

Kid News Today

The Catholic School Edition

Holy Family Catholic School

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How to Raise a Bully-A Satire

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Inside:

Resources 2

Health News 2

*Relationship
Corner* 3

*Something to Talk
About...* 3

Tip of the Month 4

Are you worried that your child will be weak, passive and easily manipulated? Do you want to be sure your child's rights are always met first? Then raise a bully! It's easy. Follow these simple steps to ensure your child grows up aggressive and self-centered.

1. Remember, life lessons start at home! Threaten your child with all sorts of consequences and then be inconsistent. Use your larger size and louder voice to be sure your child gets the message that you're in charge here! Your child will learn that threats, unpredictability and strength are the secrets to interpersonal power.
2. Harass the adults involved in your child's life. With teachers, send an email and then verbally complain to your child when the teacher fails to respond in the next couple of hours. Then repeatedly email the teacher, at least two or three times in any given 24 hour period. You are demonstrating to your child that your (and your child's) concerns are more important than those of any of the dozens of other parents/students with whom that teacher works. With coaches, be sure to let the coach, the other parents and of course your child know all the errors the coach made during practice or play. If you can throw in some critiques of your child's efforts during practice, be sure to do so! Forget all that nonsense about practice being an opportunity to learn from mistakes; be sure your child knows how embarrassing those mistakes ought to be.
3. Demonstrate bullying behaviors by demanding that your needs be met in every possible situation. Complain about the thermostat being set at a temperature not of your choosing in public places; demand special treatment; engage in bartering or bargaining in settings where barter and bargaining are not customary. Then, when you are successful in badgering someone into acquiescing to your demands, be sure you boast about this to the family. You don't want your child to grow up to be the kind of person who just waits patiently in the express lane or fails to bully a salesperson out of a small commission.
4. Never ask a question when hurling an accusation will work. Put people on the defensive! If they can't take it, well, it's not your fault.
5. Be sure that you accompany necessary criticisms with as many personal insults as possible. Words like "never," "always," "stupid," "loser" and "failure" are especially helpful. You don't want people to fail to take you seriously; powerful words will get their attention.

If you are successful in raising a bully, your teenager will probably be cruel and vindictive to you...not just those "stupid losers" in the outside world. Your child may grow up to be unhappily married, sometimes unemployed, and often unlikeable. It would be good to **fail** to raise a bully.—Dr. Lori Puterbaugh, LMHC, LMFT

Faith-Friendly News
You Can Use

**Sr. Flo Marino,
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JANUARY HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day 1/1

Epiphany 1/6

Dr. Martin Luther King,
Jr. Birthday (obs.) 1/16

January resources for parents & professionals

Positive Psychology for real people: **The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology that Fuel Success and Performance at Work**, by Shawn Achor. (Do you wonder why it's always 7? 7 habits, 7 principles, 7 dwarves? Because research indicates that 7 is the typical number of concepts we can hold in working memory at any given time!) This book applies basics of positive psychology to increase personal happiness, which will in turn yield more effective work experiences. **Positive Psychology for Dummies**, by Averil Liemon, is a good basic go-to for non-psychologists (and probably not bad for psychological professionals) as an introduction to this no-longer-new, but still burgeoning, approach to well-being. **Positive things for kids: The Veggie Tales** are a great tool to introduce positive ways of thinking to kids. For example, *It's a Meaningful Life: A Lesson in Contentment* takes the lessons of *It's a Wonderful Life* and puts it in accessible, albeit little-kid-silly, form.

HEALTH NEWS: Cutting back—or giving up—on alcohol is a common New Year's resolution. Do you need to revisit your relationship with alcohol? The National Institutes of Health offers this website, which includes information about alcohol, a questionnaire to assess for alcohol problems, and information to support decisions to change your relationship with alcohol. You can find **Rethinking Drinking** at: <http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/default.asp>. **Stem Cell Research:** Did you know...that the Vatican has invested in a biotech firm focused on stem cell research? It's true; in 2010, the Vatican partnered with Neo-Stem, a company developing treatments using adult stem cells. Adult stem cells are already being used successfully to treat over 70 conditions, while embryonic stem cells (the use of which the Vatican opposes because the embryos are destroyed) have not been successfully used in treatments. *** Botox and Apathy:** David Havas of the University of Wisconsin-Madison has published research indicating that the inability to fully frown due to Botox injections measurably reduces, or at least slows, participants' ability to understand negatively charged written statements compared to their pre-Botox ability. Our ability to mimic the expressions of another person not only relay our understanding to the other person, but act on our own emotions. When you look sad, and I express sadness back with my face, I let you know I hear your sorrow but I stimulate the sense of sorrow in my own mind through my actions. Paralyzing the facial muscles appears to short-circuit this process. *** Can taking vitamins be bad for you?** Besides the risks of taking supplements that might not be good for you, or may interact with your medications or health conditions, Taiwanese researchers have found that people who believe they are taking a multivitamin tend to engage in more frequent health-risking behaviors. Somehow the notion of taking a vitamin protecting one's health increased the willingness to indulge in behaviors such as binge drinking, excessive sunning, and a preference for all-you-can-eat buffets over regular, sit-down, single-serving meals. Self-check: do you ever justify unhealthy activities by mentally going through your self-identified virtuous behaviors? For example, instead of merely enjoying that chocolate ice cream, do you first weigh it against your evening exercise routine? ***Mental Health exercises:** taking a few moments to write down just 3 things for which you are grateful every day can drastically change your mood and thinking. Positive psychology, a movement of cognitive psychology that focuses more on health and wellbeing than on dysfunction and disorders, emphasizes developing positive habits of thinking to increase your basic sense of happiness. It's easy to do: just write down 3 things each evening. Already doing this in the context of journaling, prayer or gratitude work? Then kick it up a notch: tell the person you love what you appreciate about him/her each day. If you are blessed to have many people to love, tell a few each day. See what happens—Dr. Lori Puterbaugh, LMHC, LMFT

Relationship Corner: Strategies to Reduce Defensiveness

Are you tired of trying to have conversations with loved ones who get so defensive that the conversation goes nowhere? Here are a few tips to reduce that tendency to defensiveness:

Skip the “why” questions until you understand more about the situation. “Why” puts people on the defensive because it seems to demand an explanation. “Help me understand more about what was happening...” may elicit more information and understanding.

