



THE PARENT UPDATE

West Side Youth Ministry

WSYMatters

Jake Greer

There are quite a few things happening with the WSYM this winter! We are continuing our Sunday AM series -- A Year with Jesus. Each week we send out lesson recaps and discussion starters to help keep the conversations going at home. We are also continuing our Sticky Faith series on Wednesday nights. Each week are getting very practical in looking at and discussing how are faith can continue to grow after high school instead of just shelving it after graduation. Parents, if you have not received a Sticky Faith book for your family, they are only \$10. The book is for you parents and is full of everyday ideas to help build lasting faith in your kids! We hope to have a class using it in the near future. We hope you all have a great CHRISTmas!



UPCOMING EVENTS

WSYM Christmas Extravaganza

Saturday, December 19, 2015 at 5:00 PM to Saturday, December 19, 2015 at 9:00 PM

The WSYM Christmas Extravaganza will include a progressive dinner, video scavenger hunt, and gift exchange (~\$10-20 or a nice re-gift). Meet at the Cornerstone at 5:00PM.

Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 20, 2015 at 1:00 PM to Sunday, December 20, 2015 at 2:00 PM

The MY and WSYM Small Groups are going Christmas Caroling! Wear a loud Christmas getup and come ready to sing!

Christmas Schedule Changes

Wednesday, December 23, 2015 at 7:00 PM to Sunday, December 27, 2015 at 1:00 PM

There will be NO Wednesday night classes on December 23. There will also be NO Small Group meetings on December 27.

Need more info? Email me at jake@westsidear.org or visit us at www.westsideyouthministry.org

Now What? Too High Parental Aspirations Can Hurt Kids' School Performance

HomeWord.com

New research suggests parental ambitions can benefit or harm a child's academic achievement.

If a parent's expectations are realistic, children tend to do better in school. However, if the goals are unrealistic, then the child may not perform well in school.

"Our research revealed both positive and negative aspects of parents' aspiration for their children's academic performance. Although parental aspiration can help improve children's academic performance, excessive parental aspiration can be poisonous," said lead author Kou Murayama, Ph.D., of the University of Reading. The study was published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

Researchers found that high parental aspiration led to increased academic achievement, but only when it did not overly exceed realistic expectation. When aspiration exceeded expectation, the children's achievement decreased proportionately.

Now What?

- Parents should set realistic expectations for their child's academic potential and then encourage and coach them to reach that potential.
- Encourage your children to do their best, learn all they can, and do the best they can do. Intervene when they do not, and affirm them when they live up to their academic potential.
- Parents should be careful to not push their kids beyond realistic academic expectations. When kids fall short of their parents' expectations, they feel pressure which can lead to a sense of failure, and ultimately result in lower academic performance.
- Keep in mind that you can't push an average student into an overachiever by nagging or pushing. In fact, the more you get involved, the greater the likelihood the student will do worse, not better.

Holidays or Holi-Dazed?

Jim Burns

For many of us, the holiday season is a time that is anticipated with both joy and anxiety. Sure, we love the celebrations, the family traditions, and we cherish the memories of holidays gone by; but along with them, we add the stresses of preparation, expectations and the fear of letdowns, or family squabbles that we have experienced in the past. In a real sense, many of us are looking straight into the face of the holi-daze, not the holidays. With this in mind, here are five tips I feel can help make for an enjoyable, meaningful Christmas season in 2015.

1. Set manageable expectations. Spend some time now setting realistic and manageable

expectations for your holiday season. Start by understanding that you can't do everything. So, be realistic and upfront about what your family can do. Make a list of what is possible and prioritize your most important events and activities for you and your family. Then, pace yourself. Keep in mind that it's the holiday "season" (not "day") and spread out your activities to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.

2. Acknowledge the past, but look toward the future. Life brings changes. Each season of life is different. Determine to enjoy this holiday season for what it is. If you find that this year has been a rough one and you don't anticipate having the best holiday season ever, try not to set yourself up for disappointment by comparing today with the "good old days." Take advantage of the joys the present holiday season has to offer.

