots of PRAISE when they obey! Then we like to give them time to run and be loud (outside) after they

have obeyed!

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Eric and Heather's children are Patricia (7), Benjamin (6), Matthias (4), Jonathan (age 2) and Elizabeth (4 months).

Cuddle Time

My five and three year olds love to cuddle. I let them cuddle with me in church and gently rub their back. If they start to talk, I whisper, "shh." It works great. Our two-year-old is a bit rowdy. We are still figuring that one out. The eight-year-old takes her toddler Bible to church and loves looking at the pictures. She amazes us by telling us what she learned in church. She really was listening the whole time!

Our children love to sing so worship time has been easy. We all sing at home daily and they carry this practice to church.

MICHELLE STAHNKE

Rock Springs, Wyoming, USA

mjstahnke@aol.com

Jonathan and Michelle's children are Naomi (8), Omar (3) and Elaina (2).

Watching the Adults

All our children sit with us in church. They sing and dance during worship and sit quietly during prayer and sermon time. This was achieved by practicing at home where we turn on a sermon CD and sit on the couch and listen.

For church they each have a quiet bag. The older ones have: notebook, crayons, pencils, pencil sharpener, trace the letters papers, Bible coloring book and Bible.

In Hannah's bag (age 1.5) she has a blanket to sit on the floor, crayons, paper, snack, quiet books (zip the zipper, open the flap etc.), and a few small toys.

Grace and Theo (age 4 and 6) sit in their chairs and color or read and Hannah sits on her blanket on the floor (or nurses in the sling). The sling is also a lifesaver for church. When Hannah is tired I can stand in the back and bounce and nurse her to sleep without missing anything. She can then nap in the sling while I take notes on the sermon.

The biggest benefit of having them in church is they are learning how to follow God by watching the adults. At a recent prayer meeting, all the adults were given a slip of paper and asked to write down several names of unsaved friends in order to pray for their salvation. My children stopped their coloring, asked for paper and wrote down names of people they knew who needed to be saved. Grace still gets her paper out every night and prays for those people by name.

HILLARY CRANDALL

Denver, Colorado, USA
crandallquiver@q.com

David and Hillary's children are Theo (6), Grace (4) and Hannah (1.5).

Take Notes

Recently I read about a great method for training children to take notes in church. For the youngest/non-readers, they are to listen to the pastor and draw a picture of something he is talking about.

For young readers/writers, they take a word the pastor says, write it down and then doodle around it.

For older readers/writers, they write a sentence or quote the pastor says and doodle around it. As they get older they write more and more of what the pastor says.

This not only occupies their hands, but also their minds and hearts. They will pay even closer attention to the sermon if Daddy asks them to show their work to the family on Sunday afternoon.

LISA METZGER

Matthews, North Carolina, USA
carolinametzgers@earthlink.net

Mark and Lisa's children are Annalise (15 - adopted from Kazakhstan at age 10), Kaitlyn (8), Ethan (7), Trey and Jake (5 and 3 - adopted from

Missouri 6/07), Julia (2), and Ellie Grace (4 months).

Sticker Books

We have a busy two-year-old daughter who is tough to 'settle down'. Sticker books work well for her. I bring along a small bag with all kinds of stickers in it (old address labels, miscellaneous stickers that have come in the mail, or various stickers that I have purchased). About halfway through the service she is ready for momma to pull them out. I peel them off the backing one at a time, hand them to her and she gets to choose where they go. Luckily she hasn't decided they go all over the pew ... yet!

HARMONY KOBILKA

Hudson, Wisconsin, USA

Paul and Harmony's children are Nathan (4), Emily (2) and Olivia (6 weeks).

Teach Self Discipline

I cannot count the number of times that I have been grateful for having children, from "pre-toddlers" on up, who have learned how to sit quietly in church, at swimming lessons of older siblings, in restaurants, in waiting lines (offices, store checkouts) etc. We have seven children, now ranging in age from 7 to 21 years. I regularly have strangers comment in how well behaved my children are, often marveling that "My Johnny would never sit that still for so long!" I think some of them believe that my children are that way naturally. They have not seen the hours of training that have led to this success. Anyone who is committed and consistent can also yield the fruit of self-disciplined children.

The most important thing I do is to practice at home on an almost-daily basis. This allows me to discipline the children according to our standards—something much easier to do in the privacy of our home than in the middle of a "quiet" setting.

I start teaching the child to sit still and quietly on my lap when he is between 5-7 months old. I begin with shorter periods of time (5-10 minutes) and build up from there. Generally, our practice sessions do not last longer than 30 minutes, but on occasion they have gone longer.

You don't need to practice for 1 1/2 hours even though you may need the child to last this long in certain situations! If they learn the basics of self-discipline, they can extend it for as long as needed, within reason.

We have found Family Devotion time to be good times for this training. You can also do it while listening to a favorite radio program or while reading aloud a book. I believe it is important to do it at a time when there is very limited visual distraction for the child.

Throughout this practice time we do not allow the child to have any books or toys. This is because we do not allow them during church (or similar settings) as we have found them to cause problems, distract others, drop on the floor and so on. Sometimes we allow them a "cuddly" to hold, but only during "real" situations, not during practice sessions.

It is important to consistently discipline the children during practice when they will not sit still and/or quietly. Even "happy" noises can be disruptive when in a setting where all else is silent. Do this using whatever effective methods you and your husband have agreed upon. In our home, this ranges from a light squeeze of their body, forcefully holding their wiggling parts or smacking a hand, arm, or leg so that it stings. It depends on the child, and also where they are in the training process as to what corrective measure you will need to take. It is also important to praise the child at the end of the practice session.

Another important thing is that I require the child to sit on my lap (or if older, in a chair beside me) at all times. When I am in a real-life situation he knows that he will not have freedom to get down and walk around, but rather will still have to sit in my lap or on a chair beside me (or be held by me if I need to stand). Again, praise is vital, because I am requiring my child to do something that does not come naturally.

It can also be helpful and important (for during meetings, visiting others' homes, etc.) to train the child (as outlined above) to stay within a confined area, such as a child's blanket. Once trained, wherever you take the blanket, the child will stay on this area.

It is tempting for parents to sandwich a child between them and become "book-

ends". My husband and I are always careful to sit side by side, with children who need more attention on our laps or sitting on the "outside" of us. This is an additional, subtle way to let the children know that we are united.

It is a process that requires dedication and consistency, but the rewards are innumerable!

SUE DERR

Mount Airy, Maryland, USA

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Gary and Sue's children are Christina (21), Kevin (19), Lisa (17), Andrew (15) Michael (12), Stephen (9) and Catherine (7).

Eliminate the Distractions

It has been our habit, from the arrival of our first child, (a very lively boy to say the least!) to train our children from birth to attend public worship with us as a family. They have all settled easily into a one-day-in-seven routine. Despite having certain patterns for nap, sleep and even feeding times, all our children have adapted to the Lord's Day being different. Of course, in the first few months they usually sleep or nurse their way through the service.

When they become more alert, they sit on my knee—no toys or sweets! Apart from wanting to teach them a reverence for the Lord's house these things only become a distraction, both to us and to others, as they make noises with them or throw them down in a "throw and pick me up game."

If, during these months, the baby is noisy I take him out to the cry room. This is a sound-proof room where I can both see and hear the service. Baby is not allowed down to play on the floor and it is here where he learns to sit as still as possible on my knee and I encourage quietness. Usually by one year old, all the children (even our lively boy) have been able to stay in for most of the service which lasts for almost two hours.

Around the one-year-old mark, Daddy takes over the supervising. Baby sits on his knee, and if he has to be taken out, is disciplined and brought straight back in. With all five of our children this has only had to happen two or three times. From 18 months old the children have sat on their own seat beside Daddy and are taught to close their eyes in prayer and

hold their Psalter to sing which they love to do!

An aid to this whole process is the baby is part of family worship in the home every evening where he can be taught to sit quietly. I have found that having the baby seated on my knee in the same position facing forward each time, helps as well.

I can testify that all the work pays off! My husband and I can sit through two services every Lord's Day, morning and evening, with our five children without almost any distraction. Of course, the process is ongoing; they need to be continually encouraged to apply themselves in worship. But, what a joy and privilege to worship the Lord together as a family.

JANE DUNLOP

Lurgan, Co. Armagh. Northern Ireland.

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David and Jane's children are David (10), Amy (8), Katie (6), Charlotte (4) and Hannah (2)

Reward for Points

Every Sunday each child starts with three points. If they are quiet, sit still and don't cause any disturbances with their siblings they can keep the points. After they have accumulated nine points they get a reward when we get home.

MELANIE MARTIN

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, USA

unionmillacresfarm@juno.com

Keith and Melanie's children are Sarah (11), Daniel (9), Hannah (7), Moses (5), Rebekah (3) and baby Hadassah.

Persevere

It wasn't until we had four children that we learned the blessing of keeping them in church. Our six and four year old daughters learnt to sit quietly and listen to the (sometimes very long) messages and the six-year-old would take notes.

As our family grew, we taught them to either sit quietly on someone's knee, or to sleep on a rug on the floor, depending on their age. We would sometimes let the little ones color in or look at a book, but as they got older, they learned to sit and listen. Giving constant training in the early years brings them to the place where they accept that sitting quietly in church is

"what we do."

It is more difficult for children to accept this concept once they are older. Training right from the start is the best option. However, it can be done with perseverance and prayer. I do believe that the rod of correction is something that still needs to be adhered to.

We have raised ten beautiful children. They have all been a blessing, and whilst they made the most of the outdoors and other pursuits, they were generally really great at being quiet in church.

MARGARET HARTNETT

Te Puke, New Zealand

tysmob@clear.net.nz

Tyronne (Ty) and Margaret's children are Shelley married to Phil, Nicola married to Brett, Tim married to Carla, Michael (28), Ben (26), Sam (24), Anna married to Gerhard, Katrina (19), Melody (18), Reyna (15). They also have nine grandchildren so far - Caleb (5), Holly (5), Alyssa (4) Gamma (3), Joel (2), Ezra (2), Asher (8 months), Joshua (3 months) and new baby Toby.

