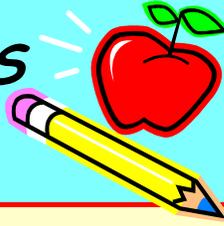




COUNSELOR'S CORNER



St. Leo the Great
Catholic School

March 2012

Celebrating Lent as a Family: A Lesson on Self-Control

As we continue through our season of Lent, this is a perfect time to discuss our virtue of Self-Control. It is also a good time for families to re-orient themselves and consider the priorities that sometimes get lost in the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Lent is traditionally a time of penance and reconciliation in the Church. Families can also make Lent a season to practice a spirit of reconciliation in the family. This is a perfect opportunity to role model and practice self-control when managing anger and discipline. Parents can model forgiveness for their children and encourage them to forgive those who have hurt them or seek forgiveness from those they have hurt.

Fasting and making sacrifices builds self discipline and teaches children to gain skills in delaying gratification which has been shown to be closely related to success in work and relationships.

Lent is also a time to make a special effort to give our time, talent, and treasure. In a family's hectic daily schedule, this may mean making sacrifices elsewhere and demonstrating control and discipline in order to serve others.

Self-Discipline Lacking? Make Your Discipline Fit!

Although our virtue for March is self-control (or self-discipline), it is not likely that our students will be able to completely regulate themselves without a little guidance from you as parents.

As children get older they begin to outgrow discipline strategies. Children, especially those in middle school, may begin to question authority more than younger children do as they grow more independent. Here are some strategies to help discipline while maintaining your own self-control.

Give explanations. If your child understands the "why" behind a decision, he or she may be more likely to accept it.

Adjust consequences. Set consequences that relate to the problem and that matter to your child but try not to overdo it. It helps to make the punishment fit the crime. Grounding for the whole year may not help the behavior because it may lead to a "don't care" attitude.

Follow through. If you and your child have discussed a punishment for a certain behavior, follow through with that punishment. This helps to teach consistency and reinforces to children that all behavior has consequences.

March is SELF-CONTROL Month

Why Self-Control?

Being successful in school, peer relations, and the working world requires more than sheer intelligence. We have to learn to reject urges to interrupt someone when they are talking, talk when we should be listening, and do the right thing even when we feel like no one is watching.

Having self-control, or self-discipline, means demonstrating control over your emotions, words, actions, impulses, and desires. It also involves giving one's best in all situations - even if we don't think we are being watched.

It is normal to feel frustrated, angry, sad, or embarrassed, but we have control over how we react to those feelings. If a child feels angry, he or she has the choice to act out physically or choose a more constructive choice such as counting to ten, taking deep breaths, or walking away.

Developing good self-control is important in every aspect of life.

"I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies, for the hardest victory is the victory over self."

- Aristotle

Self-Control for Children

- Children can show self-control by
- Completing assignments on time
 - Staying on task
 - Waiting to be called on
 - Working toward goals
 - Ignoring peer pressure
 - Controlling tempers/anger

Self-Control for Parents

- Be a role model of self-control, from controlling your reaction to an angry situation to not overindulging in sweets.
- Do not discipline your child(ren) in anger. Model anger management for your child(ren) by calming down before disciplining.
- Use routines and chores to help teach self-discipline. Morning routines, bed times, chores, and family schedules become opportunities to help children responsibility and self-discipline.
- Teach children to respond positively to correction. Most children don't like to be corrected and respond negatively in either aggressive (anger) or passive (bad attitude) ways. Teach children to respond with a good attitude as well as the right behavior. This requires self-control and helps children learn to control their impulses.

Contact Information

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