

3 Ways to Raise Kids Who Care

As introductions were made, I smiled and extended my hand. The preteen before me offered a limp grasp, but his gaze never connected with mine. His cellphone buzzed, and his indifference to meeting me was complete.

The boy's mother attempted to power through the awkward moment. Her cheeks pinked as she laughed. "Kids. What can you do?"

Believe me, I didn't stand in judgment. I'd stood in her sweaty shoes and watched one of my children exude rudeness like a cloud of smelly fumes. And like my friend, I was embarrassed and frustrated with my offspring.

As parents who want to raise compassionate, caring children, is there anything we *can* do? (Short of threatening their precious little existence, of course.)

How can we encourage our children to see others with the eyes and heart of Christ?

Here are three ways to sow seeds of kindness and compassion in our children:

- 1. Lay a biblical foundation for the value of every life.** Genesis 1:27 begins with "So God created man in His own image." As a family, take time to ponder this incredible fact. We are created in the image of the Creator of the universe! Not only that, but God's Word reveals that He has plans and purpose for each of us, and His love is deep, abiding and faithful (see Jer. 29:11, 31:3; 1 Pet. 1: 18-19).
- 2. Provide opportunities for our children to interact with people of different age groups and backgrounds.** All people—young and old, well-dressed or tattered—deserve caring and respect. Our children need to see the

cashier, the mail carrier, the white-haired lady at church and the man in the wheelchair at the nursing home as real people with real lives. Also, eye contact is becoming a lost art in our society. Are we modeling this simple grace with our children? When we talk with our loved ones, are we looking into their unique, God-designed faces or at our cellphones?

3. Have times of family prayer for others—and get specific.

To our children, a prayer list can be a jumble of faceless needs. Instead of vague petitions for Mrs. So-and-so, we can guide our family prayer life into a time of genuine and powerful intercession. “You know Mrs. Tate? She’s the one who smiles a lot, loves to hear about your ballgames and sings in the choir on Sunday mornings. Remember? Well, she’s been in the hospital and needs our prayers for strength and healing. And later, maybe we can make a card to encourage her.” The connection is made, and our family is eternally invested in another’s life.

Guiding our families to honor and respect others involves an ongoing investment of time and patience. But the joys of seeing our children extend Christ’s love to others is a beautiful and priceless treasure. {eo}

Leigh Ann Thomas is a wife, mother, grammy and the author of *Ribbons, Lace and Moments of Grace—Inspiration for the Mother of the Bride (SonRise Devotionals)*. A regular contributor to *A, and I*, she has also published with *Southern Writers Suite T, Power for Living* and *Southern Writers Best Short Fiction*. You can find Leigh Ann on her front porch daydreaming story plots or blogging at [l](#).

This article originally appeared at .