3. Do something for someone else. One of the ways we can demonstrate that we are grateful to God for His many blessings is to help others. There are always people who can use a helping hand. So, enrich this holiday season for your family by getting involved in serving others.

4. Enjoy a family holiday tradition. Traditions provide opportunities to keep your family's legacy going. They create meaningful memories. So, from the silly to the sentimental, if your family has established Thanksgiving and Christmas traditions, if possible, be sure to include them in your holiday activity plans.

5. Spend money responsibly. The holiday season always brings with it a big temptation to spend lots of money on Christmas presents for your family. Don't be afraid to say no to this temptation. Here is some good advice for every family: Don't spend beyond your means and don't rack up significant credit card debt! Don't forget that come springtime, your kids may well have laid aside or forgotten those expensive gifts, even while you're struggling to make the payments. Decide now to be financially responsible this Christmas season!

Culture Snapshot: Study Finds Religious Kids Are More Selfish

HomeWord.com

A recent study has found that children who grow up in religious households are more selfish, less empathetic and sensitive than those who grow up in non-religious households. The findings run contrary to the conventional wisdom that religion plays an essential role in childhood moral development.

The study was conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago, and published in the journal *Current Biology*.

The research studied 1,170 children between five and twelve years of age from six different countries. Researchers identified three main religious types: Christians, Muslims, and non-religious. The study did not provide further breakdowns in data between distinctions within the three major groups.

Researchers found that Christian and Muslim children were less likely than non-religious children to share with others. Further, children from religious homes favored stronger punishments for antisocial behaviors than non-religious children.

Christian children were found to be less generous than non-religious children, but more generous than Muslim children. Christian kids judged meanness more harshly than non-religious children, but were less judgmental than Muslim children. Christian children were found to be more sensitive to injustice than both Muslim and non-religious children.

The study highlights the need for Christian parents to proactively teach their children to live out their faith in genuine and god-honoring ways. Christian kids need practical ways to put their faith into action and parents should encourage kids to be regularly involved in service and mission opportunities where they learn that the call to Christ is the call to love and serve others.

10 Memorable Family Christmas Traditions for 2015

Jim Burns

From the silly to the sentimental, traditions create meaningful memories for your family. They provide opportunities to build your family legacy as your children grow up. But sometimes, families get in a rut with traditions, never experimenting to see if new traditions might add some new spice to your family life.

- 1) Try an annual extended-family get-together. Sometime around Christmas gather the extended family together at someone's home or restaurant and hang out with one another.
- 2) Watch Christmas movies. Throughout the Christmas season, gather the kids together and enjoy your favorite Christmas movies. Two of my own personal favorites: *It's a Wonderful Life* and *A Christmas Carol*.
- 3) Attend a Christmas Eve service. If your church doesn't have a Christmas Eve service, you can probably find one going on somewhere in your community. This is a great way to focus your family's perspective on the true meaning of Christmas!
- 4) Live out an annual family version of The Twelve Days of Christmas. First identify a friend, relative, or neighbor to receive all of the "gifts." Then, create a unique gift for each day of the song (i.e., five golden rings could be five glazed donuts) and place the gifts on the recipient's front porch.
- 5) Bake and decorate homemade Christmas cookies. Allow everyone in the family to participate if they want. Everyone should be able to request their favorite kind of cookie.
- 6) Go to the movies on Christmas Day. Gather the troops and head off to the local movie theater. You'll probably get good seats!
- 7) Drive around looking at Christmas lights. Sometime during the Christmas season, load the family



up in the car and drive around looking at Christmas lights.

8) Ice skating on Christmas Eve --- day. If you have Christmas Eve day off, gather the family and head out to an ice rink or local (safely frozen!) pond for some time together on the ice.

9) Go Christmas caroling. Take a walk around your immediate neighborhood and stop at homes and sing Christmas carols.

10) Help at a food bank or soup kitchen. Try spending Christmas day helping the needy at a local food bank or soup kitchen. You never know, your kids may never want to spend Christmas day at home again!