HEMPSTEAD City of Character

"Building On a Solid Foundation"

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 Joyfulness

Unlike happiness, which is an emotion that is usually dependant on good circumstances, joyfulness is a character quality that can be built. The way to true joy is to have a purpose in life larger than oneself.

In addition to purpose, a person has joy when he has a sense of having done what it right. A great "joy-stealer" is guilt and the shame that comes with wrong behavior. Other "joy-stealers" are grumbling, self-focus, unrealistic expectations, anger, bitterness, and ungratefulness.

Parents can help their children practice joy. Children can learn that they can initiate joy even when they don't feel like it. They can smile at someone who looks downcast, give a gift or a bouquet of wild flowers to someone who needs a lift, or a cheery word of encouragement to a friend who has been hurt or disappointed. Joy is like planting seeds: they have great return and multiply back to you the little you have planted.

Be sure your home is filled with joyful music, conversation, humor, and uplifting books. Remember to sow seeds of joy yourself-it is contagious!

Benefits of Joyfulness

~Shows honor and value to others, which is very empowering.
~Encourages others like a ray of sunshine. It brings hope.
~Strengthens relationships.
~Makes the home a happier place.
~Is contagious!

Humor

Encourage humor in your family to build joy. Humor has practical results, such as-
~alleviating animosity
~making a point clear
~relieving tension.

Be sure your children know the difference between humor and folly (click here for a discussion on the two). Why not make a comparison chart on humor and folly and let the children clip pictures to illustrate each or write examples seen on TV, etc.

Build humor in your family life by bringing jokes to the dinner table. A clean joke book might be an excellent resource.

Joyfulness Game

1. Someone starts the game by saying a sentence that begins "Oh no... (and describes something bad.) For example: "Oh no! a bull is coming toward us!"
2. The next person replies with a statement, "But... (and describes something that stops the situation from being so bad.) For example: "But a cowboy is behind him lassoing him!"
3. The game continues with everyone taking turns with good and bad statements. For example: "But the lasso broke!"
4. The game ends when someone can't think of anything to add to what the last person has said.

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