Composition Book

We have a composition book for each child and several pencils with added eraser heads that go in our "church bag". These books are used during sermon time. They are allowed to draw in them, and as they get older, they write in them too.

LORETTA WILSON

Chandler, Indiana, USA

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Lee and Loretta's children are David (22), Cassi (19), Nicole (17) Michel (10), Sara (8) and Jasmine (7).

Odds and Ends

We pack a bag of odd things for church. Our son who is 17 months rarely plays with "toys". He likes real things.

Currently the bag consists of twist ties, a washed old Vaseline jar (he's into opening and shutting things right now), a couple of jewelry boxes he can put the lids off and on several times, a zip purse, a very small stuffed bear that he can put things in and play peek-a-boo with a hanky, a couple of board books, a toy car, a garland you put on a Christmas tree, a zip lock bag, a small cloth bag he can put things in and

out, a pedometer that doesn't work anymore, some fish that link together, "Tangles" that come apart and can be twisted to make things, a tongue depressor, a small piece of sandpaper, a piece of fake fur like a fabric swatch, a roll of masking tape, a couple of clothes pins, a small cardboard box, and last of all, a toothbrush (he loves to brush his teeth!)

We don't take all this at one time. But odds and ends you might throw away will occupy a toddler for a long time.

Last church service he occupied himself with a long narrow jewelry box and a tongue depressor the whole hour and a half! He is a very active child but he is kept fascinated with REAL things.

ANGIE ROUNDS

Creston, Iowa, USA
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Jeremy and Angie's children are Mark (7), Alexis (6), Hannah (3) and Ethan (1).

Training Sessions

We prepared by having "training sessions" at home. We had everyone sit on the couch for say, five minutes, (or a length of time we felt sure they could do) without talking or excessive wiggling. They were to focus on a particular person or object in the room. At the end of the time, we praised them for sitting still and quiet. Sometimes we make it a game to see who can be the most still and quiet. We gradually lengthened the time to simulate the time they would be listening to a sermon.

We don't allow coloring during the sermons because we have found that it absorbs all of their attention, and can become a distraction to those around them as they rustle around for certain colors or borrow from their sibling, etc. But, for those who are able, we give a small reward for taking notes of the sermon.

The older children are required to stay awake and keep their eyes up toward the pastor, not fidgeting or slouching. Our littlest ones usually sit on our laps, and become still after a few minutes. We have found that toys lose their charm too quickly, and we end up exhausting and distracting ourselves trying to entertain them. After the music, Grandpa likes to pass mints to everyone, which is something they look forward to.

Teaching our children this kind of

self-discipline means we can also take them to weddings, funerals, concerts, plays, and a myriad of formal military functions, knowing they can act appropriately. For specific events, we prepare them in advance by describing what they should expect to see, and often by simulating the situation. For example, at their father's recent Change of Command ceremony, (a very formal event where our family would be escorted in and seated front and center) we simulated how to walk, sit and stand by rehearsing it in the yard.

After church, they are instructed to make their way back to a particular bench in the foyer. They can visit with people on their way, but by the time the parents are finished visiting, they should be gathered together. This prevents rowdiness, looking for lost children, interrupting adult conversation, etc. We have found that people like to see them sitting there and will visit with them while they wait. For this we give a small reward.

As we train our children at home, they will become good ambassadors for Christ to the world!

ANN HINES

Willow Springs, Missouri, USA
6rubies@gmail.com

Jack and Ann's children are Elaine (12), Samantha (11), Sarah (11), Levi (9), Caleb (8), Noah (6), David (4) and new baby. (Four of the children are adopted).

Sign Language

When a child is able to point at things and nod the head in agreement, he/she is ready to use simplified sign language. He can do this before he can communicate with spoken language. Rather than all the frantic "whispering" that goes on among family members during a church service, why not have everyone learn a few basic signs? Signs such as "no," "yes," and "toilet" are done with one hand and can be done discreetly without distracting anyone. Children generally love to learn sign language. An excellent starting place for information on baby sign language is www.babysigns.com

LINDA MARTIN

Rainbow, California, USA
lindamartin@integrity.com

Scott and Linda have a married son, James. He

and his wife, Kendra, have a son, Hunter (15 months). Scott and Linda are in the process of adopting a daughter, Selah Amanda (5 months) who they were able to take into their home when she was only 7 days old.

Sit in the Front

I was surprised that no one mentioned this secret for keeping children well-behaved in church. I found it a great blessing when raising our children. Sitting in the front seats, right under the eye of the preacher, and where the anointing is strongest, they were always better behaved.

Many parents sit with their children toward the back of the church thinking it will be easier to keep them in check. However, the back of the church is the worst place. There are many distractions which sidetrack the children more easily. They can also see what everyone else is doing in front of them which add more distractions again.

It might sound a little scary, but give it a try. I am sure you will be amazed at the difference.

NANCY CAMPBELL

Primm Springs, Tennessee, USA

A Sudden Guest

Nestled in a quiet nook,
Hidden from the closest look,
Love's rejoicing seed
became a life-
And tiny hands will now rejoice,
For God has sent a little voice
To praise His name
and warm our nest.
Welcome baby! We are blessed!

ELISABETH SNELL

This poem was written on a card and given to her husband to tell him a new baby was on the way.

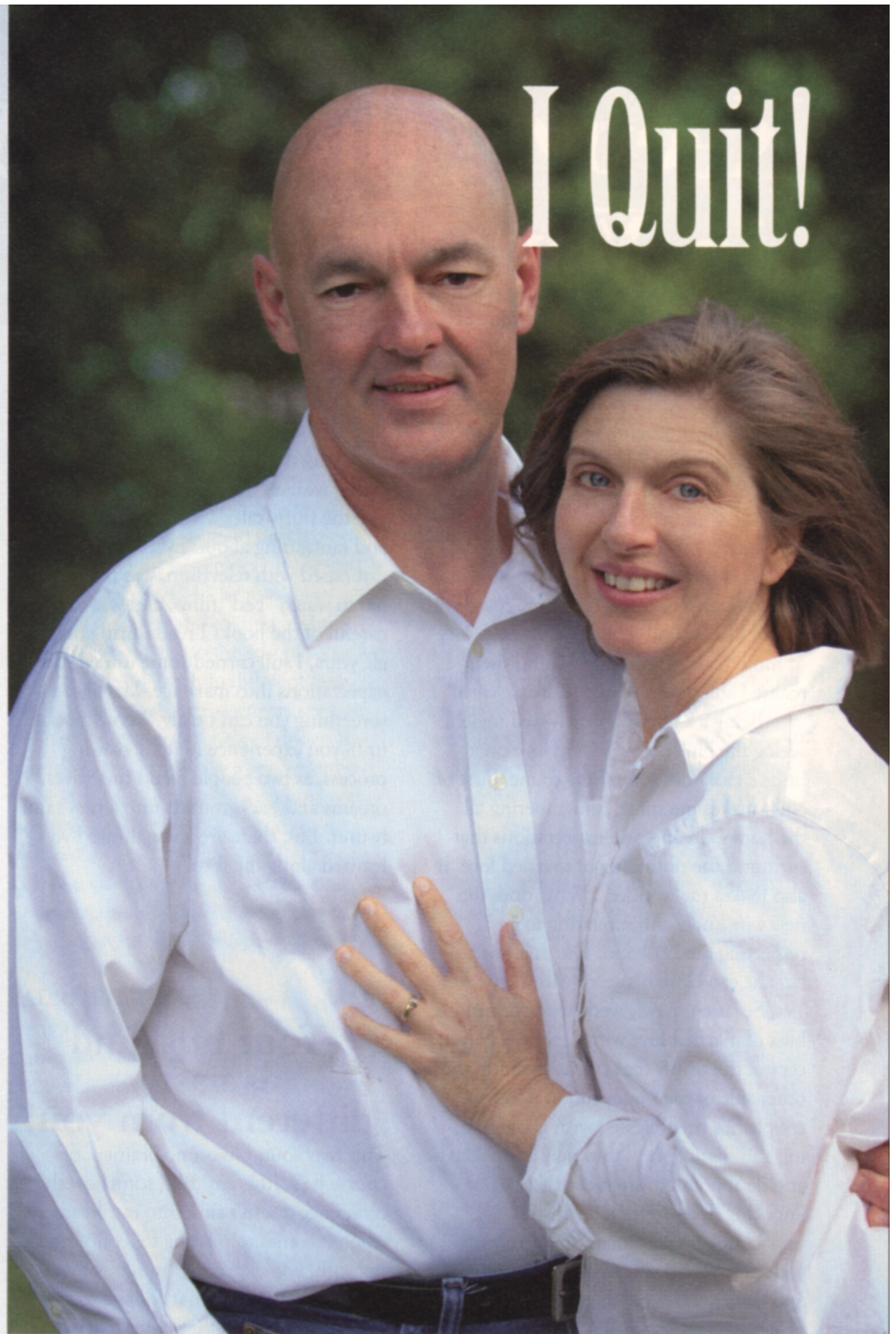
I quit. I'm too tired to keep this up. It just isn't even worth trying anymore. Certainly no one can take this much pressure. It was all too much. One of my children had rejected our authority and my marriage was faltering. My husband and I were mortal enemies. We could hardly stay in the same room five minutes without some type of argument. Besides all that, my health was quickly deteriorating.

So one day I quit. In one desperate act, I gathered it all up in an imaginary pile and set it on God's altar. My right to be heard, my desires, my dreams, my hobbies, hopes for ministry, and friends. Then I watched as it burned away. I was taking "wives submit to your husbands" to its most literal meaning—giving up "body soul and spirit."

Then I turned and walked away. I was convinced that I had doomed myself to a life of painful solitude and slavery. Nevertheless, I closed the doors of my home and began to live out, by faith, the Proverbs 31 woman—peppered with the attitude of 1 Corinthians 13. "You're a fake, a phony," the enemy yelled out. "No," I replied, "It's childlike faith. It's seeing what isn't there and believing what cannot be. Faith is walking one step at a time on a narrow and treacherous path, following the single lamp at one's feet."

