Parents - If you haven't already read the pages on "Developing Character in Your Children," you might want to go there first before reading these pages.

Tips for Parents to Encourage Gentleness

Gentleness may be a character quality that we often overlook when training our children for adulthood, since our culture often values qualities that offer visible success and strength. However, there is real strength in a gentle person who is able to be a peacemaker, restrain his anger, and show value to those around him.

George Washington copied "Rules for Civility" when he was 14 that showed his value for deferring to others, politeness, caring, and gentleness. Ronald Reagan was commended for his gentleness. Gentleness is not a weakness; it is a mark of a great leader.

As usual, training our children begins with ourselves. Do we give orders to them harshly? Do we value their opinions and their needs above our personal projects and phone time? Do we get at eye level to listen to their hearts. Do we ask forgiveness when we show anger?

Here are some ways to encourage gentleness:

- *Let them hold a small animal and talk with them about being gentle. Then let them suggest some ways they can be gentle with a friend or sibling.*
- *Let them do a craft project that requires gentle handling of the pieces.*
- *Let them play "pick up sticks" or Jenga and discuss the gentleness that is required to do well at those games.*
- *When they display harshness, have them "rewind" and show gentleness.*
- *Teach them ways to deal with anger, such as stepping back a while to calm down or putting themselves in the other person's shoes.*

Shoe Mobile

Make a "shoe mobile" to hang in a prominent area to remind the children of "walking in someone else's shoes."

1. Cut out various shoe shapes, making sure that each one has an exact match. You will staple the matches together, leaving the upper end open to form pockets for holding a folded piece of paper
2. Have your children identify someone they have trouble getting along with. Then have them list some things that might be causing that person to be difficult.
3. Write that list on a piece of paper and fold it so that it fits into one of the shoe-pockets.
4. Cut out a cardboard foot as the base for the mobile and suspend the "shoe-pockets" from the foot base at varying lengths.
5. Use a wire or pipe cleaner run through the center of the "foot" to hang the mobile to an overhead hook, etc.

Gentleness Game

Divide the children into two groups and organize them into lines.

Give one from each group a raw egg and let him"toss" the egg to the next in line. The first group to reach the end with an intact egg wins!

Check out the **Just for Kids** pages for an animal analogy and a biographic sketch illustrating Justice