



TODAY YOUR PRETEEN LEARNED

PATHWAYS TO JOY

Pathways of Mercy and Peace

Today, preteens grew in their understanding of what it means to be merciful. When people hurt us, it's natural to want to hurt them back. But Christians can only experience joy when we **show mercy** to others and help people live in peace.

This lesson did not teach preteens to let everyone beat them up and use them. It did, however, help them learn what Jesus taught about **forgiveness**, by studying the story of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35).

We need to forgive those who wrong us. But it is only through the grace of God that we can show others this mercy. Preteens were given an opportunity today to commit themselves to a lifestyle of mercy and peacemaking.



How can you show mercy to your preteen this week? Let him or her see in you an example of what it means to show mercy.

PARENT CONNECTIONS

for families of Preteens

PARENT POINTERS

The world of preteens is full of uncertainty, change, and confusion.

Their bodies, minds, and spirits are developing and changing. They look to adults for role modeling and sometimes find inconsistency and questions. They are looking for those solid foundations that can be counted on during these years of transition and change. Consistency is vital for your preteen.

Not moving around every year or changing churches all the time during these years may be good, but what is most important is the consistency of your character as a parent. Your children will be nourished as you make prayer, devotions, compassionate service to others, and church attendance an intimate part of your and your family's life.

As a child, I often saw my mother in prayer at random times of the day and night. I regularly saw my father leaning quietly over a Bible early in the morning. Not only did seeing them spend time with God help me feel

safe and loved when I was a preteen, but also these memories vividly remind me to pursue my relationship with the Father today.

We live extremely busy lives. Perhaps you have not made these things a priority in your life and home. It may not be apparent to your preteen that you love the Lord if you only talk about prayer, devotions, and worship and seldom follow through. Give it some thought. Your child's life patterns, whether you or they intend it, will be a reflection of yours. Enable them to live victorious Christian lives by providing a vibrant, consistent example of what it means to be a child of God.

—by Katherine Hendrixson

It is absolutely essential for us as parents to fight the faith fight ourselves, so that our children see us struggling with the same issues and winning. I am talking about being living models of faith.

—Jeff VanVonderen

(Families Where Grace Is in Place [Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1992], 105.)



Art means creativity, and God gives creativity to children in abundance. Creativity can be either fostered or squelched. If your preteen has a creative interest, such as painting, pottery, making jewelry, etc., encourage him or her to develop these skills.

One way both to introduce and foster creativity in your preteen is to take him or her to an art museum. Even if you have to drive a couple of hours to get to a major one, it will be worth your time. Instead of just focusing on whether or not what you are looking at is a pretty picture, think about what the artists were trying to do. Were they expressing

something happy, or sad? Art often expresses the pains or struggles of huge groups of people. It is a wonderful way to learn how you can better touch lives in your world.

Of course visual creativity can be found in many places outside of an art museum. Encourage your preteen to look at buildings, gardens, advertising, room decorations, and nature and to see how artistically these examples are designed. When we engage in creative activities, including artistic outlets, we are participating in one of the important areas that reflect the image of God—the ultimate Creator.