Something amazing began to happen. What was this that emerged from the ashes of my willfulness? Its beauty and rapid growth took me by surprise. Almost immediately it began to bear fruit. Inner joy was first. Peace quickly followed. Then more came until I was too overwhelmed to speak. It continues to flourish and bear more abundant fruit every day—even now, some three years later.

God's ways are higher than our ways. In my struggle to keep my life I had lost, but in giving it I have gained so much more. My failing health has been restored and my marriage healed. My mourning has turned to laughter. My life partner became my confidant, my greatest cheerleader, my ministry partner, my protector, my lover and my closest friend. The greatest reward of all has been to watch my hus-



I Quit!

band take an active role as the leader of the home. When a young man asked for the hand of our eldest daughter, he played an important role in helping to direct their pure relationship. Their first kiss at the altar was proof that a Godly marriage bears not only good fruit for the couple, but also for the generations that follow.

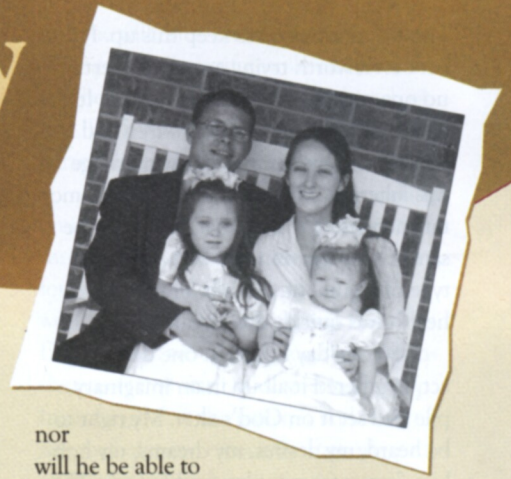
ANGELA DECOTEAU

St. Amant, Louisiana, USA
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Clayton and Angela's children are Dean—married to Emily and they have two children, Seth (5) and Allison (2), Lela (married to Michael White) and Megan 18.

**"It is better to bite your tongue...
than to permit it to bite someone else!"**

Keeping the Happy in Your Everafter



Having yet to celebrate our sixth year of marriage, my husband, Jeremy, and I still consider ourselves, in many ways, “newly” married. Granted, after nearly six years of marriage (and two children, with a baby on the way) I feel that I’ve learned a few things I didn’t know as a starry-eyed bride. But compared to many “veteran” couples whom I know and respect, with forty, fifty or more years of marriage behind them, I realize I still have MUCH more to learn!

Being a somewhat-newly-wed myself, seeing the blush of new fond love on a bride’s face does something to me. First of all, it makes me smile, remembering all the hopes, dreams and expectations that surround the unfolding of married love. It also makes me wonder... What does this new wife know about relating to and respecting her husband? Did any one tell her she can close his spirit with her words?

So often, newly weds soar off into the bliss of married love with very little concept of the reality that awaits them on the other side of the honey moon. Unless a couple has been blessed with godly training and discipleship, they may be shocked and disappointed when conflict begins knocking holes in their air castles.

Unfortunately, many girls grow up with pie-in-the-sky ideas about marriage and romance. It’s all about beautiful princesses and handsome princes, fairy-tale love and happy-ever-afters. While that may sound good in a story, or make a girl sigh with delight in a movie, it creates a shaky foundation for a marriage—a mar-

riage to a real man, with real faults and real needs.

I discovered the hard way, as many young women do, that marriage is nothing like the fluffy tales we grow up reading and fantasizing about. Even though I was not raised with television, was not permitted to watch “bad” films, and was very careful of the books I read during my single years, I still carried some unrealistic expectations into marriage. Marriage is something you can’t truly “know” about until you experience it; it’s a growing process, as two people blend their lives, dreams and backgrounds into a new family unit. But, there are a few things I’ve learned along the way:

1

Your husband is vastly different from you!

This may sound like a no-brainer...of course he’s different! But, somehow the difference doesn’t sink into our heads when it comes to relating to, communicating with, and expecting from our husband. Contrary to what a lot of young wives believe when they enter marriage (myself included), your husband truly does not know why you cry when you get upset, he does not understand why you obsess over what pair of shoes to wear to church,

nor will he be able to sympathize and relate to you like one of your female friends. He is a man. A concrete, black-and-white, to-the-point, non-emotional man! By “non-emotional” I don’t mean that a man is void of emotions; just that he is not connected to his emotions like you are.

Women see the world through the rainbow spectrum of a thousand shades and hues...a man sees black-and-white. Either a thing is or it isn’t. He doesn’t analyze how he feels about it. He just knows the facts. For example, when a female friend tells you that she is sick, you do not simply process the fact “my friend is sick”, you feel for her emotionally. You might say something like, “Poor thing! How are you getting all your house work done?” We instantly relate to another woman’s emotional needs, because they are probably very similar to our own.

Now just imagine that a male friend told your husband that he was sick (which would be very unlikely, but let’s imagine!) Your husband’s response would probably be something like, “Oh. So, who won the foot- ball game last week?” Men do not get involved in the intimate affairs of their friends as women do. That’s why they often talk about weather, sports, cattle prices, jobs, or other “safe” items of mutual interest. When a man attempts to relate to his wife, a highly emotional and very

Mother – Golden Glow of the Home

**The man is the brace and ceiling of his house,
He is the straight walls rising from the earth,
The woman is the golden glow of lamps,
The firelight on a hearth.**

~ Emery Petho



DADDY

intimate creature, it is like learning to speak in a foreign language. Things can quickly escalate on a down-ward spiral if the couple has not learned to realize and appreciate their God-given differences.

2 Your tongue can become your worst enemy.

Most women are gifted articulators. Even a quiet woman can usually out-talk her man, especially when it comes to expressing herself and her needs. Our tongues seem to be connected to every part of our being. We can express exactly what's on our mind, how our body feels, or how hurtful someone's words were. Studies tell us that women use the left and right hemispheres of the brain simultaneously; we can easily go back and forth between fact and feeling. Men primarily use the left side of the brain; they are factual.

Apparently, women speak approximately 50,000 words per day, while a man generally only speaks half that amount! If you are a particularly talkative woman, or are prone to giving your opinion, you **MUST** take extra caution in how you relate to your husband verbally.

Your "expressing yourself" in frustration, even if you feel you have a good reason, will sound like a verbal attack on who he is as a person. Never, NEVER, say things like, "You always do this", or "You never remember such-and-such." Your man is hearing, "You don't measure up. You're worthless. I don't respect you." While you feel you're making a last-ditch effort to communicate and connect with your husband, he is feeling vulnerable and disrespected and will withdraw from you emotionally.

Winning a silly argument may have entirely the opposite effect that you desired. It will push your husband away from you. If you find, after six months or a year of marriage, that your husband is not as thoughtful as he once was, doesn't share his thoughts or needs with you as

often, stop and consider the way you relate to him verbally. It is very possible that you have closed his spirit with your words. Your husband's self worth is much more vulnerable than you may realize, and since he is probably not as verbal as you are, he will not tell you if you are wounding him. You will find out that hard way, once he has already withdrawn.

3 Build Your New Family Unit.

It's important that you and your husband establish your own family unit within the first few years of marriage. "Cut the strings" from your childhood. I've seen young wives make the mistake of running home to their mother with every little trouble. The husband feels like a second-rate bystander, and probably wishes his wife would grow up! I'm not saying that you should not be close to your mother after marriage; just be sure you are a wife first, and a daughter second.

It is a painful thing letting a daughter go. Kindly, but firmly stand your ground. Marriage demands that you leave behind childhood and its dependencies and become a woman. If you are newly married, and living near your parents, take extra care to make sure that your husband knows that you are **HIS WIFE**, not your mama's baby. Simply put, don't expect you and your husband will eat with your parents every evening. Cook at home, for him. Share things with your husband first. Ask him where he wants to eat Sunday dinner or what he wants to do on the weekend. Don't just assume that he will become an extension of your family. He is your husband, not your sibling. You are now a couple, with an identity of your own. Don't run home to mama, or call her on the phone every time hubby does something "wrong". This is foolish, and will undermine your marriage. Marriage demands maturity and mutual respect.

Love and honor your family and his, but be sure your first loyalty lies with your man.

4 Don't compare your husband to your father.

The transfer of loyalty from a young woman's father to her new husband can be very confusing at times, especially if she and her dad have always been close, as they should be. It takes time and maturity to fully transfer your loyalty to another man, even if you're madly in love with him! The truth is that your dad has probably always been the stable man in your life. Most likely, he is capable, dependable, and always had the last say. Now you suddenly find yourself under the authority of a man who is your peer. He is inexperienced, sometimes unsure of himself (even if he doesn't admit it), and may even make a few decisions that you think are a bit silly. This Prince Charming that has always made you feel so wonderful suddenly leaves you feeling insecure, and you find yourself wondering (much to your dismay), "Would Dad have handled it like that?"

DO NOT compare your husband and your father. They are two different men, with different personalities, different strengths and different weaknesses. Your husband may not yet possess the wisdom or experience that your dad does, but he is your new God-given leader. Believe in him. Always stand by him. He will rise to meet your expectations if he senses that you truly believe in him and his new role as the provider and protector of your home.

KRISTY HOWARD

Cisco, Texas, USA

jandkhoward@sbcglobal.net

Jeremy and Kristy's family are Amy, Emily and Keith (who will join the family in May 2008).

Perhaps the greatest weakness in our parenting is our lack of prayer. It is our most powerful weapon! God waits for our prayers. When we pray, He moves. When we pray, He gives us answers and shows His mighty right arm. E.M. Bounds writes, "Woe to the generation of sons who find their own censers empty of the rich incense of prayer, whose fathers have been too busy or too unbelieving to pray, and who have inexpressible perils and untold consequences

home), along with the mother, carry the burden of their children upon their shoulders in prayer.

