

The Importance of Conscience and Moral Development for Our Next Generation

6 Ways To Teach Children About Conscience

1. Communicate with your children

- The best way to teach children about something is to informally talk about it when it naturally arises. For example, reading a book about a story, reading the news...etc
- Listen carefully to what your children has to say, because their words are a window into their heart. Listen to what they think is right and wrong

2. Encourage your children when they listen to their conscience

- Sometimes children are convinced that something is wrong when it is not inherently bad, and they might confess such a “sin” to you. For example, wearing shoes at home. How should you respond?
- Affirm your child for listening to their conscience and for sharing that with you. Encourage them. Praise them. Do not scold them
- Mark Dever says, “Conscience cannot make a wrong thing right, but it can make a right thing wrong.” Go on to help them recalibrate their conscience
- Conscience is a priceless gift that they must not ignore. It can be a warning system that saves them from great harm. Don’t ignore or suppress it

3. Exhort your children to not ignore their conscience

- When you train and discipline your children, appeal to their conscience
- When that little voice in your head warns you not to do something, don’t do it

4. Ask for forgiveness when you wronged your children

- We regularly do wrong things against our children—sometimes directly (e.g., being unreasonably angry or impatient with them). Every time it happens, it is an opportunity for us to model repentance
- It maybe helpful if you have faith-based/community support (e.g. joining a church and learn about righteousness)

5. Explain to your children how conscience differs

- No two people have exactly the same conscience. But we all have blind spots where we need to recalibrate our conscience so that it functions in a better way

6. Lead by example

- Young minds are impressionable, so it’s important to lead by example. Treat your children and other people with kindness and respect. Show your children how to live life with good morals as their guidance
- Work side-by-side with your children to teach them the importance of charity work. Teach your kids about giving back to their community or helping specific causes to make the world a better place (e.g. feeding the homeless at shelters)
- Actively volunteering also teaches children about making commitments and following through with them

References

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