

WFWP USA: Parenting: A Partnership with God

Myrna Lapres

July 28, 2022



It has been said that the family is the only institution created by God. Ideally, we are meant to learn how to relate to and love each other from the relationships within our family. Love is a gift we give our spouses, children, parents, grandparents, and ourselves. Yet, when we look at the world around us, families are facing an overload of challenges - media that makes news events known around the world instantly, wars, terrorism, divorce rates, single parents, homelessness--all impact the nuclear family and how our children view life. It is obvious that many families need help and support in raising their families.

It is important for us to remember that parenting isn't just learning the right techniques, a collection of wise words or the best bag of tricks. We raise responsible and happy children by finding unconditional love for ourselves, so we can give our children what they need most - to know that they are loved and can love others. As our children's first teachers, our relationship with them is important. Regardless of all technological advances, parents will always be the most important source of information and values for their growing children.

The most important role for families is to provide a place where children can feel unconditionally loved and learn how to love others. If our children don't feel loved, it doesn't matter what kind of clothes they wear, how well they do academically or what they accomplish on the soccer, swim, or debate team.

To be happy, a child (actually all of us) must feel loved and learn to love others. Relationships in the family give a wonderful chance to learn how to be loving. Disagreements and quarrels among siblings provide the opportunity for us to guide them in working out differences with respect and love.

I believe that God created us to be an extension of Himself. He intended to dwell among us, to resonate with our minds and hearts and experience all the joys and challenges of physical life and the universe through us. In the relationships in our families, we can partner with God so that He can experience life within and among us.

The world that parents are raising children in has changed tremendously in the past 20 years.

There seems to be much more to be anxious and fearful about.

Technology has changed our world forever. Kids, youth, and young adults today do not know a world without cellphones and other forms of media that connects them to news and trends instantly and shapes their view of the world.

There are apps to keep track of feedings, diaper changes, and extracurricular activities. You can Google "Is this normal behavior for my 10-month-old," "six-year-old," or "middle schooler?"

People are living longer, and grandparents are more involved in their grandchildren's lives than ever before. We see many more three and four generation families.

Yet, as a global community, we often live far from our extended families and the support they could offer.

In many households, both parents work outside the home, which adds additional pressure as they juggle work, school, family, and community.

More single parents are raising kids alone.

An increased number of children are being raised by grandparents.

A much higher percentage of separated/divorced parents are navigating new challenges on their parenting journey.

The thing that hasn't changed is that the most vital component in raising our child is our connection to them. Our relationship with them is the building block for their future relationships. Children learn how to interact with others by watching and relating with us.

Taking time to talk and listen, really listen, to our child is essential. The best approach is being intentional about making opportunities for connection. Experts recommend scheduling family time: conversations over device-free dinners, one-on-one time with each child even if it is while running errands or walking the dog, family meetings once a week, and establishing family traditions and weekend outings.

Parenting is an inside job. Regardless of all the technological advances, parents will always be the most important source of information and values for their child. Parents guide their children through their relationship with them, supporting them to make good choices, learn from their mistakes, and take responsibility for their actions.

Through this connection and support, children develop a moral compass - an inner voice - that can guide them throughout their whole life. In fact, I believe that the parent-child connection is the core relationship that rules the world. If it is broken and fragmented, we have a wounded world. If it is strong and solid, we have healthy men and women and families where God can experience joy and connection.

For more parenting information, visit Myrna Lapres' website: www.coachmyrna.org/