But that is not all. The High priest had to wear a breastplate that was made with the same beautiful materials as the ephod. On the breastplate they attached four rows of precious gem stones which were each set in gold. God told them to engrave the name of a tribe of Israel on each of the stones.

will love and embrace children and who will also establish godly homes and families. We pray that God will pour out His Holy Spirit upon them as He promises in Isaiah 44:3-4, "I will pour my Spirit on your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring; they will spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses."

We pray that their whole spirit, soul

POWERFUL PARENTING! What is the secret?

for their heritage! They whose fathers and mothers have left them a wealthy legacy of prayer are very fortunate, indeed."

Every child deserves praying parents. If we don't pray for them, who will? Some children are blessed with praying grandparents and great-grandparents but parents must not renege this responsibility.

I love the typology of the Priesthood and the tabernacle in the wilderness and how it relates to us today. God was very particular about designing the High Priest's clothing. It was to be made for glory and beauty. God wanted His servant to be clothed in beautiful, bright-colored garments when he came into His presence.

There are two interesting aspects, among many others, of the High Priest's garment. One was the ephod which was skillfully embroidered with gold thread and blue, purple and scarlet yarn. It was joined with two shoulder-pieces in which were fastened two onyx stones. God told them to engrave the names of the children of Israel on the stones, six on one and six on the other. Exodus 28:12 says, "And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders as a memorial."

The names of the tribes of Israel were to be carried on the priests' shoulders in the presence of the Lord. It is on the shoulders that we carry burdens and weights. In the same way, the father (the priest of the

Exodus 28:29 says, "Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment **over his heart**, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the Lord continually."

We must not only carry the names of children upon our shoulders but also upon our heart. It is our privilege and responsibility to carry their names upon our heart into the presence of the Lord each day to pray for them.

This was such a high priority to God that He made it very tangible and practical for them. He didn't just say, "I want Aaron to pray for the tribes of Israel when he comes into my presence." Instead, He made sure they were engraved on precious stones, close to Aaron's heart, so they would be a continual remembrance before Him. I know your children's names are upon your heart, but you may also like to write, engrave or make something tangible that you could take into God's presence when you pray for them each day. Or you may, as I like to do, to place your hand over your heart as you pray for your children..

What do you pray for your children? I have always prayed that God will give our children soft hearts to hear His voice and to be pliable in His hands. We pray daily for our children and grandchildren that they will hate evil and love righteousness. We pray that they will seek after God with all their hearts. We pray that God will give them godly husbands and wives who will be true and faithful to them all their lives, who

and body will be kept pure and blameless for the Lord, and of course that they will also be kept from accident, harm and danger.

Not only do we pray for our children and grandchildren each day, but we also pray for the children who are to come and future generations. We pray that the generations to follow will continue to walk in the fear of the Lord and impact this world for God.

When God gave commandments or promises to His people, He gave them also for the offspring to come. In the space of four verses in Genesis 17:7-10 God reiterates the following words five times, "you and your descendants after you..." My husband's great-grandmother loved to pray. Not only did she pray for family and those who needed her prayers in this life, but she constantly prayed for the coming generations. We believe that the blessing of God on the family today, six generations later, is due to her prayers.

Recently I was reading in John 17 the prayer of Jesus for His disciples and all who will believe on Him throughout the ages. As I felt the burden of Jesus' heart for His disciples, I felt that this should also be the burden of my heart for my children. You may like to add them to your prayers for your children.

1. That they will know God.

"That they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." v. 3. This is the greatest burden of my heart—that

TOP SECRET

Handle with Prayer

my children and grandchildren will not only know about God, but they will come to **know Him personally** and experience His power and presence in their lives. This should be our No. 1 prayer. Some time ago I asked our six married children to share with me again when they first met Jesus. Most of the children were under five years and yet had a life-changing encounter with God.

Let me share with you Evangeline's experience: "God saved me at four years of age. Even today, it is still the most vivid and powerful experience of my life. I was lying in bed. I still remember the orange bed-spread cover. My mother came into my room and said, "Stephen has just asked Jesus to come into his life. Would you like to also?" At that moment the world stopped and the fight between the powers of darkness and heaven began. My whole body was shaking. With all my heart I wanted to ask Jesus into my life, but the pull from Satan was so strong. "No, no, no..." the voice of Satan pulled at my heart. The struggle was powerful.

Eventually I said, "Yes" with all my heart. I followed my mother in prayer asking Jesus to come into my life. At that moment I knew God. I experienced the reality of God. He came into my life and filled me. He opened my mind to Him. I was saved for life - **no turning back!** I have known His powerful presence in my life ever since. Instantly, I felt peace. Instantly, I was not afraid of the big owl outside my room - or of anything. I have never been afraid of anything from that day." And this has continued to be her testimony until her 43 years of age today.

Rocklyn was also four years old. He said, "After my mother read the story of Nicodemus to us in our kitchen, I asked her if I could also be born again. I look back at this experience as the start of my conscious relationship with Jesus Christ. This experience burned into my life. Many Christians

who are saved when they are adults see part of their life from a worldly aspect and now they have the Christian aspect. I found that growing and learning with Christ in my life affected my understanding of everything in life from a God point of view. I saw and learned everything from a Biblical perspective. This shaped my life."

2. That they will have joy.

"*That they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*" v. 13. Jesus knew that His disciples and believers throughout the ages would suffer much persecution and trials and yet He prayed that they would have joy. Not joy because things were going well, but the joy that goes beyond circumstances—His joy in our hearts, because He is joy, and He lives within us. We need to pray and also teach our children that joy is not dependant on circumstances but allowing Christ to live His life of joy through us. 1 Thessalonians 1:6 tells us that "*affliction and joy*" go hand in hand.

3. That they will be kept from evil.

"*Keep them from the evil one.*" v. 15-16. What an important prayer. We cannot keep our children from evil by hiding them from this world. Taking them out of the city into the country may not even work. We raised our teenagers on the Gold Coast of Australia in a home that looked out on the Casino! That drove me to prayer! The greatest victory in our parenting is that our children can live in this world but not be touched by the spirit of this world, that they can live in this world but not be sucked in by its evil. We are to be separated from this world, but our separation is not isolating ourselves and our children from this world. Our separation is the power and presence of God upon our lives. Read Exodus 33:14-15 and 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

4. That they will be sanctified.

"*That they also may be sanctified by the truth.*" v. 17,19. Let's pray that our children

will be sanctified (set apart and made holy) by the power of the truth, the Word of God. Let's teach them that the Word of God is alive and active and speaks to us personally. Pray that they will have a love and passion for the Word of God and that it will lead them to holiness.

5. That they will be one.

"*That they may be made perfect in one.*" v. 11,21-23. God wants oneness in the body of Christ, but we will never have it there until we have it in the home. Firstly, in the marriage. God planned for the husband and wife to be one. Not two, but one! When we are one and our children see that we are one, with no compromise, or being able to play one off against the other, they will experience security and see the divine truth of oneness. When there is oneness in the marriage, there can be oneness in the family, and oneness in the church.

6. That they will behold the glory of the Lord.

"*That they may behold my glory which you have given Me.*" v. 24. Christ's glory is the revelation and manifestation of all that He is! We need to pray that our children will see Christ for who He really is, rather than their own interpretation. There is a temptation to bring Christ down to our humanistic level but His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His ways higher than our ways. Another prayer that I pray often for our children is that they will have "*revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened...*" (Ephesians 1:17-18) It is not religion, but revelation that will keep our children from deception! The wonderful thing is that as we behold Him, we also will be changed into His image from glory to glory. What a powerful prayer to pray for our children. (2 Corinthians 3:18).

7. That they will experience God's love.

"*That the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them.*" v. 26. This love is agape love, a supernatural love, which continues to love in the face of rejection and hate. God loves. He lives by love. He rules by love. But we are also commanded to "*keep ourselves in the love of God.*" (Jude 21) Let's pray that our children will keep themselves in the blessing of His love and not be

continued on bottom right of page 18

For some time I have been speaking at *Above Rubies* camps in Australia about the seven pillars of wisdom. Proverbs 9:1 says, "Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out seven pillars." The Scripture does not name these pillars. However, God put on my heart seven pillars that can help build

answered.

"And you know I do my best to be submissive to you."

"Yes, Val, I know you are submissive." He confirmed.

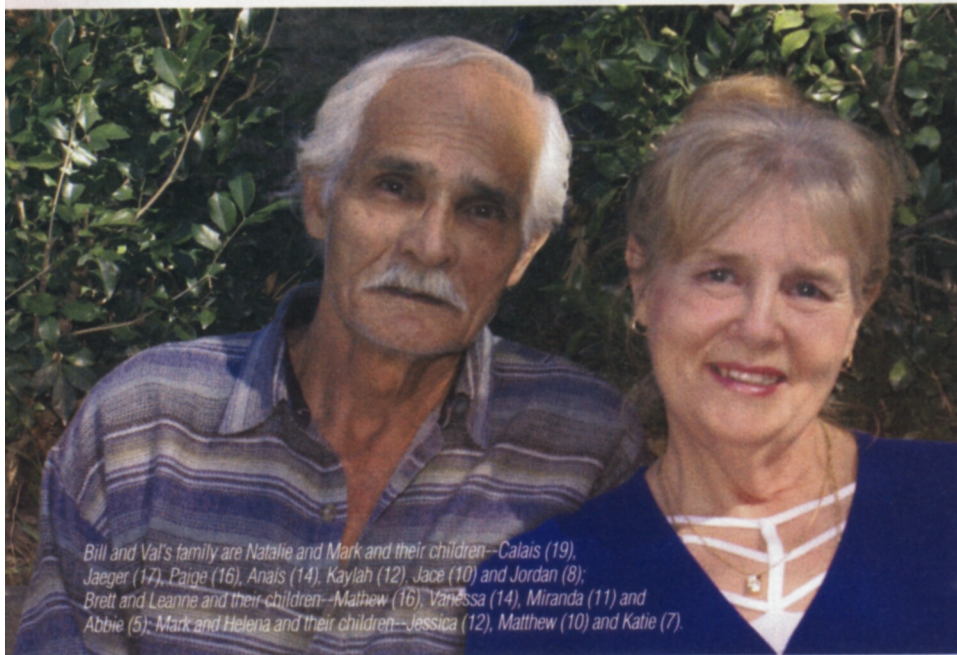
"You also know I'm forgiving." I continued.

good book to help me get started, at least. I checked out the Internet, ordered, and to my surprise, it arrived within two or three days. Dropping everything I sat down to read. Within the first chapter I knew the missing ingredient in our marriage. It was Respect. I had obviously answered Bill in a disrespectful way that day we were frustrated with one another.

