

PARENTING

Parenting is a contact sport. From hugs to swats. The uniform varies from none to many. The world is its playing field. Each player plays different positions both ways: offense and defense. Each player is a referee. Each player is a team owner. Each player is a fan. All for one, one for all, **but....**

You don't want to be up a creek without a paddle. Life is the river. Family is the canoe (there are other canoes: church, school, neighborhood, work place, etc.). Each parent/spouse and child/sibling is a rower, pulling on an oar. Every tool, activity and ceremony is an oar. We pull together. If we don't pull together we go around in circles. We reciprocate pulling, back and forth. We know we should row just as we would want the others to row. If we pull together, harmoniously, we travel straight. We know we have to give each other space, sovereignty over their own oar. And we know that the most difficult thing is coordinating interdependent rowers in the teeth of their autonomy. How do we get close and still maintain our own individuality? How can we be close without getting stuck in each other? We need maps for navigating the river, weather reports to gauge when and when not to be on the river, tools for fixing leaks and broken paddles, activities to keep us busy when we can't be rowing on the water together, and ceremonies to celebrate our accomplishments and ceremonies to urge us to row better each time.

This packet of material is supported by Lutheran denominations, including the ELCA. It provides the tools to go along with our presentations. Leaders are readers. You must read the materials if they are to benefit you. In addition to these, the following, also part of the Healthy Communities Healthy Youth materials, are being placed in St. Luke's library:

1. Parenting: Raising Faithful Children in a Fragmented World, Emily Demuth Ishida, for small group discussions, Augsburg Fortress Press, 1999.
2. Family Friendly Ideas Your Church Can Do: 50 Ways to Involve Families, Group Publishing, 1998.
3. Starting Out Right: Developmental Assets for Children, Nancy Leffert, et. al., Search Institute. Provides conceptual frameworks of the 40 development assets for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary-age children, as well as charts for each and for the 40 developmental assets for adolescents (age 12-18), 1997.
4. Faith-Building with Preschoolers: Teachers and Parents Together, Linda Prenzlou and Ilene Alliger Candreva, Concordia Publishing House, 1998.
5. Alive in God's Family, Kenneth Wagener, Concordia Publishing House, 1996.

These materials are provided by **Lutheran Brotherhood**, through the Tualatin Valley Branch #8359. Bea Seaverson of our congregation is Chapter President. You can order these and other similar materials online at <http://www.luthbro.com> (click on "Resources for Sharing Online"). You can also order by phone, toll free, at **1-888-LBMEMBER (1-888-526-3623)**.

By Peter Jessen,, sharing his own journey/struggling with the issues of how to be a good enough parent./3-12-00