

# Grab the Power in a Teachable Moment

## **It was an ordinary day.**

I was leaving the doctor's office with my three kids when the homeless man approached us. He was in a wheelchair and was missing a leg. I'd just gotten the kids buckled into their car seats when he approached asking for food. I "just so happened" to have a packed lunch with me. I also had recently been to the bakery, and I'd picked up some donuts for my grandma for a treat.

I gave the man the lunch and offered him the biggest donut. His eyes grew wide. "Is this cream-filled?" It turned out it was, and the man's face filled with joy. He ate it with pleasure.

## **It was only as I backed away that I realized my kids had been watching everything.**

It was only as I backed away that I realized my kids had been watching everything. @TriciaGoyer

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## **Even though I never intended it to be, that was a teachable moment.**

We talked about homelessness. We talked about caring for those God brings into our paths. We talked about sharing what we had. We talked about kindness. And that night—as the kids shared about the experience with their dad—we talked about it

again.

How can you take advantage of the unexpected, teachable moments in life? Here are some ideas from experts (and expert moms).

## **Converse creatively**

“Learn the art of meandering conversation. When you’re working a puzzle with your kids or riding in the car together, talk about worries or other crisis times. As a way to get started, use something you heard about, something you saw on TV, or something that happened to you as a child.” –Ron Rose, *Seven Things Kids Never Forget*

I especially love the idea of sharing stories from my own childhood. There are lessons each of us has learned that can be passed on to our kids.

## **Be real**

“When I fail, when I say something really stupid, I ask my children’s forgiveness.” –Maxine, mother of four

Being real means owning up to our faults and exhibiting what it means to be humble and thoughtful. Seeing the way we respond will teach our children how to act.

## **Show you care**

“When uncertainty clouds your children’s vision, lead them to their knees in prayer—pray with them often and about everything.” –John William Smith, *Hugs for Mom*

One day on the way to town we saw an accident, and I told my kids we should pray for the drivers. Now every time they see an accident (or even someone pulled over!) my children want to pray. Whenever I see concern or worry in their gazes over anything, I know it’s time to pray.

## **Be available**

“When my children ask me a question, I make it a point to stop whatever I am doing to answer it right away. I want them to know I place priority on them and their questions.” –Tamela, mother of two

I’ve found that eye contact with my children makes a big difference. When I take time to focus on their faces, a connection is made. If they’re coming to me, I want my children to know I’m available and I care. If I don’t take time to listen to my children about the little things, they won’t come to me about the big issues of life.

## **Take advantage of all life’s situations**

“I try to share words of wisdom during fun times, like when we’re enjoying popcorn and a movie or picking flowers outside. It’s then that they’re more likely to listen.” –Cindy, mother of five

## **Give your time**

“It is clear to me that the time [my children and I] spent together in those formative years strengthened our relationships in their teenage years. Our time together bonded us to each other and laid a foundation of open communication, helping us establish mutual trust and loyalty that grew into a warm, lasting friendship.” –Donna J. Miller, *Growing Little Women*

I’ve found that bonds are built when I appreciate my children’s strengths. Making a list of those strengths, thanking God for them, and praising our children makes a difference in their hearts. And as they grow, the connection grows!

**How about you?**

**How do you take advantage of teachable moments with your children?**

*Prayer*

*God, show me the moments that I can use fully with my children. Allow us to take advantage of every second by creatively conversing and experiencing life together. Make me sensitive to the moments of life that will have a big impact on my child's life.*

**Tricia Goyer** has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31 and HomeLife Magazine.