

Parenting on Point: Leading Your Family Along God's Path

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Discussion Guide

Parenting on Point (Abingdon Press, 2002) offers the reader a process for creating a personalized parenting plan. It is intended to help you keep your family anchored to important values, principles, and beliefs, and on the path that God wants your family to follow. This book contains valuable insights and ideas for strengthening the Christian family and for bringing parents and children closer to God.

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Chapter 1

Why Things Are More Difficult for Parents Today

This chapter focuses on the challenges faced by parents regarding things that pull their children away from God, including sex, drugs, the entertainment industry, and violence.

1. In your own words, share what it means to have a meaningful conversation with your children. List some ideas for how to have good communication with your children.
2. Recall how you gained your values while growing up, and list some ways that you can pass on your values to your children.
3. Which of the four perils covered in this chapter do you consider to be the biggest threat to your children? Explain.
4. List some of the benefits of talking to your kids about sex rather than delegating sex education to your local school. Are there any advantages to delegating sex education?
5. What proactive steps can you take as parents to prevent your children from using drugs? What prevents you from completely shielding them from drugs? Discuss action steps you can take to become better educated about the drugs that are in your children's world.

6. List some of the biggest dangers your children face from today's entertainment industry—music, television, and so forth. What are your standards for what is appropriate and what is not?
7. Talk about threats posed to your children by violence, both verbal and physical. Name ways that you can dramatically reduce these threats in your children's lives.

Chapter 2

Every Family Needs a Mission Statement

This chapter illustrates the need for a family mission statement and provides the information and ideas necessary to begin the process of creating one.

1. In your own words, explain what a family mission statement is, what it does, and why it is so important.
2. Discuss some strategies on how you can involve the whole family in creating a mission statement and make it fun at the same time.
3. List what you think could be three key elements of your family mission statement, and explain why you chose these three elements as being important.
4. Brainstorm some ways you can put faith and family first. Consider how you can put these ideas into action.
5. Name some of the gifts and talents that exist within your family. How can some of these gifts and talents be better used to strengthen the family unit?
6. Explain why “having more fun together as a family” is an important ingredient of a family mission statement. List some inexpensive or no-cost ideas for having family fun.
7. What benefits or results do you want to achieve by writing a family mission statement? What specific commitments do you need to make in order to support your mission statement? Create a timeline for the different steps in writing your family mission statement.

Chapter 3

Which Child Is Yours?

This chapter offers insights for recognizing and understanding the unique characteristics in and differences among your children.

1. What new insights about your children did you gain from reading this chapter?

2. What is the most difficult aspect for you in understanding the behavior of your children? Explain your struggle or circumstances.
3. What are the three “types” of children, and how does each of your children correspond to these types? What behaviors help you identify your children?
4. Why is it so important to embrace and celebrate the differences in your children? List a few examples of how you can celebrate personality differences.
5. List some of the needs of the strong-willed child. Contrast those needs with the needs of a compliant child.
6. In your own words, explain what it means for a child to be a rebel. Discuss what can be done to prevent a child from becoming a rebel.
7. List some of the benefits of learning the behavioral style of your children. What resources are available to help you gain a better understanding of your children?

Chapter 4

Empowering Your Children

This chapter presents ideas on how to empower your children so that they may become responsible and capable adults.

1. Explain what “empowering your children” means and why it is important, and give an example of empowerment.
2. What is “enabling,” and why is it harmful? How can you prevent it?
3. Recall a time when you enabled the behavior of your child. What were the results?
4. How were you encouraged as a child to become responsible? Discuss what works and what does not work.
5. How can a parent encourage a child to be resilient? Give an example using your children or from your own childhood.
6. What role can God and a strong faith play in empowering children? How can empowering your children help make parenting easier?
7. What recommendations from the author would you like to implement after reading this chapter?

Chapter 5

Setting Limits and Boundaries

This chapter provides some ideas and guidelines for establishing limits and boundaries with children.

