

PARENTS **PARKids** CHRONICLE

Growing in Grace at Grandview Park

NOT EVEN CATS AND DOGS FIGHT LIKE MY CHILDREN! ... PART 4

Thus far in our study of sibling conflict we have: 1) Discovered the reasons why children fight (James 4:1-3), 2) Emphasized the importance of biblical confession and forgiveness (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:32), and 3) Discussed ways to teach your children how to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).

Now I'd like to take this one step further. Most of us parents would settle for a "cease fire" between our children. As long as we don't hear the sounds of battle—arguing and yelling; cries of "Mom, she took my book!" or "Dad, he hit me!"—we think we've done our job. (That's why many times we simply separate our children when they fight rather than addressing the problem and working towards biblical reconciliation.)

Imagine with me for a moment a world where your children not only cease being enemies, but start being friends!

But could it be more than that? Imagine with me for a moment a world where your children not only cease being

enemies, but start being friends! Isn't that what God did with us? We were his enemies, but through Jesus Christ he not only removed the hostility (Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21), but also made us a part of his family (Ephesians 2:11-22)!

"My children?" you say. "Friends? Impossible!" Well, it may take work. But with God all things are possible! Here are some suggestions to help you:

1. **Explain your desire.** During family devotions or a special family "pow-wow", explain to your children your desire for them to please the Lord in their relationships with one another. Examine an appropriate passage of Scripture, such as 1 John 2:9-11; 3:14-23; 4:7-8; 4:19-5:1 (yes, "brother" here refers to a brother in

Christ, but it certainly can be applied to siblings as well). Discuss some of the things you will do to help them show Christian love to one another.

2. **Emphasize the blessing of being part of your family.** Thank God in prayer specifically for *your* family and for the members in *your* family. Regularly "pump up" how great it is to be a part of *your* family.
3. **Emphasize the blessing of having siblings.** Remind your children that they should be thankful to have brothers and sisters. Say things like, "Isn't it great to have a brother you can play with?" "Aren't you glad God gave you an older sister who can help you with your chores?" I've even said things like, "Nathan, you are Andrew's brother, and brothers look out for one another. Why don't you work/play together?"
4. **Have your children pray out loud for one another by name.** When you pray for someone, even someone with whom you are at odds, your heart is drawn to him. The same thing happens when you hear someone praying for you. Have your children thank God for specific things about their siblings and ask God for specific prayer requests on behalf of their siblings.
5. **Memorize relevant Scripture passages.** This is an area in which I have much room for growth, both personally and as the leader of my family, but right now our family is memorizing Philippians 2 together:

1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do

nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

5. **Teach them to serve one another.** The passage above teaches us to have the attitude of Christ—the attitude of a servant. Think of creative ways your children can serve one another.



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NOT EVEN CATS AND DOGS FIGHT LIKE MY CHILDREN! ... PART 4 CONTINUED

(Continued from page 1)

6. Have your children cheer on their siblings in extracurricular activities.



Encourage them to watch their siblings' sports activities instead of playing with their friends (this is a general principle, not a hard and fast rule, as younger children with a short attention span will have a

difficult time watching an entire

sporting event). Teach them to praise their siblings for a "job well done" in sports, music, or other activities.

7. Teach your children to encourage one another.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up" (see also Ephesians 4:29). This may be done verbally or through encouraging notes or gifts.

8. Work and play together as a family.

Working together on a project or having fun together as a family can strengthen family bonds. Of course, it can also produce conflict...but that

gives you an opportunity to teach biblical reconciliation!

I'm sure you can think of many other ways to build the relationships among your children. But be patient...don't expect your children to become best friends overnight. Pray that God will put a special love in their hearts for their siblings.

For more ideas, see *Making Brothers and Sisters Best Friends* by Sarah, Stephen, and Grace Mally (Cedar Rapids, IA: Tomorrow's Forefathers, 2002).

BIG NEWS

I have put this year's editions of the PArkids Parents Chronicle on our church web site so you can download and read them at any time! (Try to contain your excitement.) I just hope our web site doesn't crash from the thousands of people who will be flocking there to read the Parents Chronicle!

www.grandviewparkbaptist.org/ministries_children.asp



READ MY QUIPS

MEDICAL MISTAKES

The following are taken from doctors' dictations on actual patient records...

1. He collapsed on the sidewalk and died without medical assistance.
2. He is married but not currently smoking.
3. The baby was delivered and handed to the pediatrician, who breathed and cried immediately.
4. The patient had ear wax impaction, so I removed the ear. It was red and tender afterwards.
5. The throat shows tonsils that have been removed.
6. The skin was moist and dry.
7. Patient was alert and unresponsive.
8. The patient was in his usual state of good health until his airplane ran out of gas and crashed.
9. The patient lives at home with his mother, father, and pet turtle who is presently enrolled in day care three times a week.
10. The patient was advised that if she could not awaken from sleep, she should call 911.
11. She is numb from her toes down.
12. Apparently, his pain is worse with breathing.
13. The patient's vision is 20/20 in both ears.
14. When asked which knee was operated on, he cannot recall, but he notes that whichever knee it was, he still has a problem with it.
15. The patient refused an autopsy.
16. The patient has no past history of suicides.
17. Heart problem is fixed. Patient died at 10:07am.
18. If it weren't for the fact that the patient is dead, I would say he was in perfect health.
19. The left leg became numb at times, and she walked it off.
20. The patient was bitten by a bat as he walked down the street on his thumb.

From *The Bride of Anguished English* by Richard Lederer (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 64-68.

GRANDVIEW PARK BAPTIST CHURCH CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES