

Family Times

Making our Homes a Haven (or Heaven)

Child Development professionals categorize kids into two main groups:

1. The naturally compliant, intrinsically kind, inherently logical children.
2. Your children.

All parents hope to get the children in category No. 1, but they end up from category No. 2 because the first category was made up by the researchers as part of a huge April fool's prank. At least, that is my theory based on a poll of every single parents I know. None of my peers report having easy kids. If you happen to have been blessed with naturally compliant, intrinsically kind, inherently logical children, then all of us other parents bitterly resent you (in a loving, Christian Manner (from Dave Meurer, "Stark-Raving Dad,"

New Man, May/June 2005, 14).

There is no question, parenting isn't an easy task. Some of us think our kids are completely crazy. (i.e. my college aged daughter who recently ripped the cover off the gas tank on my car in order to fill it up). Certainly, we know that each of our children is different. Some may be easier to raise than others. Some parents may feel that their children are low yield, high maintenance; fewer seem to be the other way around.

The world is also an increasingly hostile place, making parenting much more difficult. Consider the words of President James E. Faust: "In my opinion, the teaching, rearing, and training of children requires more intelligence, intuitive understanding, humility, strength, wis-

dom, spirituality, perseverance, and hard work than any other challenge we might have in life. This is especially so when moral foundations of honor and decency are eroding around us. To have successful homes, values must be taught, and there must be rules, there must be standards, and there must be absolutes. Many societies give parents very little support in teaching and honoring moral values. A number of cultures are becoming essentially valueless, and many of the younger people in those societies are becoming moral cynics" (James E. Faust, "The Greatest Challenge in the World—Good Parenting, *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 32).

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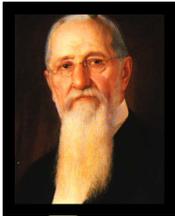
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Specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy, Parenting Solutions, Depression, Anger, and Anxiety Issues, Sexual Addictions.

Quotable: "Good homes are still the best source of good humans" (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, October 1974, p. 71).



“Not one child in a hundred would go astray, *if the home environment*, example and training, were in harmony with the truth in the gospel of Christ, as revealed and taught to the Latter-day Saints. Fathers and mothers, you are largely to blame for the infidelity and indifference of your children. You can remedy the evil by earnest worship, example, training and discipline, in the home” (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1939], p.302).



“...The best way to keep children home is to make the home atmosphere pleasant - and let the air out of the tires” (Dorothy Parker, in Laurence J. Peter, comp., *Peter's Quotations* [New York: William Morrow and Co., 1977], p. 77).

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In this complex world we live in, we may often feel like there are many factors out of our control. When it comes to converting our youth to the gospel of Jesus Christ, however, there are many things that we can do to influence our children for good.

Perhaps one thing we have some control over is the spiritual environment in our own homes. Notice, we cannot create spiritual experiences for our children. That is something that cannot be constructed. All we can do is help create climate and opportunities for our children where the spirit can penetrate their hearts.

That is why in our meetings we sing hymns, preach, pray, and bear testimony. These activities help bring the Spirit to us. Parents have a great opportunity to help create a home atmosphere where the Holy Ghost can dwell.

One young man wrote: ***One of the reasons I love to bring my friends to our home is to give them a chance to feel the Spirit that we have there. Almost without exception, everyone who comes***

through the front door stops, looks around, and says “Wow. This is really neat.” They don’t know what they are feeling, but they like it. After the senior prom, my date and I, along with two other couples, came back to our home to spend the rest of the evening. I still remember my girlfriend sitting in the rocking chair in our living room and saying, “I really feel comfortable in your house. There is something here that I really like.” Little did she know that what she was feeling was the Holy Ghost” (Boss & Boss, *Arming Your Children with the Gospel: Creating Opportunities for Spiritual Experiences* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 20).

In a recent study, two BYU Professors, Brent Top and Bruce Chadwick reported the following: “Creating a spiritual environment in the home provides the best opportunity for our children to develop a shield of faith within themselves. In our study of effective parenting, experienced parents who had already raised their children as well as young adults who could look

back on their upbringing identified the spiritual environment of their homes as the single most important factor in raising righteous children” (B.L. Top & B.A. Chadwick, *Ten Secrets Wise Parents Know: Tried and True Things You Can Do to Raise Faithful, Confident, Responsible Children* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004], 4-5).

Many young people have identified the spiritual environment of their homes and the deep religious convictions of their parents as the primary means whereby they gained their own spiritual strength. “My parents put the Lord first in their lives,” one teenager observed. “The most important thing that has helped me internalize gospel principles in my life has been seeing how the gospel and Church are central in their lives. The gospel is everything to them. (See B.L. Top & B.A. Chadwick, *Ten Secrets Wise Parents Know: Tried and True Things You Can Do to Raise Faithful, Confident, Responsible Children* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004], 6-7).