

# Supporting Your Child as a Leader

## Parents of Christian Leaders . . .

### **Model Leadership**

Consider these three rules for raising children:

- Be a good role model.
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Parents who assume leadership positions themselves raise young people who view leading and serving as a natural part of life and find it easier to step into those roles. Ask yourself: In what ways do I model Christian leadership in my home, parish, and community?

### **Are Informed**

Read newsletters and bulletins; check Web sites; converse with teachers, youth ministers, and the other adults in your child's life; and attend meetings. Learn as much as you can about the leadership roles your child has taken on, the ministry that is being performed, or the possibilities for leadership that are available. Ask yourself: How much do I know about what my child is doing in his or her role as leader?

### **Set Goals and Priorities**

Overextended lifestyles make it easy to spend time on activities that do not produce long-range benefits to the quality of life. Family discussions about values clarification, goals, and priorities help your child (and you) make better choices about time management. Ask yourself: How do I help my child set goals and priorities?

### **Show Support by Sharing Resources**

Support organizations, agencies, and activities that reflect your family values and offer leadership opportunities for your child. Volunteer to drive, chaperone, provide treats, or make phone calls. Share your suggestions for improvements and offer to help. Thank the adults in charge. Your small investment can produce big results by helping those programs to thrive. Ask yourself: What gifts do I have to share?

### **Encourage Participation**

Mark your calendar and put flyers on the refrigerator. Talk to your son or daughter, his or her friends, and the friends' parents. Most young people need encouragement and reminders—so do not be shy about putting in a good word for programs you consider worthwhile. Ask yourself: Do I have any creative ways to encourage participation?

### **Acknowledge Accomplishments**

Recognizing accomplishments that uphold values and a willingness to serve without rewards is important when nurturing Christian leadership skills. When your child demonstrates those skills, tell her or him that you're proud, again and again, through scrapbooks, refrigerator displays, a family Web site, and so on. Ask yourself: How does our family celebrate accomplishments and positive behavior?

### **Communicate**

Eating together, riding in a car, and sharing hobbies and chores are all ways to generate conversation. The more you listen to your child, the more likely you are to discover unique gifts, talents, and leadership skills. Ask yourself: In what special way does our family communicate?

### **Pray**

Pray for and with your son or daughter. Mealtime prayers, family rosary times, or going to church as a family all help keep the focus on using gifts and talents in a Christlike way. Ask yourself: What time does our family set aside for prayer?

### **Help Solve Problems**

Invite your child to talk with you when she or he is having difficulty, and listen carefully to the concerns. While young people are developing as leaders, they may not always know the best way to handle a crisis or a difficult person. Provide guidance as they try out new skills, learn new ways of dealing with their emotions, and succeed in their leadership roles. Ask yourself: What leadership skills do I have that I could share with my child?