

PARENTS **PARKids** CHRONICLE

Growing in Grace at Grandview Park

COMPLAIN, COMPLAIN, COMPLAIN!

We are taking the opportunity to use the *PARKids Parents Chronicle* to address some of the issues voted upon by parents in the ongoing parents' survey (you can participate by going to www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=FT4_2bDM9ABTIsMU_2fOTy8EVw_3d_3d). For the last several months we examined biblical and practical principles for dealing with sibling rivalry and fighting.

In this newsletter we will begin to discuss another issue that received quite a few votes—dealing with your child's arguing, complaining, and talking back.

I don't think any of us would "argue" that arguing, complaining, and talking back is only a problem for children. The Bible contains examples of adults doing just those very things.

Complaining reveals a lack of trust in God.

Perhaps the most familiar example is that of the Israelites, who never seemed to stop "grumbling" (complaining, murmuring) as they left Egypt and then wandered in the wilderness. The word translated "grumble" or "murmur" "means to express resentment, dissatisfaction, anger, and complaint by grumbling in half-muted tones of hostile opposition to God's leaders and the authority which he has invested in them" (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* [Moody, 1980]).

They complained against and argued with Moses for lack of food (Ex. 16) and water (Ex. 15:22-25; 17:1-17) and because they didn't believe they could defeat the inhabitants of the Promised Land (Num. 14:1-4).

Here are some things we can learn from the Israelites:

Complaining against God's authorities is actually complaining against God. Even though the Israelites were complaining to Moses and Aaron, Moses said, "Your grumbling is not against us, but against God" (Ex. 16:8). Children should be reminded of this when they complain against their parents (and we adults should be reminded of it as well!).

Complaining often goes hand-in-hand with discontentment and ungratefulness. The Israelites actually said that they wished they were back in Egypt and that they wished they were dead (Ex. 16:3; Num. 14:1-4)! Rather than being grateful that God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt, they complained that He wasn't doing a satisfactory job meeting their needs when and how they expected Him to do so.

Complaining reveals a lack of trust in God. Was it wrong for the Israelites to want food and water? No, but the way they expressed their desires revealed they did not trust God to provide for their needs. God had promised He would bring the Israelites out of Egypt safely into the land of Canaan. He had showed His mighty power through the Plagues, the Exodus, and the Red Sea Crossing.

However, the people seemed to doubt that He was willing or able to provide food and water in the wilderness or drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land. Numbers 14:11 says, "And the LORD said to Moses, 'How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?'" One commentary

states, "[The Israelites] sinned because they doubted God and cast aspersion on his justice, goodness, and power" (*TWOT*).

God takes complaining very seriously. Those Israelites who complained against God were prohibited from entering the Promised Land and died in the wilderness. James 5:9 says, "Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door."

The New Testament tells us that the things written in the Old Testament "happened to them as an example, but were written down for our instruction" (1 Corinthians 10:11). What can you and your children learn from the negative example of the complaining Israelites?

In the next edition of this newsletter, we'll look at some practical ways to help your children overcome constant complaining, arguing, and talking back.



IDEAS THAT WORK

Coins of Kindness

I got tired of my children tattling on each other. So we made a "treasure chest" by covering a small box with foil. I then gave each child some cardboard "coins" with their names on them. Each time one of the children saw another child do something nice, they were to report it to me. The child who did the act of kindness got to put one of her coins in the treasure chest. At the end of the day, we'd hand back the coins and talk about all the kind things the children had done during the day. Now my children are eager to be kind to each other.

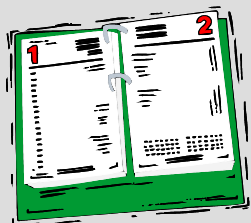
The Puzzle Place

To liven up our collection of puzzles, I make simple homemade ones by tracing around everyday items such as a toothbrush, a spatula, a spoon, a key, etc. For my younger children, I lay the items on the table and let them match the items to the shapes. For my older kids, I give them the page with the shapes on it and they have to figure out what each shape is and find the item in our house.

A Day in the Life

Our 2-year-old loves to tell his dad about his day, but he can't always remember everything he's done. I gathered pictures of my son doing various activities such as reading, playing, and eating. Then I bought a notebook with plastic sleeves. As my son does an activity, we slide the appropriate picture into the notebook. He loves to go through the book at the end of the day and share each event with his dad.

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UPCOMING FAMILY EVENTS

June 27-28.....	Father-Son Campout
Wed., July 2.....	1 st Wednesday Prayer
Thurs., July 24.....	Mother-Daughter Pool Party at the Frys'
Wed., August 6.....	1 st Wednesday Prayer
Fri., August 8.....	Father-Daughter Digital Camera Scavenger Hunt
September (TBD).....	Mother-Son Pottery Painting

READ MY QUIPS

GIVE ME A SIGN

The following have been found on various signs...

1. *On the wall of a Vancouver cleaning service:* Able to do the worst possible job
2. *Near an old folks home in a small English village:* Warning! Old people: Please don't make unnecessary noise.
3. *On many restrooms in London:* Ladies, Gentlemen, and Disabled Toilets
4. *In a London department store:* Bargain basement upstairs
5. *In an office in Shrewsbury:* Would the person who took the stepladder yesterday please bring it back, or further steps will be taken.
6. *Outside a secondhand shop in Bath:* We exchange anything—bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?
7. *In the English countryside:* QUICKSAND WARNING: Any person passing this point will be drowned. By order of the District Council.
8. *In a London dance hall:* Smarts is the most exclusive disco in town. Everyone welcome.
9. *At a London zoo:* Please do not feed the elephants. If you have any peanuts, give them to the keeper on duty.
10. *In a Manchester cemetery:* We must ask anyone with relatives buried in the graveyard to do their best to keep them in order.
11. *On the fence of a rural farm:* The farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free, but the bull charges.
12. *On a shop in Gloucester:* We can repair anything. (Please knock hard on the door. The bell doesn't work.)
13. *In a Manchester shop:* Customers should note that any complaints of incivility on the part of our staff will be severely dealt with.
14. *At an ear-piercing salon:* Ears pierced while you wait.

From *The Bride of Anguished English* by Richard Lederer (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 72-74.

GRANDVIEW PARK BAPTIST CHURCH CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES