

PARENTING PAGES

A Growing Christian makes the Best Parent

Caring for Children

All airlines have well researched, very detailed, and strict guidelines for how passengers are to act, especially in emergency situations. One emergency situation is when passengers would need to access the oxygen masks. The unwavering procedure is that adults traveling with children are instructed to have their own oxygen masks functioning and then they take care of the children's masks. The obvious reason for this is that if the adults become disabled the children will suffer and even die.

While physical lives are at risk in airplane safety, spiritual lives and eternity are at stake if adults do not grow spiritually.

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. John 21:15-17

In John 21:15-17, Jesus reinstates Peter and provides specific direction for the ministry Peter is to undertake.

- The first directive is to "feed my lambs." This illustrates Jesus' concern for the "Little Ones." To "feed" means to find good food.
- The second injunction is to "take care of my sheep." Sheep here means adult Christians. This meant he was to watch over them. While the pastor will one day have to account for how he has done this, adult sheep also have a responsibility in this matter. Hebrews 13:17 reminds Christians that they should live their lives in such a way that makes the accounting process a joy and not a burden.
- The third charge is to "feed my sheep." To "feed" is to continue to instruct. It points to the fact that adult Christians are to continue to grow and become teachers as Hebrews 5:12 teaches.

Mentioning sheep twice of three times does not minimize the concern for children. It fact it enhances the ministry to children. Adult sheep that are well cared for will do a much better job of nurturing the lambs in the flock. Parents who are well fed spiritually and lovingly nurtured through Word and Sacraments will enjoy an

intimate relationship with our loving Lord. This will be illustrated in their lives. They will also help their children to see and feel that tenderness of our gracious Lord. Knowing and experiencing the gracious love of God in their day-to-day activities will help the whole family live full and joy-filled lives.

- Think about what you are doing to spiritually feed yourself.
- Think about what you are doing to spiritually feed your children.
- Think about how might improve both yours and your children's spiritual growth.

Listed below are a few possibilities that are available for your spiritual maturing. Many of these resources are from Concordia Publishing House. (800-325-3040) Ask your pastor(s), child's principal or teacher for information on these and other materials.

Getting Ready for Next Sunday – Weekly study of upcoming Gospel lesson – (genesbrunotes.com)

Portals of Prayer (Journal)

Each devotion features a Bible reading, meditation, and prayer in an easy-to-read format. *Portals of Prayer* is great for personal devotions.

Happy Times (Journal)

If children could format a magazine, *Happy Times* would be it. Bible-based stories, colorful activity pages, and special projects are the mainstays of this monthly magazine targeted for 3- to 5-year-olds. A "Grown-ups Page" offers helpful and fun ideas for parents to encourage family time and Bible learning.

My Devotion (Journal)

Encourage 8- to 12-year-olds to build a habit of daily Bible reading at home! *My Devotions* is an excellent resource that points children to the Word through stories and situations to which they can relate. Each devotion page includes a Scripture reading, true-to-life story, and short prayer.

Blessing and Prayers for Parents (Book)

For parents of all ages with children of all ages, *Blessings and Prayers for Parents* points readers to our Heavenly Father as the only perfect parent and speaks to parents' need to hear God's specific words of forgiveness and grace.

You may also go to www.cph.org and search for "Parenting Materials" and find many other possibilities.