



Growing Families Australia

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Reaching our nation one family at a time

Merry Christmas

Greetings from Bill & Joan



Inside:

- Cause and effect
- The Lords Prayer
- Love Languages & Christmas
- People do notice
- And more...

Keep us up-to-date!

- Are you changing your email?
- Have a new telephone number?
- Planning to move in the next few months?

We would love to know your new details so we can keep you informed & connected with the Growing Families family! Email us on enquiries@gfi.org.au

WE ARE DIFFERENT!

It was very inspiring to read the autobiography of Paul and Becky while reviewing the draft of this newsletter. It got us thinking "Is our family so different that those who communicate with us day by day are attracted to see what that difference is"?

Does your family get up in each morning and consciously say "This is the day the Lord has made, WE WILL be joyful and glad in it"? (Psalm 118 v 24)? Do we truly know with assurance that "The Joy of the Lord is our strength" (Neh. 8 v 10)? Do our hearts and heads help us to remember that "He who began a good work in you WILL COMPLETE IT (Phil. 1 v 6)? This will make you different!

We were asked recently "What does a Christian look like?" It really made us stop and consider what the answer would be for us. This would be a good discussion topic for a family mealtime. Is our family reflecting the character of God so radiantly that those who have contact with us will say "this family is

different" and seek to really find out what that difference is?

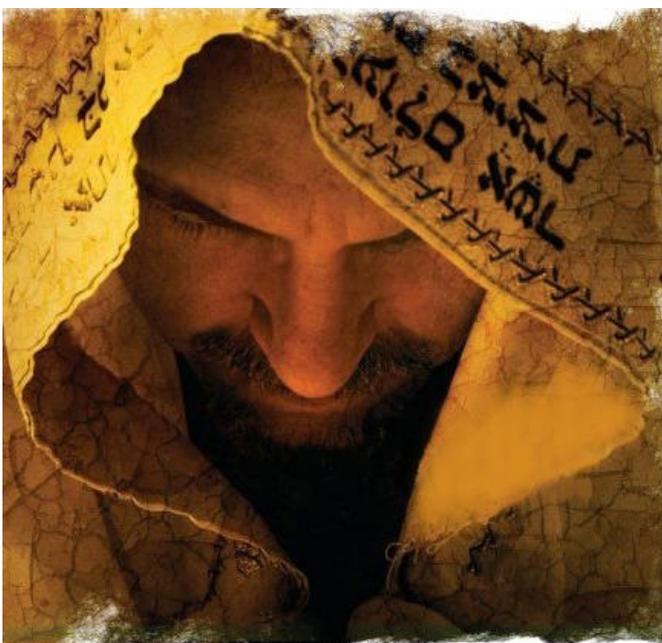
This Christmas you can be "different" by

- Really examining what Christmas is all about with your children;
- Reflecting on why you do what you do at Christmas;
- Exploring how the whole family can be "others centered" in very practical ways.
- Understanding what a Christ-centered family looks like at Christmas – and being that family.

Yes, by doing this your family too will be different!

We invite you to read our favorite Christmas passage from the Bible - Philippians chapter 2 v 1 – 15 and be encouraged to be DIFFERENT this Christmas!

Bill and Joan Grosser



Prayer: Lord, teach us to pray. Luke 11:1

The disciples were humble enough to ask Jesus how to pray. Teaching our children to pray is not too hard when they are little, as they grow giving your children some more understanding of the importance will help them adopt and own their own prayer life. Have a read of John.

Prayer is an act of dedication

We depend on God (we need his help)
We are devoted to God (we love him)

Prayer is an act of communication

You cannot have a relationship without communication –
so talk with God
We can be Jesus' friend (see John 15:15)

Prayer is an act of supplication

Do not be anxious about anything, but in prayer... (see Phil 4:6-7)
Check out Ps 145:19, Ps 37:4, Ps 84:11

Prayer is an act of cooperation

When you pray you let God work through you!
Check out John 14:11-14.

www.gfanc.com

Growing Families Australia
FOUNDATIONS 4 GENERATIONS
 National Conference • January 2012 Australia

Come and connect with the Growing Families community to encourage each other and journey together.



Phillip Island Adventure Resort, Victoria

Main Conference: 21-24 January 2012 | Teens Camp: 18-21 January 2012

For further details and to register, please visit www.gfanc.com





Love Languages

Choosing to speak someone's primary 'love language' is an investment in relationship. No matter how much you love them inside your heart or head, if they can't tell because the way you show it, then their needs are not being met. So lets quickly summarise the 'love languages' (and if all this is news to you - try getting hold of 'The Five Love Languages' by Gary Chapman or participate in a Growing Kids Gods Way class in which it is also covered).

Words of Encouragement

This is a person for whom WORDS are IMPORTANT. Try giving them a call or leave a note saying " LOVE YOU". Don't use unkind words or use the "silent treatment".

Quality Time

This person loves "just spending time together". Try walking together, shopping together - anything together - EXCEPT for watching TV together...

