

WEAVERS KIDS



H1N1 Flu . . .

There is much talk in the news about the H1N1 flu, known as swine flu. I have heard of many persons who are getting sick and being tested for the swine flu. There are reports of widespread influenza in forty-six states and many hospitalizations, far more than usual. We want to be aware of what is happening and also take precautions to protect our children, pregnant women, elderly and those more vulnerable among us.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 main ways we can keep from getting sick with the flu at home, at school, and I add, at church:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
2. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
3. **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Keeping children at home means that they keep their viruses to themselves rather than sharing them with others.
4. **CDC encourages everyone to get the family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.

I hope we can practice these guidelines (especially 1-3) here at Weavers as well. If you want to read more, check out the website: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/toolkit/parentfactsheet2.htm>
--Janet Blosser

Children's Offering Project

Our Children's Offering Project for this quarter is for Heidi Schoenhals and her parents, Mark and Sarah Schoenhals. The SS department is hoping to raise \$200 for them through December. Parents are encouraged to send an offering with the children to Sunday School.



Reducing the Risk of Abuse Policy

Because of the concern about child sexual abuse and the safety of our kids, Joe, Julia, and Janet have been asked by Church Council to formulate a policy that would ensure the safety of our children/youth. The conference has already adopted a policy and many of the churches are looking at that and adapting it for their congregations. Church Council has already affirmed this policy and as a result, we are asking each volunteer to fill out the screening sheet and authorization forms for criminal record checks. We not only want our children and youth protected, but our volunteers as well.



Kids Calendar

- November 4 – Boys Club and Girls Club, 6:30-8:00pm, in Shady Oak.
- November 11 – Boys Club and Girls Club, 6:30-8:00pm in Shady Oak.
- November 18 – Boys Club and Girls Club, 6:30-8:00pm in Shady Oak
- November 22 – Special music by the children during worship.
- November 26 – Happy Thanksgiving Day

Parenting in a Chaotic World

Seminar with Roberta Gilbert, MD.

Several weeks ago, I attended a conference on ***Parenting in a Chaotic World***, with author and speaker Roberta Gilbert. We are in a societal regression, she says, which creates more anxiety in the family. Crime rate is on the rise, teen pregnancy is high. Teen suicide is increasing, SAT scores are declining, and the dissolution of the family is the rule rather than the exception. Many parents are in denial, but if we understand the facts concerning the problems we face, we are more likely to be effective parents. Parents are the hope of civilization. In a study done on 20,000 families, the relationship with parents was the most influential factor in kids' lives. **PARENTS ARE IMPORTANT!**

She is a strong proponent of Bowen Family Systems theory. The parental role is guided by 'relationship principles' from the study of the family. In a family system, there are two principles at work: the **principle of togetherness** and the **principle of separateness**. They are opposites. At birth, a child is much **fused** (*togetherness*) emotionally to his/her parent. As a child matures, the fusion lessens. The level in which we are still fused in adulthood determines our level of maturity as an adult. (Too much fusion can generate cut-off in a relationship, which creates all kinds of symptoms in a person.)

Roberta invited us to see the family as an emotional unit. The marriage is the nucleus of the nuclear unit. It sets the emotional, relational tone. If the marriage is chaotic and anxious, the children will be also. Anxiety and immaturity can land in children if there are unresolved issues. How the marriage does sets the tone of the whole family.

Often what happens is that the children become the focus and the anxiety of the parent(s) is transferred to the child. For example, "Johnny" begins to do poorly in school. Or he acts out in some way. The focus can turn to one or more of the children. And anxieties are transmitted from one generation to another.

Today's parents she says, have too much focus on children, or too little focus. We need to give the job of parenting back to parents. They are the ones that need to be the real

leaders in the family, not the kids. As we understand the emotional system of the family, we can learn to give the right amount of focus to our kids, basing it not on our own emotional needs or anxieties, but on what the kids really need. Kids need boundaries, and we need to remember it's ok to say "no" at times.

As kids grow, fusion lessens, parents set their own boundaries with the "I" position (this is what I want and desire") and kids learn to take responsibility and do better. If we worry about "not enough" or "trauma" from events, there will be an over focus. Difficulty in life is normal. Kids need to fail at times. If we allow for what she defines as reality needs (safety, nutrition, hygiene, developmental tasks, fun, staying in connection with the "self" of parent, independent thinking), then building a positive relationship focus will be more appropriate.

Parents can get stuck in fusions. They may relate to the child as if he or she were much younger, or older. Kids at different ages need different amounts, and types of parenting. Parents may have neglected self, or the marital relationship. As kids grow, we need to let go.

As a parent, I was challenged to:

- 1) Stay connected with my spouse
- 2) Stay connected in my extended family (relationships with my own parents predict my parenting)
- 3) Give my kids the *right amount* of focus
- 4) I am in charge of my family without *over-functioning* or *under-functioning*.
- 5) As they grow, learn to take an 'I' position ('This is what I think, but it is your life')
- 6) As I monitor my own anxieties and my own relationships, my kids will do much better.

And grandparents can be a wonderful help to relieve tired parents, providing perspectives of experience. They can become wise counselors, without over-functioning.

Most of all, as parents, we need to seek God's help. Spiritual practices help us be better parents. Studies report that in general for families who attend religious services together, there is less delinquency, less addiction, and less physical illness. May God help us to ***stay the course*** and ***stay connected***.