

Top ten ways to teach values to your kids:

In a consumer-driven society that broadcasts values that don't reflect what you believe, how can fathers teach values to their kids? Here are ten ideas to help you:

1. Tell them your life stories and teach through your stories

Kids love to hear stories about your childhood. Weave in some moral dilemmas and you've got great opportunities to teach values to them. It certainly beats lecturing your kids!

2. Live your own life according to your values—walk the talk.

Kids learn by imitating, especially at a young age. They are very adept at seeing if what you say and what you do are matching up. Don't give them confusing signals; follow your own values every moment.

3. Expose them to your religion or faith

It seems especially important today to let them know that they're not alone. Providing your kids with a community of faith will strengthen their values and provide parents some "leverage"

4. Pay attention to who else might be teaching values to your kids

Get to know your child's teachers, coaches, relatives, etc. Anyone who spends time with your kids may be influencing them. Know their values and beliefs as well.

5. Ask your kids questions that will stimulate dialogue about values

Telling them what values they should have won't always be effective, especially when your kids get older. Asking them "curious" questions will allow discussions that will eventually lead to values. "What did you think about that fight," may be more effective than, "He shouldn't have started that fight!"

6. Talk to them about values in a relaxed and easy way

Nothing will turn your kids off more than preaching values to them after they've screwed up! Talk to them when everyone's relaxed, and do it in a light, conversational manner. They'll be much more likely to be listening rather than tuning you out.

7. Read them fairy tales when they're younger

Fairy tales capture the imagination of kids and can easily lead to a discussion of values. Kids will learn the most concerning values when they're excited about the topic.

8. Involve your kids in art, activities, or helping others while limiting TV and video games

Kids learn values when they experience them. Allow them to experience helping others and involve them in activities that will expand their creativity.

9. Have frequent conversations about values in your household

This lets your kids know that it's important and it's not just something you talk about when they do something wrong.

10. Have high expectations for your kids' value systems

Kids will tend to rise to the level of expectation you have for them. Their value system will often reflect yours if the expectations are high.

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