Acts of Service

This person REALLY appreciates a kind act. Try doing some "small or behind the scenes" things - don't make a big deal about doing them. Filling a car with petrol, taking in the washing are good - things that make EXTRA work for that person are bad.

Physical Touch & Closeness

Its not just "hugs & kisses" its being near. If you can do what you are doing anywhere - take it with you and be near her (or him). Don't retreat off to the "shed", "sewing room" or other retreats.

Gift Giving

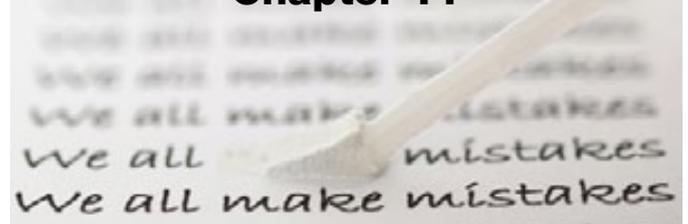
Bring something home that says - while we were apart I thought of you. Try small treats Caramello Koalas etc are great - cheap and nice for the whole family. The longer you are away the greater the appreciation is likely to be.

Reminder:

How about this month during couch time...

This month is a great opportunity for a series of discussions around the love languages of each member of the family. During the business of finishing off the year it is easy to forget to "choose to love" in the most meaningful way. You may even wish to do the love language tests again or even do them at a family night and discuss the results.

Key Principle – GKGW Chapter 11



The first principle of correction is this: *The type of correction depends on the presence or absence of evil motive. When making an assessment on a child's action, parents should ask, "Were my child's actions accidental or intentional? A mistake or malicious intent?"*

CAUSE AND EFFECT



There are times we may wonder why we do what we do and why living to the standard as parents is just as important and “teaching” the standard... where we mean to or not – we are role models to our children.

- If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.*
- If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.*
- If a child lives with pity, he learns to feel sorry for himself.*
- If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.*
- If a child lives with jealousy, he learns to hate.*
- If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.*
- If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident.*
- If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.*
- If a child lives with praise, he learns to be appreciative.*
- If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love.*
- If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.*
- If a child lives with recognition, he learns to have a goal.*
- If a child lives with sharing, he learns about generosity.*
- If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.*
- If a child lives with honesty, he learns what truth is.*
- If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith in himself.*
- If a child lives with friendliness, he learns that the world is a nice place to live in.*

Cause and effect

There are times hearing the “same thing” from a different perspective can provide a renewed insight. Here are 15 ideas on building your child’s self confidence (slightly modified from the original text). These are neither rules nor an exhaustive list – just a gentle reminder about our role and influence as parents as well as some clever insights and reminders.

1. Give lots of kisses and cuddles to babies and young children. Draw their hearts.
2. Smile and talk to them at the earliest age. Bless them.
3. Give praise for things achieved like making beds, cleaning their own shoes and cleaning their teeth carefully. Praise (the character behind the achievement).

4. Tell your children you love them even when you think they don’t deserve it. God loves them but we don’t condone bad behaviour.
5. Share daily activities. Let your child plan a meal and help prepare it. Share a story. Have meals together at the table (without the TV). Teach, nurture, exhort.
6. Stay calm and be fair. You are the adult and your child’s teacher. Your child will copy your behaviour. Model good character.
7. Reinforce and encourage your child’s good behaviour. Recognise and correct.
8. Take time to listen to children and really hear what they are saying and want to share with you. Be attentive.
9. Encourage children to develop their own strategies for achieving things and help them review their effectiveness. Resist the temptation to provide adult solutions all the time.
10. Encourage children to see mistakes and awkward moments as a natural part of learning and growing.
11. Catch your child being good and comment on what you have noticed.
12. Don’t be afraid to say sorry when you make mistakes.
13. Children feel valued and important when family and friends watch them participate in school and weekend sports.
14. Laugh with your children, not at them. Your teenager is more likely to respect your views, if you respect his or her views too.

Based heavily on the “National Association for prevention of child abuse and neglect” in an article in the Herald Sun on the 4/10/2002.

The Life of Titus

For I know the plans I have for you - Jeremiah 29:11

People do notice...

We are a conspicuous family.

When you have 5 boys, people tend to notice.

When two of the five are adopted from South Korea, people tend to notice.

When one of the five is special needs, people tend to notice.

And when you are a conspicuous family, you learn that people will make comments and ask questions. It just comes with the territory.

Our youngest was born two years ago. He was a miracle from the beginning since we had long given up the hope of having another biological child. The pregnancy was very normal, but the moment Titus was born, we became aware of his special needs. The list is long and issues we were faced with at birth are no longer the issues we are faced with now. Titus is deaf-blind and has breathing and muscle tone issues. He is on oxygen 24x7. He has a cochlear implant which is very noticeable. At the age of two, he is not able to walk and can only support himself in a sitting position for a few minutes. We have had numerous surgeries and hospital stays. I mention that to say, his special needs are very noticeable when you meet him. But he is also very cognizant, very happy, and very content.