I decided to test the theory explained in the book. Approaching Bill, who was working out in his shed, I took care to tell him how I really respected him in a certain area. Right before my eyes his whole demeanour softened. He smiled.

It can't be that easy I thought. I'll leave it for a couple of hours and try again. Two hours later I told Bill how I respected him on yet another aspect of his character. Once again he seemed to grow in stature. I realised I had won his heart. He was like putty in my hands.

Respect is what a husband longs for, even though he may not be able to put his finger on it. Actually, I should have made this the first pillar. Building this pillar in your marriage makes building the others easy. Of course, it is not a magic potion. You have to work at building your marriage.



Bill and Val's family are Natalie and Mark and their children—Calais (19), Jaeger (17), Paige (16), Anais (14), Kaylah (12), Jace (10) and Jordan (8); Brett and Leanne and their children—Mathew (16), Vanessa (14), Miranda (11) and Abbie (5); Mark and Helena and their children—Jessica (12), Matthew (10) and Katie (7).

What is Missing in your Marriage?

up and strengthen our marriages. They are:

1. Love your husband.
2. Obey your husband.
3. Intimately linked with your husband.
4. Adorned as a bride for your husband.
5. Building a family with your husband.
6. Please your husband.
7. Reverence your husband.

I had ministered about the first six pillars and was ready to prepare for the seventh. However, I wasn't sure if I really understood this pillar, let alone teach about it. I looked up the Greek word in the New Testament and found it means 'to respect'. A few days later a lady rang to change her address and in the course of conversation mentioned a book by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs called *Love and Respect*. I wrote it on a bit of paper, popped it in the drawer and promptly forgot about it.

Not long after, Bill and I had a few words, nothing major to be sure, but we were definitely frustrated with each other.

"But, Bill, you know I love you." I stated my case.

"Yes, Val, I know you love me." Bill

"Yes, Val, I know you are forgiving. He patiently replied.

"Well then, isn't that enough? What else do you want of me?" I wanted to know.

"I don't know, Val, but it isn't enough". Bill replied quietly.

"So you're telling me that love, submission and forgiveness are not enough?" I demanded to know.

"Yes, Val, that's what I'm telling you."

"And you can't tell me what this something is?"

"No, I can't Val, I just know I want it."

I marched off furiously. What else does he want from me?" I muttered to myself. "I don't have any more to give." In my frustration I felt that most men would be grateful for those three elements in their marriage, but not my husband. No, he wants MORE! I cried out to God for help, feeling it was so unjust.

The next *Above Rubies* camp was drawing closer and I was still unprepared. Rummaging through a drawer I came across the name of the book the lady had given me. It occurred to me that it might be a

VAL STARES

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POWERFUL PARENTING *continued*

lured away to sin where they come out from the protection of His love.

8. That they will be prepared and ready to face the battle of life and declare God's glory to the world.

"As you have sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." v. 18. The purpose of raising our children is to get them ready for God's purposes for them in this life. God wants His salvation, love, joy and peace to be revealed in them wherever they go and whatever they do. We do not raise our children for hibernation but for the revelation of God in their lives. They are arrows that we daily sharpen and polish, getting them ready for the day when we send them forth to hit the mark for God. Let us daily pray to this end.

NANCY CAMPBELL

OCCUPYING TODDLERS

While Trying to Homeschool!

One Location

We have been homeschooling for about five years. While it has been one of the best decisions we have ever made, it has also been challenging. We find that keeping all the children in one location is very helpful. The little ones have their own desk if they want to color or do their 'work'. They know they have to be quiet in that area. We also allow them to play quietly on the floor with a special box that contains educational materials appropriate for them.

If they are too noisy, they must leave and play in their room or the kitchen which is close by. If it's becoming "one of those days" then I try to have the older children working as independently as possible and spend a little extra time with the little ones.

They know that when all school work is complete we do a fun activity. Everyone looks forward to that. It could be a science project that everyone helps with or a walk outside—usually something that will help them spend their extra energy.

BRENDA SAVERCOOL

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Tim and Brenda's children are Nyoka (11), Kiana (8), Maleki (6) and Levi (4).

Number Train

We made up a fun activity that keeps our four-year-old occupied while I'm working with the older children. We call it the "number train." I took three shoeboxes and strung them together to be his "train cars" and tied a long string to the first box to use as a handle. We select another location in the house (for us, it's the living room) to be the "train station." We place a number of small objects (marbles, toy soldiers, blocks, etc.) on the coffee table to be the "passengers."

He pulls the train to me in the school

room, where I'm working with the other children and I attach little cards with numbers on them to each box with paper clips. He chugs out of the room to the train station to pick up his passengers. If the card on the first box says "4," he puts four objects in that box, and so on. He chugs and choo-choos back to the school room for me to check and give him different number cards. When all of the passengers are with me in the school room, he's all done. We have also modified this to work on letters and colors. He feels like he's working with me, but he's going back and forth to the train station often enough that I can work with the older children at the same time.

Who doesn't like chug-chugging and choo-chooing to their little heart's content?

LAURA PENTECOST

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Eric and Laura's children are Logan (10), Cailyn (7), Gabel (4), and Jonah (2).

Keep Changing Activities

I recommend changing activities every half hour so that the child does not get bored, though sometimes I do stretch this time longer.

One-on-one time

I have a special time set apart in the beginning of the day for one-on-one time with the young children. This time is usually half an hour which increases in length as they get older. During our one-on-one time we might read, sing, color, work on training issues or the child might work alongside me. Spending this time with them first helps them to feel loved and gives me the ability to work on training them.

Blanket time!

While I work with an older child (or two!),

the young child plays with a small box of toys. I rotate the toys to avoid boredom. The child is required to stay on the blanket! Sometimes, I also assign "couch time" for an older toddler. The child is required to sit on the couch and look at books or play with puzzles. "Room time" is fun also. I turn on a music tape, CD or book tape while the child plays with a set amount of toys. You can start with 10 minutes and work your way up to half an hour. They grow to love it and it teaches the child to play and be content alone.

Older Sibling Helper

I assign playtime or reading time with an older sibling. This helps to build their friendship and teaches the older sibling to serve the younger ones.

Nap time!

Don't let go of this!

In your Lap

Teach your toddler to sit quietly in your lap or beside you. They can learn to color on a piece of paper while the other children are writing or play quietly with blocks at your feet while you teach a math lesson.

HEATHER TULLY

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Eric and Heather's children are Patricia (7), Benjamin (6), Matthas (4), Jonathan (2) and Elizabeth (4 months).

Include the Toddlers

The best way I have found to occupy busy toddlers is to include them! This means you must plan for your toddler just as you plan for your school children. Jot down a list of things your little one can do in the areas of taking care of himself. Never underestimate what a young child can do.

They will certainly surprise you if you spend some time instructing and training them!

In our home, we have a chart on the refrigerator with a small picture of each task in the order I would like them to be done each day. You can use your own digital pictures in a Word document or cut and paste from a magazine. Above each picture is a simple description, e.g. "Brush your teeth" has a picture of a little girl brushing. After about a week of walking my children through the list they can do it by themselves, with my five-year-old daughter helping my two-year-old son. Meanwhile, I can nurse my baby or get breakfast ready.

For personal care, our list includes going potty (my son is potty training), getting dressed, putting away PJs, combing hair, and eating breakfast, which is when I teach the children from the Bible. Our Bible time includes a "hymn of the week" and learning the Apostle's Creed.

During chores, my children make their own beds. No, they do not do it perfectly, but they do their best! Then they can pick two chores each from a list of four. The first chore is emptying the bathroom trash into the kitchen trash every day, even if they are not full (put a rubber band around the liner so only the trash dumps out). Next, I bought a Dustbuster for cleaning crumbs from under the table each morning, and for cleaning up hair from the bathroom floor. Two-year-old boys generally LOVE noisy chores like this one! The other two chores are sorting silverware from the dishwasher and helping with the laundry. I am AMAZED at how many laundry steps young children can accomplish with a little instruction!

Now we are ready for school. School in our home is known better as "fun time with Mama!" Both older children participate while my baby naps. At the table, my son can do sticker books, color, sort "counting bears," write on the slate or dry-erase board, or play with a toy. Reading time is all-inclusive. My lap can be quite full, especially if it's time to nurse again!

JENNY HINTON

(Second generation homeschool mom)
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Kevin and Jenny's children are Katie (5), Owen (2), and Audrey (6 months).

Have More Toddlers

I have found the very best way to occupy toddlers is to have more than one. The more children you have, the more they play together and entertain themselves! I usually have three, sometimes four preschoolers. They keep each other playing, while I school the other seven.

MICHELLE KAUEHOFEN

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Cam and Michelle's 10 children are Bryson (16), Jacinda (15), Dalton (13), Brielle (10), Logan (9), Havenne (7), Gideon (6), Jilissa (4), Tressa Leigh (2) and Drayden (10 months).

Train to Stay

I have a 19 month old who is into everything. And he LOVES to climb. I found it very distracting to home school his two older brothers while my toddler was running around the house climbing on top of everything. Therefore, I spent a few afternoons training him to "stay on the rug" and play quietly with his toys. I home school the older boys at a desk on one side of the living room and we have an area rug in the middle of the sitting area on the other side.

When I need him to stay put to concentrate better, I tell him to "stay on the rug." Because I keep him in the room with us, he hears his brother practicing his phonics and he has picked up almost all of the sounds. He mimics them in the background and it makes his brothers laugh. This makes learning all the better!

KAREN ADAMS

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Jeremy and Karen's children are Jared (11), Hudson (6) and Nathan (19 months).