1. Explain why limits and boundaries are needed for children and how they contribute to healthy family relationships.
2. How do children benefit when they are given limits? What do they learn from having limits and boundaries? What do parents gain by establishing limits and boundaries?
3. Explain why limits and boundaries must be clearly stated and reasonable. Give some examples of clearly stated, reasonable boundaries for a teenage girl or boy who is dating.
4. Why should limits and boundaries be put in writing? List some of the benefits in doing so. Brainstorm some ideas on how to write limits and boundaries. What rules do not need to be put in writing?
5. What roles do age and behavioral patterns play in establishing limits and boundaries?
6. How should parents respond when children try to test their limits?
7. Why are chores a good idea for children? What lessons do they teach?

Chapter 6

Disciplining with Consequences, Not Punishment

This chapter illustrates the benefits of using consequences to discipline children, rather than punishing them.

1. Explain the differences between consequences and punishment. List some reasons why disciplining with consequences provides better results.
2. What practices make consequences effective? Give an example of an effective consequence and an ineffective consequence.
3. Explain natural consequences and how you can put natural consequences to work for bedtime and mealtime.
4. Discuss the importance of privileges to children and why privileges can be very effective when used as consequences.
5. Explain the concept of “doubling up” and its benefits.

6. What do you believe makes a consequence unreasonable or unfair?
7. In your own words, tell what “the brown bag” concept is and under what circumstances it should be used.

Chapter 7

Teaching Your Children Delayed Gratification

This chapter points out the benefits of delayed gratification and how parents can teach this concept to their children.

1. What is delayed gratification, and how does it benefit children?
2. List some ways parents can model delayed gratification.
3. Recall a lesson or experience from your childhood where you had to wait for something you desired. What did you learn from the experience?
4. Explain why delayed gratification needs to be a “family affair.”
5. List the benefits a family receives from using a family budget and giving children a regular allowance.
6. Discuss the concept of “reasonable and customary expenses.” How can children and parents benefit from this?
7. Give some guidelines for how children can earn extra money. How does this help instill delayed gratification?

Chapter 8

Improving Communication Skills in Your Home

This chapter offers ideas and strategies for strengthening communication between parents and children.

1. Share how your parents communicated with you when you were a child. What did you learn about communication from family experiences?
2. Recall an experience of poor communication within your family that served as a wake-up call for the need to improve communication skills within the home.
3. How can you tailor your communication style to meet the needs of your child?

4. What is the danger of a “one size fits all” approach to communication?
5. List some guidelines for communicating with a nonassertive child and with an assertive child.
6. Discuss some ways that you as a parent can be an effective listener.
7. What new idea did you learn from reading this chapter that you would like to implement in your home? How will it help improve communication within the family?

Chapter 9

Handling Anger in a Positive Way

This chapter provides ideas and techniques to help you reduce anger and conflict within your home.

1. Discuss how you try to control your own anger. What works for you?
2. In your own words, explain the difference between anger and rage. Give an example of each.
3. Discuss the tips suggested by the author on how to release negative feelings in a positive way—in other words, handling your anger before it turns to rage.
4. Discuss the meaning of this statement: “Instead of merely learning how to handle our children’s anger, we must learn how to handle our own anger first.”
5. List some ideas and techniques for “letting off steam” and reducing anger.
6. How can God, reading the Bible, and your faith help you handle anger in a positive way?
7. What new insights did you gain from reading this chapter regarding how to respond to your child’s anger?

Chapter 10

Nurturing Your Child—and Yourself

This chapter explores ways parents can nurture others and satisfy their own need for nurturing.

1. How were you nurtured as a child? Give some examples of times when you felt supported and loved.
2. What have you learned over the years about nurturing yourself? What person or circumstances contributed to your knowledge of nurture?
3. What new insights about nurturing did you gain from reading this chapter?

4. Discuss the importance of everyday acts of kindness. Give some examples. How have acts of kindness played a role in your life?
5. Discuss how grace and forgiveness have strengthened your relationship with your children. What role do trust and integrity play in the family?
6. Discuss some of your experiences in learning to apologize—from your childhood, your adulthood, or both. How have your experiences helped you teach your own children?
7. What did you learn from this chapter about “at-risk” children? What information was the most helpful?

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