

These Godly Actions Will Crush an Attitude of Entitlement With Your Kids

The other night I was working at a Panera Bread. Sitting at the table next to me was a group of teenagers studying for a test.

When they finished they were all exiting, leaving their trash on the table. The same thing happened several weeks before at an airport. Two teen girls sitting next to me got up to board their plane leaving their empty Starbuck cups for someone else to clean up. My outspoken friend pointed to the trash and announced to everyone at the gate, "If anyone wants to know what's wrong with our country it's this right here!"

In both circumstances and the many other examples I could have cited, it wasn't absent-mindedness. It was an expectation that it was someone else's duty to clean up after them. I think kids today, teens, in particular, get a bad rap on a number of fronts. However, one criticism that does have merit is their sense of entitlement.

Perhaps we were just as bad at that age, but our kids are growing up in a world of instant gratification. If they want information, they go online and get it easily. They receive trophies just for showing up, rather than for performance. In the process, they miss the powerful lessons of humility and hard work that come from the experience of losing.

If you don't want entitled kids, be sure to do these five things.

1. Teach them to say "thank you." The words we speak have a profound effect on our attitude. When we speak positive words we tend to have a positive outlook. Training your kids to say,

“Thank you” will help nurture their gratitude. Reinforce this every time they receive something. For example, if someone gives them a cookie and they don’t say it, remind them. Send them back to the person to express gratitude. Role play with your children on how to say thank you and why it is so important.

2. Make them earn their money. Kids need to understand the value of money and what it takes to earn it. If they have an allowance make them do chores to earn it. If they don’t do their jobs they don’t get paid. On the other hand, give them bonuses when they go above and beyond. We were recently at the Disney Store and my daughter asked me to buy her a \$20 stuffed animal. I told her she could buy it with her money and then I broke down for her how many days of daily chores equaled the cost of the animal. Then I asked her if it was worth all of the work. She quickly put it back on the shelf and walked away.

3. Do service projects together. Another way to cultivate thankfulness is to show them how to serve others. Doing service projects together or going on a mission trip will open their eyes to the less fortunate. One way to do this is by participating in Operation Christmas Child. All Pro Dad has partnered with Operation Christmas Child for several years because it’s an amazing service project dads and kids can do together that teaches the power of giving. Take your child to a dollar store and buy small toys, socks, crayons, etc. and pack them into shoe boxes for children in developing countries. If your child uses their own money, it’s even better. This video shows a great example. Make sure to order your free materials and get the information regarding how to pack the shoeboxes prior to National Collection Week (November 14-21).

4. Teach them to clean up after themselves. A friend of mine had a rule with his kids. If their room wasn’t clean by the end of the night they forfeited their right to sleep in it. He

would literally make his kids sleep in the hallway until their room was clean. His point was simple, be faithful in the little things. Maybe that is too extreme for you, but kids need to learn there is a responsibility that comes with things we are given. They need to learn to be a good caretaker. Let them know if they can't handle the responsibility it will be taken away, whether it is a toy, a privilege, or perhaps even a room.

5. Let them lose. Kids can't expect to win without putting in the work it takes. Achievement doesn't just happen. It takes learning, effort, risk, personal growth and character. Many of those traits come from trial, failure and difficulty. Allowing your kids to win to boost their self-esteem and enjoyment of games is fine occasionally, but also should be balanced with loss. Make sure they know that every loss is an opportunity to learn. {eo}

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