

## Column

Many children will be returning to the classroom in August. Others, will not. Concerns over the coronavirus or other reasons will keep these children at home learning using computers or being taught by their parents.

Regardless, for both, education is going on in the home, acknowledged or unacknowledged. Every home is a school. Either godliness, kindness, good manners, industriousness, responsibility, moral restraint and honesty are being taught, or such corresponding negative precepts as ungodliness, cruelty, bad manners, laziness, sloth, irresponsibility, licentiousness and dishonesty.

There are no homes which are moral and religious vacuums. If positive virtues are not being passed on, then vices are.

Right now in this country, many Christians are focused on getting candidates elected who will seek to slow the moral rot and stand for what is right, just and honourable. All right and good. But culture is not going to be transformed by the ballot box alone. The home must play its part.

At this point, you might be thinking, “I agree with you in principle, but where does one begin?” Here, are a few preliminary suggestions:

First, parents can pay attention to what is coming into the home via the television and internet. Parents cannot create a totally antiseptic environment for their children – nor would they want to – but they can keep the worst things out. Most houses have sewers, but one does not leave the pipe leading to the sewer open without a trap.

Secondly, as children get older, parents can offer positive guidance in helping them form a biblical worldview. In so doing, they will be giving them not a set of rules and list of pat answers, but the tools they will need to critique culture and make right decisions on their own.

For very young children, the place to begin, no doubt, is by introducing them to the contents of the Bible. A number of Bible story books (Egermeier, Hurlbut, etc.) exist that can aid in this process. But as they get older, the emphasis must shift towards acquiring a personal faith and applying biblical principles to everyday life situations.

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within,” J.B. Phillips translates Paul’s words in Romans 12. Why not have a family discussion with this verse as your starting point?

Thirdly, parents can inculcate positive virtues in their children by themselves modelling these virtues. Don’t just tell them, show them.

Obviously, these three suggestions are merely starters. Be creative. What ones can you add to them?

*LORD Jesus Christ, who dost embrace children with the arms of thy mercy, and dost make them living members of thy Church; Give them grace, we pray thee, to stand fast in thy faith, to obey thy word, and to abide in thy love; that being made strong by thy Holy Spirit they may resist temptation and overcome evil; and may rejoice in the life that now is, and dwell with thee in the life that is to come; through thy merits, O merciful Saviour, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer)*

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