Older Children can Help

Now that my older children (aged 11, 9, 8 and 6) are focusing on long division, fractions, decimals, and percents, it is not as easy to include my three-year-old in their work. I now get my older children to rotate blocks of time playing one-on-one with their little sister, Faith. This gives me one-on-one time with each of the others during math time, while it promotes sibling bonding and, hopefully, a servant heart. The children look forward to their time with her,

and she will often bounce up to the next sibling with a beautiful smile on her face and beam, "It's your turn!" With each sibling, Faith gets a fresh playmate, a variety of personalities, and never-ending game ideas!

When the older children are working on independent work, Faith gets me! She can tag along as I do chores, learning the foundations of skills around the house, or work with puzzles, coloring, and Play Dough when we all study together. When she was two, it was not easy (actually very frustrating!), but the patience and training has paid off now, especially when we read science or history books together, or when they listen to the Bible or read-alouds.

I believe it is important not to overlook behavior problems in a toddler, even if it means stopping a homeschool lesson. Do not overlook it! It is tempting to ignore a toddler's bad behavior for the sake of the homeschool lesson at hand, but it is far better in the long run to stop the lesson and take advantage of the training.

REBEKAH HIXON

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Eric and Rebekah's children are Hannah (11), Benjamin (9), Joshua (8), Mary Grace (6) and Faith (3).

Blanket Time

While homeschooling three of the children, my two toddlers play on a 5 x 5 blanket with a plastic shoebox filled with small toys. I call it blanket-time. My two toddlers sit and play on the blanket for up to two hours. I keep the box only for blanket-time. Blanket time is my portable playpen. I use it in church. I even use it while visiting other families.

I cannot have my little ones running all over the place unsupervised while I try to homeschool, so blanket-time has helped to keep order in my home.

AMPARA CUCUTA

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Anthony and Ampara's children are Brandon (10), Alina (7), Natalie (5), David (4), Victoria (2) and Gabriella (1).

It Pays to Plan

A little bit of planning and organization in the summer has saved my sanity this school



year. Here is what I did:

For my 1 1/2 year old I bought six Rubbermaid shoebox size tubs (97 cents each at Wal-Mart) and filled each with a quiet activity. When it is school time she gets to pick a tub and sit and play quietly at our dining room table with us while I teach my kindergartner.



The different tubs include:

1. Empty tubs with lids (such as margarine tubs, empty bacon bits tub) and plastic frogs. This is Hannah's favorite! She puts the frogs in a container, twists the lid on and then takes them out and puts them in another container and so on. When we were on Christmas break she kept looking up to the shelf in the kitchen where I keep her tubs and asking for her frogs.
2. Wooden blocks for stacking.
3. Board books to look at.
4. Plastic zoo animals (elephant, monkeys, giraffe etc.).
5. Plastic play food and dishes to cook with.
6. Empty measuring cups (1/2, 1/4 etc.) to stack together.

The basic rules are one tub out at a time and to pick up her things when finished. Each tub has no more than 15 or 20 objects to pick up. I get out one tub per

subject (math or reading time) and she needs to be happy with this the whole time. No asking to switch after five minutes.

For Theo, my four-year-old, I found a great book called *Preschool Activities in a Bag* by Paula Reetz and Sherri MacLean, www.ActivityBags.com. This book was a lifesaver. It gives instructions to make simple and inexpensive activities to keep your preschooler busy and learning while schooling older children.

In the summer I made 20 activities. Each activity is kept in its own zip lock bag in a file cabinet in the corner of our dining room. When it is school time Theo picks an activity to work on. Some of his favorites are cutting out shapes, matching lower case to upper case letters, and sorting coins. All the supplies for each activity are contained in the bag so Theo can independently set up and clean up. The other big advantage of having all these activities ready is that I can grab a bag and set both my four and six year old to work on something educational while I do office work. This is much better than letting them watch T.V.

I concentrate better with everyone in the same place; I don't send the younger ones off to go play at school time. Instead, they sit at the table and do their school work. This way they learn that school time is "sit and work quiet time" and they look forward to this time.

HILLARY CRANDALL

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David and Hillary's children are Theo (6), Hannah (1 1/2) and Grace (4).

Participation

The first year I homeschooled my daughter Elizabeth, I was concerned about what I

would do with my very active 2 1/2 year old son. I tried letting him watch educational preschool videos during teaching times, but I soon realized that he wanted to be a "big boy" and do "school" with his big sister as well. So, I set up a desk for him and involved him in every part of our day. I purchased and designed my own worksheets to keep Ethan busy while Elizabeth was doing her math and handwriting pages. They both participated in reading times and all other subjects, as well as field trips and other activities—and they both had so much more fun! Ethan has learned so much, and he is completely unaware that he really isn't in school yet!

ALISON BABCOK

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Randy and Alison have three blessings: Elizabeth (6), Ethan (4), and Abigail (3 months).

Paint with Water Books

We use "Paint with Water" pictures with our toddler while I work with the two older children. I give him two pictures at a time to "paint" and this is his homeschool "work". I keep it in a folder and store it with the older children's work folders so he feels big like them. The "paint with water" books are great because they only require a little dish of water and a brush—the color is already on the page and spreads when the brush goes over it. There is no mess and the only liquid they use is water.

CHARLENE WITEK

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Tom and Charlene's children are Eliana (8), Asher (5), Ephraim (3) and Hadassah (8 months).

Younger Children First

I recently purchased Susan Bradrick's CD, *"Twenty-four Hours is all you get."* She makes a wonderful case for putting time with the younger children first—a priority above the school-aged children. Instead of finding something to fill up their time, they get focused attention in the prime hours of the day. More time can be devoted to the school-aged children while the younger ones are napping. She really helped me understand that I cannot afford to waste these fleeting, crucial, tender years with my

youngest ones.

I am adapting this principal into our daily routine. I begin my day with the four-year-old cuddling, reading with me and being with me in my room while I make my bed, read my Bible, pray, etc. He really relishes this time with Mommy, and will say "I didn't get my cuddles" if we miss it. I also spend time with the little ones while the older ones are cleaning up after breakfast/first school session.

ANN HINES

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Jack and Ann's children are Elaine (12), Samantha (11), Sarah (11), Levi (9), Caleb (8), Noah (6), David (4) and new baby. (Four of the children are adopted).

Bag Swap

A group of homeschooling moms and I are getting together for a Toddler Activity Bag Swap! Ten of us!

The bags will follow certain rules; they must be very inexpensive, if not free, to assemble. They must allow a toddler to use them independently (though it may take a few minutes for mom to demonstrate the first time). They must be easy to clean up, and there must not be any parts that are a choking hazard for littler babies lurking around.

Each bag will be assembled in big Ziploc bags with a little white zipper handle, NOT the type that has to be pressed together.

Here are some of the ideas:

- Cardboard shapes with holes punched around the edges, and a piece of yarn tipped with masking tape. Sewing!
- A pie tin and small toys with magnets glued on the bottom.
- An empty paper towel roll and a toy car to roll thorough it.
- Several cups of various sizes to stack and build.
- Chalk on dark construction paper.
- Crayons and sandpaper (an interesting change from paper).
- A big puzzle with five or six pieces, home-made or purchased from a yard sale or thrift store.
- Very big beads and a drinking straw (easier to handle than string). Mom can make a sample pattern for the child to follow if she glues the two end beads.

Here are some ideas for your own toddlers:

- A can of shaving cream and a nice smooth surface (counter, inflatable pool, cookie sheet)
- A shallow bucket of water with boats, scoops, etc.
- Cornmeal on a cookie sheet to practice writing with a finger.
- A spray bottle of water and a small dry towel for "washing windows."
- Make a necklace with string and cheerios.
- Picture book and tape to be enjoyed on headphones so they don't bother other children.
- Record your own personalized tape for your child to listen while he looks at his favorite book.
- A flashlight.
- When a flashlight gets boring by itself, you can add cut-out shapes of cardboard for a shadow and light show (an older child may enjoy building a little tent of blankets and chairs to create a dark space).
- Beanbags and a bucket.
- A drop of food coloring in water, an eye dropper, and a paper towel or coffee filter.
- Clothespins and just about anything that can be clipped together; paper, cloth, paper cups.
- A disposable camera.
- Pictures with colored glue. If you use this on a smooth plastic surface, such as a page protector, you can peel the pictures off when it's dry! It's also great fun to paint your hand, let it dry, and peel it off like extra skin!
- A captured bug in a jar.

MAGDALENA ALVAREZ

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA
babykneads4life@yahoo.com
Allen and Maggie's children are Accalia (11), Evelyn (7), Lydia (5), Koinonia (3), Zion (1) and Ransom coming soon.

Rice Play

I have a shallow Rubbermaid container about half full of rice. I toss in several cups and a couple of sand toys. This keeps my two and three year olds entertained for about two hours at a time. Granted, I only pull it out about once every two weeks. We set the ground rules of no dumping and trying to keep it in the box. For the most part, it works great. It takes an extra couple of

minutes with the vacuum cleaner when play time is over, but those precious hours of uninterrupted play are invaluable to the rest of the family!

My friends think I am nuts because this inevitably produces a little extra work, but for me it's a trade off I am willing to make.

AUBREY FREEMAN

Huntsville, Alabama, USA
aubreyfreeman@gmail.com
Joshua and Aubrey's children are Thomas (3), Sarah Grace (2) and Elizabeth (13 months).

Play dough is my Answer

A few weeks ago we were trying to do our schoolwork around the kitchen table. Our youngest son was trying desperately to be involved in the process. I put out some cans of play dough, cookie cutters and letter stamps and he had a ball. The older children ended up doing their spelling words with the play dough as well.

BETSY PENDERGRASS

Jackson, Tennessee, USA
betsypendergrass@bellsouth.net
Taylor and Betsy's children are Mary Taylor (8), Brady (6) and Shepherd (2).

Begin with the Youngest

I used to have the idea that the most "important" school should be first in the day. We'd start with devotions; I'd do what was necessary for the oldest, and work on down to the youngest. With this schedule, I had a lot of trouble with my third child's attitude. I realized she felt very left out, as often her "school" was neglected when school for the two oldest took too long. I changed my plan, and began school with the youngest. The first 30 minutes after devotions, I devoted to my preschooler, including her younger sister when she wished. During this time, the older children work independently. This is a very special time to us, and has helped my preschooler feel very treasured. She never gets left out.

