



Family Wellness News

This month's Four Keys focus...Caring Conversations

Our Christian faith is transmitted from generation to generation through relationships. These trusted relationships share stories and conversations about family and faith. We know that conversations can shape behaviors and interests. The stories we tell reveal a lot about our lives.

The Holy Spirit is working through these relationships, conversations and stories. It is keeping the message of the Gospel alive.

Martin Luther wrote the Catechism as a tool to be used by families to initiate conversation about their faith life. Luther realized the potential that conversations had on enriching the Christian message in daily life. So this idea of caring conversations is not

a new one.

Reflective and attentive conversations have the potential to influence the lifestyle, character, faith and values of youth. Our youth are listening, watching and learning from us all of the time.

We might feel that we are conversing with individuals we have relationships with when we use email, or voice mail. But very often email cannot soothe like a face to face conversation can. Caring conversations are not the "one size fits all". Caring conversation vary differently with gender and age.

Caring conversations must have essential and deliberate time. They are needed to strengthen family relationships.

All families need to

spend time together, listening, speaking and being sensitive to the needs of one another. It is also important to support, not dissuade, one another's dreams and aspirations.

Family meetings are a great place to talk about family goals and values. Bedtime prayers are a very effective time to carry on a conversation with a young child.

We must learn to converse with "care". Everyone needs to know about the God who cares so deeply for them.



The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and to be understood. The best way to understand is to listen to them.

-Ralph Nichols

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Four Keys to Nurturing Faith

- *Caring conversations*
- *Family devotions*
- *Family service projects*
- *Building and celebrating family traditions and rituals*

The Power of Simply Caring

John was walking home from school one day when he noticed the boy ahead of him had tripped and dropped all of the books he was carrying, along with two sweaters, a baseball bat, a glove and a small tape recorder.

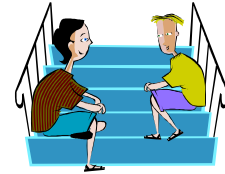
John knelt down and helped the boy pick up the scattered articles. Since they were going the same way, he helped to carry part of the burden. As they walked John discovered the boy's name was Bill, that he loved video games, baseball and history, and that he was having lots of trouble with his other subjects and that he had just broken up with his girlfriend.

They arrived at Bill's home first and John was invited in for a coke and to watch some television. The afternoon passed pleasantly with a few laughs and some shared small talk, then John went home. They continued to see each other around school, had lunch together once or twice,

then both graduated from junior high school. They ended up in the same high school where they had brief contacts over the years.

Finally the long-awaited senior year came and three weeks before graduation, Bill asked John if they could talk. Bill reminded him of the day years ago when they had first met. "Did you ever wonder why I was carrying so many things home that day?" asked Bill. "You see, I cleaned out my locker because I didn't want to leave a mess for anyone else. I had stored away some of my mother's sleeping pills and I was going home to commit suicide. But after we spent some time together talking and laughing, I realized that if I had killed myself, I would have missed that time and so many others that might follow. So you see, John, when you picked up those books that day, you did a lot more than that, you saved my life."

Every little hello, every little smile, every helping hand saves a hurting heart. There's a miracle called friendship that dwells in the heart. You don't know how it happens or when it gets started, but you know the special lift it always brings and you realize that friendship is one of God's most precious gifts!



(This story was told by Tiger McLuen at a Youth Leadership Gathering.)

Tiger McLuen is president of Youth Leadership, a Minneapolis based organization designed to train youth leaders. He is also an instructor at both Bethel and Luther Seminaries, national speaker and author with over 25 years of ministry experience.)

*They may forget what you said,
but they will never forget how you made them feel.*

-Carl W. Buechner

Book of the Month

God and Me! Devotions for Girls 6-9

By Diane Cory

In the first half of this book, girls learn all about God through devotions that include questions, activities, prayers, and Bible verses. The second half continues the format, using 21 devotions about women in the Bible.

(Both of these books are available in the Atonement Book Nook.)

Gotta Have God: Ages 6-9 A Devotional Series for Boys

Jesus knows all about being a boy because He was one! Gotta Have God helps young men learn how much He loves them and wants to be the model for their lives. The book includes devotions and activities designed to help boys understand how they can grow to be strong Christian men. Over 100 devotionals in the book!



Sharing your faith...ages 6-9

Children develop personal friendships at this age. They sense the needs of others and balance self-interest with fairness and sharing.

This is also a time when children develop personal competencies and a general sense that they can accomplish tasks by themselves. They seek new information and begin to reason how things relate to one another in cause and effect sequences. (Some still have difficulty with cause and effect thinking.) Expanded cognitive skills help them follow and remember longer stories.

Physical skills improve considerably, and a greater sense of independence and ability is a hallmark of this time of life.

Things to do

- Celebrate the unique qualities, abilities and personality that emerge in each child.
- Affirm each child as God's very good creation.
- Help your child see that the Biblical story is part of his or her story, that Biblical characters are part of their family lineage.
- Encourage each child to see herself or himself as part of a larger community through service to others and through the personal support and interest of two or

three other caring adults.

- Brainstorm things children can do for others and help them do those acts of service. Make it a family intergenerational project.
- Let them know they are important to the family and thank them for all they do.



*"Your faith has made
you well."*

Luke 17:19

Baptismal Anniversary...our FaithLife Milestone for January

On Sunday, January 9th, we will celebrate the Baptism of our Lord. This becomes an appropriate day to also celebrate the baptismal anniversaries from the past church year. On January 9th families who have had their child(ren) baptized between November 30, 2003 and November 21, 2004 will have an opportunity to meet together and renew the baptismal vows.

At their Baptismal Anniversary gathering each child will receive a Beginner's Bible. These children will also be recognized during the 11:00 a.m. worship service.

Celebrating this year...

Christine Louise Lilleodden
Ethan Luke Miller
Peyton Travis Olson
Hayden Bruce Walters
Dylan William Boock
Hanna Jean Arlt
Hayden Edstrom
Allison Paige Burk
Kasandra Wisniewski-Grzybowski
Kertrina Wisniewski-Grzybowski
Tyler Wisniewski-Grzybowski
Brady Randall Bauer
Elizabeth Marian Klinefelter
Derek Michael Wignall
Kristen Nicole Allen



**Baptism of Our Lord
Sunday, January 9, 2005**

Coming Events...

**Sunday, January 9—FaithLife
Milestone-Baptismal Anniversaries**

**Monday, January 10—ALPHA
Celebration Dinner**

**Sunday-Monday, January 19-
20—Sunday Night ALIVE!
THE GREAT SLEEPOVER!**



**February is WORLD HUNGER
Month! Watch for upcoming
events...including the
"30 Hour Famine"
February 26-27, 2005**