Acknowledge your perspective is your perspective—not a universal set of facts. Invite informa-

tion. Listen calmly, and be sure you understand. Then offer to share your perspective.

Don’t criticize the person. If you want a behavior change, ask for it specifically.

Consider whether the issue is worth a fight. People are who they are; if your spouse has always been cranky and defensive, you are probably not going to make that change on your own. People change when they are ready; we get to control our actions, not theirs. If you need to distance yourself from mean, defensive, aggressive peo-

ple, it may be a sad choice but the better one.

Remember that it takes about 5 positive interactions to counterbalance the emotional costs of one negative interaction. If you want an overall positive relationship, you must keep at least that 5:1 ratio going. During times of growth and renegotiation, it may require more positive exchanges to keep that healthy balance. For example, when your child is going through the difficult early teen years, it can be easy to slip into nagging and criticism as a way of life. Balancing necessary correction with positive relationship experiences will help keep things on the upswing! - Dr. Lori Puterbaugh, LMHC, LMFT

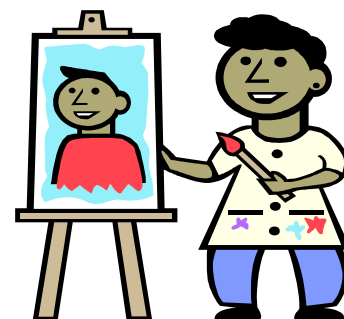


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Something to Talk About for Kids: How to Listen to Criticism

Who likes criticism? Well, artists, musicians, writers, and scientists (and others) seek out criticism on purpose. It helps them become better at what they do! True criticism helps us see what we are doing well, and challenges us to explore why we are making choices. For example, in a drawing or painting: why did you choose to take that point of view for your subject?

How did you decide what to include, and what to leave out? Someone asking these questions isn’t criticizing you: they are seeking to understand how you think as an artist, for example, and their questions can help you think as an artist, too! Next time you get a school paper or project back, see if there is criticism that helps you look at your work in a new way. How could



you use that information to push yourself to the next level? This is a great question for coaches, teachers, parents or mentors; it’s definitely something to talk about! - Dr. Lori Puterbaugh, LMHC, LMFT

Coping with Change

Change can be difficult, and change is not always good, is it? Sometimes changes make us rearrange everything in our lives. Even a good change—or one that ends up being for good—can be frightening, disorienting and aggravating!

Major life changes challenge us to rewrite the movie we have in our heads of what life will be like in the future. For example, a married person has a mental script of the future: growing old together, what the texture of life will be like in the different stages of life, sharing joys and challenges. When divorce or early death interrupts life, the spouse who remains must grieve for that script and all those dreams, and then rebuild a new script, new dreams—perhaps with some of the same elements, but certainly with some different ones. It is very difficult and perhaps one of the neglected aspects of grief. In our culture's hurry to "get over it and move on," we often seem to forget that people need something to move on towards...and that something must be rebuilt, sometimes from the ground up! Likewise, injuries and serious illnesses can require that we rewrite the script for that future-movie of our life. If you, or a loved one, is coping with major life changes and challenges, keep in mind that this is a very important, albeit painful, aspect of the grief and rebuilding process.—Dr. Lori Puterbaugh, LMHC, LMFT



Have the Magi made it to the manger scene yet? As Epiphany approaches, move the figures of the magi closer to the manger. Let the kids help the procession move closer to the Holy Family! In some families, the Magi spend time during Advent and the Christmas season moving through each room of the house, until at last they reach the Christ Child on Epiphany!

Grownup Tip of the Month: New Year's "Failures"



If you're like most people, your New Year's Resolutions may be "failures" after a week or two! Change is hard. Keep in mind that if you are changing a habit, or trying to start a new healthy habit, you are fighting against existing neural pathways that are well-developed and can seem "instant." Start small, and gather information that helps you succeed. For example, if you are trying to implement a habit of night-time prayer, insert it where it works for you in your pre-bed routine. There isn't a precise "right" time; if you pray before you brush your teeth, or pray just before hopping into bed, God hears you and it will be fine. Trying to force yourself into a rhythm that doesn't work is a set-up for failure.

Reassessing may be necessary. Did you set yourself up for failure by locking on a number—e.g., a rate of weight loss—rather than implementing a healthier set of habits? "I will eat two pieces of fresh fruit instead of junk food each day" may be more practical than, "I will lose 'X' pounds per week/month." For one thing, you can control the fruit intake, but weight can vary due to many factors. Also, weight loss isn't necessarily a good measure of health all by itself; talk with your physician about the right guidelines for you.

If you set your goals too high, break them down a bit and be gentler with yourself. Encourage yourself with short-term objectives and rewards, and put "props" into your environment that will encourage you and remind you of the small steps you are taking. Doing these things, you are helping yourself and setting a great example for loved ones! - Dr. Lori Puterbaugh, LMHC, LMFT