Dear Center for,

This eLetter provides you with the latest version of Contemporary Comments.

In the right sidebar you can also secure the Sharing Scripture facilitator guides for 1st Qrt. January-March 2014 on "Discipleship."

These excellent discussion sheets are designed to enhance your Sabbath school class or small group. Suitable for photocopying, Sharing Scripture contains thought questions and exercises that transform ordinary study times into dynamic learning adventures.

Grace to you!
Center for Creative Ministry

Contemporary Comments

"Discipling Children"
January 25, 2014
It's being called a frightening new parenting trend: parents publicly shaming their kids.

You may remember in 2012 that a father videoed himself shooting up his daughter's laptop and then posted the video. His daughter had gone on a rant about her parents on her Facebook page. When her dad found out, he retaliated by posting his own video of him destroying her laptop in order to "teach her a lesson."1

Other parents have chosen to publicly shame their kids by making them wear signs that revealed their wrong behavior and then forced them to stand on the street corner. Some signs were detailed: "I'm in the 7th grade and got 3 F's" and "I don't listen to my teachers. I'm suspended." Others gave one-word descriptions of their transgressions: "Thief" and "Bully."2

According to Childhelp—a national non-profit organization—this form of punishment isn't discipline. It's emotional abuse, which is described as: "Any attitude or behavior which interferes with a child's mental health or social development. This includes yelling, screaming, name-calling, shaming, negative comparisons to others, telling them they are 'bad, no good, worthless' or 'a mistake.' It also includes the failure to provide the affection and support necessary for the development of a child's emotional, social, physical and intellectual well-being. This includes ignoring, lack of appropriate physical affection (hugs), not saying 'I love you,' withdrawal of attention, lack of praise and lack of positive reinforcement."3

Licensed psychotherapist Julie Hanks suggests four positive things parents can do when their child needs discipline:

1. Spend time with your child to assess what emotions or situations might be underlying their poor choices
2. Use your child's misbehavior as a time to teach and understand why their behavior is troublesome or dangerous.
3. Assign positive behaviors as discipline, like volunteering at school, at a homeless shelter, or doing extra jobs at home.
4. Enlist the help of a counselor or therapist specialized in working with teens and families.4

Jesus gave us a pretty firm warning in Matthew 18:6 when it comes to our treatment of children: "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

Far from shaming children, Jesus often held them up as examples, telling us that we must become like them if we want to enter the kingdom. Children have humility, trust, and a willingness to learn that we adults sometimes lack.

Jesus also welcomed children and didn't see them as an annoyance or an interruption. Instead, He said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14).

So when it comes to discipling, we need to remember the children in...
our churches and communities. Not only do they need to be taught, but also according to Jesus, we need to learn from them.

~ nc

For inspiration: youtu.be

1. dallasnews
2. Ibid.
3. childhelp
4. dailystrength

About Us

Since 1988, the Center for Creative Ministry has been serving local church leaders and individuals around the world. Formerly known as the publishers of ABBA Newsletter and the Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, we have now broadened our generational/ministry focus to include our children. The Center for Creative Ministry took on its new name on June 1, 1996.

The Center for Creative Ministry, formerly Baby Boomer Ministries, is a privately funded and managed para-church ministry fully recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. We are dedicated to supporting the local church in outreach and nurture ministries by providing resources, information, training, and consulting.