



*Blessed are you, parents, who get up in the night;
your children will know, by your example,
that God loves them through the darkest hours, too.*

From "Weekly Meditations for Busy Parents," a service of *At Home with our Faith* newsletter, sponsored by the Clareian Missionaries. Visit www.homefaith.com

Helping Children Understand Divorce

What I Need from My Mom and Dad

- ✓ **I need both of you to stay involved in my life.** Even if you don't live close by, please write letters, make phone calls, and ask me lots of questions about who I spend time with and what I like and don't like to do. When you don't stay involved in my life, I feel like I'm not important and that you don't really love me.
- ✓ **Please stop fighting and work hard to get along with each other.** Try to agree on matters related to me and my needs. When you fight about me, I think that I did something wrong and I feel guilty.
- ✓ I want to love you both and enjoy the time that I spend with each of you. **Please support me and the time that I spend with each of you.** If you act jealous or upset, I feel like I need to take sides and love one parent more than the other.
- ✓ **Please communicate directly with my other parent so that I don't have to send messages back and forth.** I want you to talk with each other so that the messages are communicated the right way and so that I don't feel like I am going to mess up.
- ✓ **When talking about my other parent, please say only nice things, or don't say anything at all.** When you say mean, unkind things about my other parent, I feel like you are putting me down and expecting me to take your side.
- ✓ **Please remember that I want both of you to be a part of my life.** I count on my mom and dad to raise me, to teach me what is important, and to help me when I have problems.



"Family Relations: Helping Children Understand Divorce," by Kim Leon and Kelly Cole, published by MU Extension, University of Missouri-Columbia

Modeling Manners

If courtesy is something children live with daily through constant, consistent modeling and gentle reminders, it will more easily become their routine. Research reveals that high parental expectations (expressed in positive ways) result in children who live up to those expectations. We can readily recognize that the essentials of common courtesy—self-respect, respect for others, personal responsibility, good judgment, decision making, conflict management, compassion, integrity—are the foundation blocks related to other behavior-related issues that seem to loom so much larger than manners. *Remember to model and encourage these behaviors:*

- ◆ Liberal use of "please" and "thank you"
- ◆ Positive language
- ◆ Table manners
- ◆ Self control
- ◆ Respect for others' feelings
- ◆ Respect for others' property
- ◆ Remember the "Golden Rule" and treat others as you'd like to be treated.

Anita Smith, The Institute for Youth Development, www.youthdevelopment.org



Do You Wait Up for Your Teenager?

One mom slept on the couch until her kids got home... then, she'd give them a hug or kiss on the cheek goodnight. She did this to check for telltale signs of smoking or drinking. A dad kept an alarm clock, set with the curfew time, next to his bed. It was the teen's job to turn it off when he came in—before the alarm sounded—thereby giving his father a chance to make sure all was well. These ideas may seem a little much to some of you, but if you've had teenagers, you know it's better to protect than neglect. *Remember your family first!*

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Establishing a Loving Home

We ask you to bless our home, Lord.

May each of us always be willing
to do everything we can
to make our home
into a secure and happy place
where we can give our love and friendship
to each other –
and to all who visit us.

Renee Bartkowski, [Family Prayers for Daily Grace](#). Liguori, MO, Liguori Publications 2003.

All in the Family— Everyday Challenges



When faced with a child's disability, parents and siblings sometimes shatter and scatter. Instead, they need to cope as a family.

Learn—about the disability, related legal rights and all health care options.

Focus—on finances, for now and the future. Find out what aid is available.

Make time—for you and the siblings. Evenings out as a couple or afternoons with your other children are necessary.

Talk—to one another and to professional counselors. Keep communication open.

Get support—from family, friends, neighbors, church members, health professionals and groups addressing your needs.

Pray—any time, in any words.

"Living with Disabilities," Christopher News Notes #452

The 6 A's of Good Parenting

Affirmation

When we affirm a child's feelings it gives them a sense of authenticity. When our child is sharing his feelings or opinions, he wants us to listen and affirm him.

Acceptance

When you give unconditional acceptance you give a child a sense of security. This basically comes down to one principle that must be conveyed to our children: I don't love you because of what you do or achieve, I love you because you're my child.

Appreciation

When we express appreciation it gives a child a sense of significance. **The more we express our appreciation when we "catch" our children doing things right, the more motivated they will be to behave better.**

Availability

When we are available to our children it gives them a sense of importance. **Children spell love: T-I-M-E.**

Affection

When we show our children affection it gives them a sense of lovability. **All children want to feel that they are lovable.**

Accountability

When we hold children accountable it gives them a sense of responsibility and self-control. As parents, we must create a context for rules and boundaries. Once those guidelines are set, we must be consistent in enforcing them.

Based on the audio tape series, "The Six A's of Relational Parenting," by Josh McDowell.

Every
human being
has a need
and a right
to be loved,
to have a home
where he or she
can put down roots
and grow.
The *family*
is the first
and
indispensable
community
in which
this need is met.

"To Live in Christ Jesus," Pastoral Letter of
US Bishops