After our time together, I have a number of things for her to work on independently, and they vary depending on the day of the week. She absolutely adores coloring, which makes it easy to satisfy her.

Anything a child likes will help—puz-

zles, workbooks, cutting, making pictures with colored shapes, painting with water books, making shape pictures with rubber bands on pegboard, etc. Variety each day keeps things fresh.

Also, something that worked wonderfully was scheduling a short "school session" with her older sister. The two girls loved their time together. My oldest thought it great fun to be the teacher and the younger was kept busy and learning. It was a win-win situation all around. The key to this time is having an activity prepared for them ahead of time. I would vary the activity according to the day of the week, e.g. Mondays would involve something to help learn the ABC's, Tuesday would be numbers related, Wednesday might be shapes or colors, Thursday would be a Bible story activity and Friday could be a craft. By the time she was done with her school with me, her independent activity and her short school session with older sister, the six year old would have free time to play with her.

I found it was definitely hardest when I had a newborn, two-year-old and four-year-old. It gets easier as you have children who are a little older and can help out more.

TAMI CAIAZZA

Rose Hill, Kansas, USA

poplargrove@pixius.net

John and Tami's children are Bethany (9),

Michael (7), Abigail (5) and Emily (3).

Preschool Teachers

Things have gotten much easier since I was introduced to the assumption that 95% of what we teach is remembered. With that in mind, I make it a point each day to have our nine and seven year olds teach our four and two year olds so I can have time with the opposite one.

The Teacher of the Preschooler pulls out a drawer full of all sorts of preschool "teaching" objects like an abacus, flashcards (picture, number, and alphabet), blocks, and much more. I often purchase items for this drawer, to keep it interesting. There are also lots of writing utensils (markers, crayons, watercolor paints) papers, child-safe scissors and glue available.

We've done this for a full year now, and it's amazing how much the older children have taught them, especially our little four-year-old guy. They've pretty much given him a full K4 education! The older ones

have benefited not only in their own learning but also in good habits such as patience, perseverance and helping others.

When they do not need my help, the older children do their schoolwork independently such as reading and copy work. This frees me up to do housework with my toddler following after. Our K4 child is well old enough to know how to respect the work of others, so I expect him to be quiet and read or write or else he needs to go play in his room while they work.

LORI SEABORG

Pensacola, Florida, USA

loriseaborg@gmail.com

Tim and Lori's children are Brenden (12), Brittany (10), Stone (8) and Alyssa Belle (5).

Advice from an Older Mom Toddlers First

If you give your toddler the first part of the day, he or she will be much more content the rest of the day. Sit on the couch and read to them, do finger plays, talk about colors, shapes, days of the week, months of the year, community helpers or your family. Teach them some songs and have special cuddle time with them. Fill their tank with your love and attention, hugs and smiles.

Special School Only Toys

Start a list of special toys you would like to collect over time for your toddler to play with during "school." I have a list on my organizer called "Wee Hands Busy School." Some of the things on my list are: magnets on a cookie sheet, tinker toys, bee's wax, baby-bendable toy, notebook, cutting and pasting box, Tupperware containers, audio tapes, sticker books, felt and pipe cleaners, etc. I also save little toys that have a small container, like our Winnie the Poo house, which has a handle, snaps closed, and contains small Winnie the Poo characters we have saved over the years.

These toys are kept and brought out only during special school time. If you have a baby who is not walking yet, keep some special baby toys in a basket for baby to play with near you only during school time. The little ones start to look forward to this time when they have their special toys, and are kept occupied while you sit with their older brothers and sisters. They feel "big" because they are "doing school" too.

After Lunch and Before Nap Time

While your bigger children are cleaning up your lunch mess, take additional special time to sit with your baby and/or toddler to read and sing to them before you put them down for their nap. If you are consistent with your nap time, bed time and getting up time, your toddlers will be more peaceful. Let your children work with things they can do independently during the morning hours. Use nap time to work on special projects and one-on-one with your older children without worrying about little hands disturbing your work.

Half a Day Schedule

Toddlers love repeat activities, and function better with a schedule. If a full day schedule is too burdensome for you, try a schedule for half a day until nap time.

A sample schedule might be:

7:30 - 8:30 Breakfast and Clean up.

8:30 - 9:00 Chores (Toddlers can help empty the dishwasher, empty small trash cans and put in liners, pick up toys, straighten shoes in the closet, fold washcloths and match socks).

9:00 - 9:20 Couch Time with Toddlers.

9:20 - 10:00 "Hands On" activities, math manipulatives, puzzles, play dough, coloring, dress up, special video or audio tapes.

10:00 - 10:15 Snack.

10:15 - 10:45 Outside or exercise.

10:45 - 11:15 Minute clean up.

11:00 - 11:30 Toddler Special School Toys while you sit with older children.

11:30 - 11:45 Lunch prep.

11:45 - 12:15 Lunch.

12:15 Reading time with small ones while older ones clean up.

1:00 Nap time for babies and toddlers, one-on-one with older children.

LYNETTE CRIDDLE

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Alan and Lynette's family are Jarod married to Sarah with Abbey (6), Analiese (2) and baby coming, Siobhan (28), Cole and Cody (22), Cassia 'Faith' (14), Charis (13), Courage (12), Cierra (9), Alan 'Cade' (7) and Chaeli (5).

More Ideas

- Buy a small hard plastic pool and place it on the kitchen floor nearby. A few measuring devices, funnels, spouts, spoons,

continued on page 25

End of Pregnancy

As my pregnancy comes to an end, I'm often feeling uncomfortable. It's easy to fall into the world's comments and think, "This is just torture. Woe is me." I get comments about how big I am, how big this little one is going to be, how "brave" I am to have five children. They aren't comments to encourage or uplift but to get a little snicker out of me because I want to be a Mother.

I sit here this morning, and I begin my time of quiet with God, ACTS—Adoration, Confession, Thankfulness, and Supplication. I find that motherhood and the capacity for life within myself falls into every category.

As I closed my prayer this morning, my little Baby Aiden moved. Not the foot in your ribs kind of move, but a gentle little wiggle of his legs and his hands.

It reminds me of how precious life is. In a few days it will be one year since we lost our little one.

My heart still grieves and I find myself stricken with pain and fear at times. I immediately ask God to take that away, for He is not a God of fear, but a God of compassion and loving-kindness. (Jonah 4:2 and Exodus 34:6-7)

Adoration—

I simply ADORE the God that created me, and created life within me!

Confession—

I confess at times I wonder why the end tends to be so difficult with breathing, swelling and bladder, etc.

Thankfulness—

I'm so thankful that He has allowed life to grow in my womb once again!

Supplication—

I pray for a healthy birth, a healthy baby, and that my little baby will come to know Him as well.

Are you nearing the end of your pregnancy and feeling very uncomfortable? Remember that the blessing of movement in your womb is like no other blessing from God. How gracious

He is to give us life within.

How gracious He is to have given us Jesus so we can have life more abundantly! Don't fall into the trap of the world that wants to make us think that this is supposed to be hard on us. Be honored that life grows within you and that you will have the privilege of pushing your precious babe into the world so very soon.

CHRISTINE SALINAS
Kaufman, Texas, USA
inhisgrip@embarqmail.com

Prayer Covering

In the past few years my perspective of mothering has changed. I have older children and little ones. When my older children were young, I mistakenly assumed they'd all grow up to have the same values as I do and that they'd be solid in their walks with the Lord because of the training they'd receive. However, they don't always choose that direction. I no longer make any assumptions.

As a result, I've spent a LOT more time in prayer with these last few little boys, as well as my other children. When I hold little Eli (which is often as I can) and am alone with him, nursing or rocking him to sleep, he gets a lot of prayer covering. I often pray that his little hands would be only used for the Lord and never used by the devil. I pray that his feet will only take him where the Lord leads him.

There are so many things that we should pray for them. Along with praying over their hands and feet, how about their mouths, that they will only speak what is wholesome and encouraging. We should pray their eyes would always be the light of the body and that their minds will be stayed upon things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy. We should pray that they would present their bodies to the Lord as a living sacrifice and be worthy of being His temple. And don't forget their hearts, that they would always remain pure.

I've never had such a desire to pray for my children as I do now. I thank God for the desire He has placed in my heart and for the continued trust He puts in me to be a mother all over again. Children truly are a gift from the Lord and I feel so blessed.

ROBIN EVANS

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visionB4me@gmail.com

Bobby and Robin's children are: Jacob (married to Jenny), Seth (21), Karena (18), Charity (17), Josiah (14), Olivia (12), Elisabeth (10), Levi (8), Matthew (6), Jaaron (4), Adin (2.5) and Eli (5 months).

Too Many Oranges

"Hello, is that Rhonda?" asked the deep voice of our accountant.

"Yes, that's me."

"You're still alive? I thought you would be dead by now!"

"What are you talking about? Dead by now?" I puzzled.

With a subtle hint of humour our accountant explained, "I've just finished doing your yearly financial accounts. You're a single income family and your husband's income is less than the cost of your house rental. Not to mention the cost of feeding your children, and owning a car. In actual fact you should all be dead from starvation." But we weren't starving. We had a lovely house, a fully paid for car, and all the food we needed.

Our conviction has always been that I would be a stay-at-home-mum; my ministry and calling to be a homemaker. The Lord was honouring our conviction to be a one-income family.

When my husband, Rob began Bible College many people expected that I would put the children in day-care and go to work full-time to support the family. Even a well-meaning pastor told me, "God would understand if you ignored your conviction for a 'special reason'." "Supporting your husband financially," he said, "is more important than being a stay-home-mum." But Rob and I disagreed. We held strong to our conviction.

