

How to Earn the Respect of Your Wife and Children

Objective:

Help men understand that their conduct at home, especially the way they show respect for others, will earn them the respect of their wife and children.

One of the most basic needs of men is to feel respected by the people around them. We earn the respect of the outside world in how we do our jobs and in our volunteer activities. We meet deadlines and sales goals, and show up to participate in the annual coat drive. When we are in our homes, though, we let our true selves show and that can make earning the respect of our wives and children more challenging. Our families see us at our best and at our worst. We need to make a daily commitment to be the best version of ourselves in order to earn respect of our families.

In our society, respect for authority is at an all time low. The best thing each of us can do about this is to model a respectful attitude for our own families. For their part, our children need to feel respect for their parents in order to feel secure and happy.

Song Suggestion: The Servant Song (Red 661; Gather 285, Music Issue 374)

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Ephesians 6:1

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for it is only right that you should do so. Honor your father and your mother that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth."

(This is the first commandment that is connected with a promise)

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord".

(The Christian life gives a new meaning to relations between children and parents. In an age less attentive than ours to the lot of little children, Paul was already emphasizing the responsibility of parents, without denying the duties of the young. The atmosphere he suggests here is one of dialogue.)

Catechism (select from pp. 534-538 2214-2219, 2221-2228)

(excerpt from 2214-2215)

The Divine Fatherhood is the source of the human Fatherhood, this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents. The respect of children, whether minors or adults, for their father and mother is nourished by the natural affection born of the bond uniting them. It is required by God's commandment.

Respect for parents derives from Gratitude toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work have brought children into the world.

Vignette:

I asked some Father's Team members for their thoughts on why they respect their own dads. I learned a lot about what it takes to earn the respect of my kids from these comments:

"A lot reflects on how he handles himself on a day to day basis. My dad always treated our mom with utmost respect. And he respected everyone he met".

"Respect, you can't get it until you give it."

"My dad earned respect through his ethics. "

"He was always charming and welcoming."

"He loved more than most and lived life more than most."

"He would make time for each of us kids"

"He never used any vulgar language and never yelled at us. He never held any grudge, but he did discipline."

"My dad was tough but fair."

“ He always spoke the truth”

“ People he knew would say to me ‘If you’re half as honest as your dad, you’ll be a successful person in life.’ “

“The biggest thing was that he was a fair individual, and he was compassionate to people”

And finally, each man I interviewed said this about why they respected their dad: **“You knew he loved you”**

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

What are (were) your own father’s personal qualities that make you feel respect for him?

What personal qualities do you show at home that make your wife admire you?

How have you modeled a respectful attitude for your children?

How has your teenage daughter or son shown respect for you?

What do you say to your teenager or adult child who is disrespectful to you or your wife?

In what ways can a husband show respect for his wife?

In what ways have you fallen short in showing respect to your wife?

Action Plan:

1. Be authentic! Commit daily to being the best version of yourself at home.
2. Be a role model of respectful behavior for your children by respecting your wife, their mother.

Recommended Resources:

<https://stcharlesschoolorlando.org/7-tips-for-teaching-children-about-respect/>

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/marriage-and-family/parenting/take-back-your-kids-how-to-teach-and-get-respect.html>

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