

A Short Parenting Tip

Debriefing After Correction Times

We encourage parents to ask their children a series of questions after every discipline experience. One of those questions is, "Why was that wrong?" Some parents like this question because it appears to be a set-up for a parent to lecture. Resist this urge. You may have a desire to lecture but your child may quickly turn you off.

Furthermore some children answer this question by saying, "because you shouldn't do that." Again, this is an opportunity to help children understand some of the deeper issues involved.

Rather use this question to address heart issues directly. Through dialogue you can point out the bad attitudes like pride, selfishness, anger, or disrespect. Also, you can help children understand the values behind the rules. If you tell your four-year-old son to stay in the back yard and he violates that rule, you can teach him about living within limits. The same value will be taught to him at seventeen years old when he wants to stay out past curfew. By talking about the values, you prepare children to handle a variety of different rules and to translate those rules from one situation to another.

Help the child learn that behavior is only a symptom of something deeper. Parents and children see the behavior but it's important to look at the heart. The Bible is full of principles that will help a child be successful. You may refer to the scriptures or even tell Bible stories that are appropriate. The question, "Why was that wrong?" helps you do significant teaching every day as you work with your kids.

This idea was taken from the audio CD series, "Eight Secrets to Highly Effective Parenting," by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.