It wasn't easy, but Rob studied full-

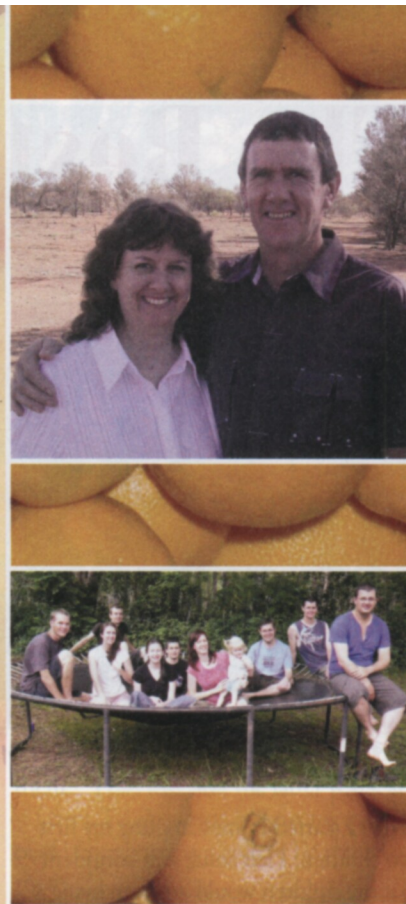
time at Bible College and worked part-time to provide for us. It was just as our accountant claimed. We didn't have enough income to survive but the Lord always provided what we needed.

It wasn't long before I began to predict when we were going to have visitors. The Lord would always supply us with extra food before they arrived. People would give us vegetables from their garden or a gift package. If we were given more than we could use in one week I would muse, "Mmm...I wouldn't be surprised if we have visitors this week." And usually we would!

One weekend we were expecting a missionary couple to come stay with us for a week, and we had very little food in the house. That Sunday after church we went to the car-park. There, on the bonnet of the car were two huge bags of fruit. My thought was, "Thanks, Lord, but I can't feed oranges and bananas to this couple all week."

The next morning, they arrived. Upon noticing our abundant supply of fruit on our counter, their eyes lit up with delight. "We grew up in Jamaica," they explained, "And we still love to eat fruit for breakfast and lunch. And we love to snack on fruit."

What a wonderful week we had. The missionary couple felt blessed that the Lord had provided them with their favourite food.



I learnt a valuable lesson: the Lord always knows exactly what we need and will supply it.

RHONDA DAVIS

Atherton Tablelands, Queensland, Australia
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Robin and Rhonda live in Far North Queensland (near Cairns). Their children are Rachel (25, married to Matt and 2-year old Shelby), Matthew (23), Lydia (20), Joshua (18), Hannah (16), Caleb (13) and Aaron (12).

P.S. By the way, the "bonnet" of the car is what we call the "hood" in USA.

Occupying Toddlers *continued*

and bake ware items, along with something to measure and pour (water, dry lentils, rice, cheerios) provide lots of great fun. Supervision is a must, of course.

- Spread a tarp on the floor and spray foam shaving cream. Young children love to smear it around. Actually, you can do this on tile or linoleum flooring and wipe when done for a sparkling floor!
- Have a bin of "school time toys" that only make an appearance when you need total cooperation from the little ones. When you have to really focus,

bring out the bin. The toys will keep the child's fascination longer because their newness has not worn off.

- Plan lessons around nap or rest time.
- Provide paper and crayons for the younger siblings to "do school" right along with the older ones. You'll be amazed at how much they learn just by being close to you.

MICHELLE PIPPIN

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Charles and Michelle's children are Bailey (9) and Kathryn (4).

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The Best Teacher



Tosh and Dawn with their family—Sandy, David (Deja), Jesse, Grace, Jonathan, Joshua, Joy, Joseph, Benjamin and Paul.

When I started homeschooling my first two children, I felt smug and confident that my children would grow up living a godly life. After all, I would be teaching them myself. I would be in charge of everything that entered their world and mind.

One day I sat down to read one of my favorite Scriptures, Isaiah 54:13, "And all your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children." This promise was the basis for my confidence that my children's future would be blessed. But on that particular day my eyes stuck on the words, "will be taught of the Lord." A bit disappointed, I realized I had been translating this verse to mean, "Your children shall be taught by their mom..." The Lord gently chided me. He impressed on my heart that He would bless my children and they would grow up godly, not because I was such a great teacher, but because of His mercy and blessings on our family.

Since that day, three of my little students have grown to adults and have moved on to higher studies in universities far away from me. As I continue to teach our remaining seven children at home, I am well aware of my inadequacy to teach my children everything they need to succeed. However, I don't despair, because over the years the Lord has proved to me that He is the teacher of my children and provider of all their needs.

I have many testimonies of how the

Lord has helped me. I would like to share one with you. When my second son, Deja (David), was 13 years old he announced to me, "Mom, I want to learn physics."

I told him right away I couldn't teach him physics. Following my missionary parents as a child, I had studied in public schools and a private school in Israel. I had been homeschooled and had completed high school in a foreign land in a foreign language. These educational opportunities gave me many skills I needed for my life, but physics wasn't one of them! Since we live in a remote area of a third world country, I had very few teaching resources. All I could do was point my child to His Heavenly Father.

"Deja, you'll have to ask Jesus to send you a teacher, because there is nothing I can do to help you," I told him.

Some time later, a new missionary arrived at our post. "Mom, do you think she could teach me physics?" my son asked me.

I watched the little lady, whom I guessed to be in her 50's, unload her bags from our pick-up. With her salt and pepper hair, delicate manner and British accent, she didn't appear to be physics savvy to me.

"I don't think so," I told Deja.

Deja kept insisting I ask her about physics. To get him off my back I told him to go and ask her himself.

A few minutes later he came back to me beaming. It turned out our new missionary friend had previously been a Physics Professor at the University of London! She taught Deja a six months crash course on physics and opened a whole new world of math and science to him.

Now, many years later, Deja is completing a degree in aviation engineering. He was homeschooled by a mother with few teaching resources and by a great God who created the universe!

DAWN SUWARATANA

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THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF YOUR LIFE

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1. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that you are a sinner. It is your sin that separates you from fellowship with God. (Luke 18:13; Romans 3:21)
2. **REPENT** of your sin and turn away from it. (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38,39; 3:19)
3. **CONFESS** your sin to God and He will cleanse you and forgive you. His forgiveness is complete. When He forgives, He forgets! (Psalm 32:2; 1 John 1:7,9; Romans 10:9,10)
4. **FORSAKE** your own way and determine to follow God's ways. (Isaiah 48:18; 55:7; Mark 8:24-38)
5. **BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Son of God. He is the One who has borne the punishment of your sin. (John 3:16; Mark 16:16)
6. **RECEIVE** His great salvation that He has purchased on your behalf. (John 1:12)
7. **BE BAPTIZED.** (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:38)
8. **THANK** Him for His great salvation and His blood that He shed for you. Receive Him gladly and ask Him to take control of your life.
9. **DETERMINE** that you and your household will all serve the Lord.

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Contact: Maureen Schinkel
Phone: 513-521-5025 • CinciAboveRubies@aol.com
Informational website: <http://cinciaboverubies.blogspot.com/>

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Email: calmdec@cox.net * <http://www.laaboverubies.org>

27 – 29 MARCH, WISCONSIN

11th WISCONSIN FAMILY CAMP, Inspiration Center, Williams Bay
Contact: Roger and Jackie Thelen, Ph: 262-715-1587
safehaven@pensys.com

8 – 19 MAY, ONTARIO, CANADA

LADIES RETREAT, Camp Crossroads, Muskoka (2 hrs north of Toronto)
Contact Phil or Cynthia Hounsome, Ph: 705-835-0760
above@exhort-daily.com * Website: www.exhort-daily.com

5 – 7 JUNE, MANITOBA, CANADA

LADIES RETREAT, Camp Cedarwood, Pinawa Bay, NE of Winnipeg
<http://www.cedarwood-yfc.com/site/site.htm>
Contact: Michele Kauenhofen, Ph: 204-388-6015 (noon – 4.00 pm or after 8 pm)
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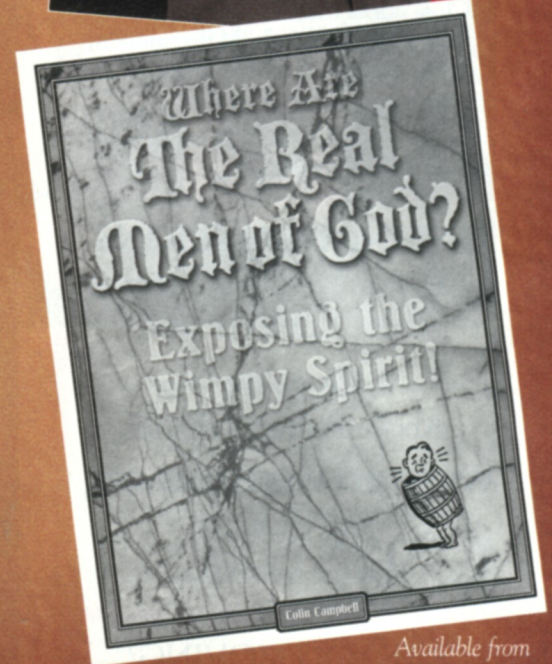
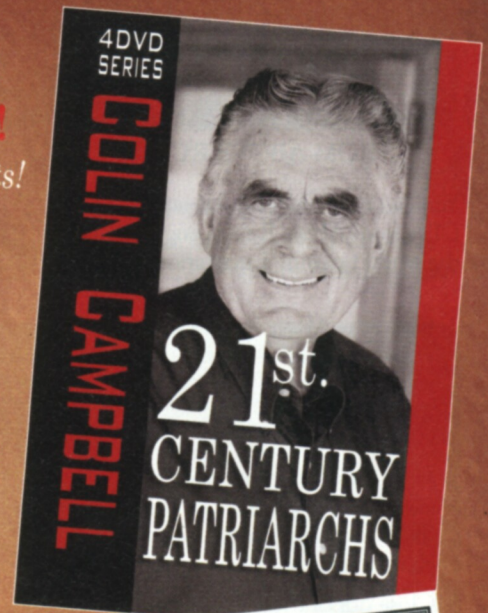
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Dr. J. G. Holland