We do not let his needs hold us back. We are a very active family and take Titus with us everywhere we go.

We are finding that when we are out in public with Titus, we have parents who have special needs children that will come and talk to us. And over the last two years, we have learned a few things about parents of special needs children.

It's hard work - plain and simple. Parenting any child can be hard work (we have lots of experience with that), but parents of children with special needs face a whole slew of other challenges - and that in itself can make life hard. So when they find someone else who can relate, you automatically feel a connection because they know you understand.

We wish we could convey that to others, but the main thing we would like to say is this - if you can show compassion to them, show it; if you do an act of kindness (even just opening a door with a smile), do it. A simple smile in their direction means so much more than turning away and acting like you do not see them and their child.

Realize that the very act of being out of the house for this family can be a lot of work. But wherever they are, they are there because they chose to be, and not to be an object to be pointed at, stared at, or ignored. Treat them like you would treat any other person.

Tell them their child is beautiful - it is something they don't hear often (a worker at one of the fast-food restaurants told us how beautiful Titus was this weekend - and it was sweet music to our ears).

Don't talk about their child like he isn't there - respect that he is and can hear you. Realize that due to a child's needs, he may require our attention while you are talking. Please realize we are not ignoring

you, but have to address his needs immediately.

Don't ask questions about the child's needs immediately. It's just rude. Get to know the family before asking personal questions about their child's needs. There are times a parent just wants to be included in the same conversation that everyone else is having, and not having to answer questions about their child. Ask how they (the parent) are doing - they also need to feel like you are interested in them - not just their child.

Know that their schedule revolves around therapy, doctor's appointments, and other children. Due to the child's needs, they might not get to take family vacations or attend fun family activities. Realize, that families with special needs don't get invited to come over to someone else's home, their other kids may not get invited to birthday parties or other activities, or they may get invited but may not get to attend. Include the family like you would any other family. They still like to hear that they are invited to participate. If they can come, they will make every effort - it just requires some advanced planning.

And, pay attention to the other children. They are used to people asking about their sibling with needs and sometimes they feel forgotten since no one notices or asks about them.

Know that having a special needs child can put an incredible strain on the marriage of parents. Statistics show that divorce among parents with special needs is high. And we can understand that. Tending to a child 24x7 does not leave time for date nights or weekend getaways. It takes away from time couples spend together. If you can offer to keep their child for an hour so they can go out and have a cup of coffee, it can mean the world to them. It may mean you have to spend an hour just learning the basics of how to care for the child, but we can say having friends and family that can assist in the care giving of our child helps us continue to have time for a date and time to be a husband and wife.

For us, we strive to keep life as normal and fun as possible for the other boys - we make sure they know that Titus is part of our family and we include him in all of our activities - it just takes some extra work and effort.

And last point, know that the parents of special needs children have received an incredible blessing that has forever affected their lives. We said one time that no one prays for a special needs child, they pray for a healthy child. But we can tell you that the last two years with Titus has changed us in a way that we never dreamed - and we can't imagine life without him.

About the authors

Paul & Becky D live in Frisco, TX. Paul is the Director of HR at an outsourcing company and Becky is a full-time mom to their 5 boys ages 12-2. They homeschool their boys, teach parenting classes and speak on parenting topics. They are blessed to have both sets of grandparents who live in town and two nurses who assist in their daily life. Their blog about Titus (and other things) is <http://www.thelifeoftitus.blogspot.com>.



Running a Course Next Year?

Have you ever heard "...you are so lucky to have such good kids"! Of course we know that it has nothing to do with "luck" - it is about Godly wisdom, fervent prayer, and the love of God being lived daily in your home. Even so, you have a unique gift from God - His Holy Spirit and His hand upon you as you parent daily.

Are you sharing this gift with others? We all have a privilege and responsibility to live out Christ before the world and to give back some of the blessings He has given you.

In 2012 we ask you to seriously consider facilitating a parenting

class (or two) so that you spread on the wonderful blessings you have received.

Maximise your effectiveness and help out your State Teams who are trying to connect families with families. Check out the new website and register as a facilitator (and have a look around at all the goodies to help run a class). When you run a class, list it so others in your area can link in. We can also connect expressions of interest to your class. So go to www.gfi.org.au

CHRISTMAS 'words'

Fun Family Night Activity

See how many words you can make from the word **CHRISTMAS**.
 Checkout below for our answers

aim aims air art arts ash cars cart carts cash cat cats chair chairs char charms charm charms chart charts chat chats chit chits
 Chris Christ crash hair hars has hat hats his hiss hit hits hit its mac march mars marsh mast masts
 mat match math maths mats miss mist Mitch ram rams rat rats rich rim rims Sam Sams sash sat sham sir Sirs sit sitar sitars
 sits smart smash stair stairs star starch stars stir stirs tar tars this Tim tram trams trash trim trims (THAT'S 92)