



PROTECT *for Parents*

7 Safeguards to Protect Your
Parent-Child Relationships
from the Work of the Enemy



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for Parents

7 SAFEGUARDS TO PROTECT YOUR
PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS
FROM THE WORK OF THE ENEMY

a



coaching resource

Whole Catholic
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Why Relationships Need Protecting

As humans, we have been created by God to thrive within the context of our relationships. Our relationship with God, our relationships with others and our relationship with ourselves. Science has provided evidence through countless research studies, that when our lives are void of relationship, we die; when our lives are influenced by toxic relationships, we struggle with mental and physical health issues; and when we maintain healthy relationships and boundaries, we thrive.

You've most likely heard something like, "You're the average of the five people you spend the most time with." Some other versions you might have heard include "show me your friends and I'll show you your future" or "you are who you hang around." The Bible even tells us in Proverbs 13:20, "Walk with the wise and you become wise, but the companion of fools fares badly." The important message to take from these statements is this: your relationships provide the context for living.

It's important that we build and maintain relationships that are healthy and life-giving, however that is sometimes more easily said than done.

Satan comes to KILL, STEAL, and DESTROY and he is actively trying to achieve this in all of your relationships.

Why? Why does he care about our relationships?

Well, we are created as relational beings. He knows that if he can cause trouble in our relationships, he can get us to open doors to sin and destruction. The Bible says he is the "father of lies" and that he throws "fiery darts of suggestion" at us to tempt us toward sin. Relationships provide him ample opportunity for inserting lies and making ungodly "suggestions."

100% of the people that come to me for coaching have hurt or brokenness in one or more of their relationships, and these wounds usually lead to open doors for the enemy to wreak havoc in that person's life.

I have put together a set of seven basic principles, based on biblical teachings, to act as a guide to help you navigate all of life's relationships, through the highs and lows. Implementing these seven principles can revolutionize the way you relate to family, friends, coworkers, significant others, children, or anyone that you find yourself doing life with on a regular basis. Give them a try and watch your relationships transform before your eyes.

May God bless you and all of your relationships richly.

In Him,

Jansen Bagwell



A Special Note for Parent-Child Relationships

As mothers and fathers, we are called into the special vocation of being a parent.

Growing up, I was not exposed to that terminology. I didn't have an understanding of what the vocation of parenthood, of motherhood, was all about. Don't get me wrong, I have great parents. It's just that there wasn't an emphasis on the unique calling of being a mother or father.

Getting married and having kids was just part of life, like everything else. Graduate. Get a job. Get married. Have kids. Farm out their raising and schooling to others while you climb a ladder or simply do your best to provide, and that's it. And I think the sad reality is that most people go through life with that same deprivation.

In our Catholic faith, however, we have a unique gift in the sacraments and in the teaching of vocations. Both the sacrament of marriage and the vocation of family life, give purpose to parenthood. Having children is more than just a societal expectation that comes with a lifetime commitment. Having children is a privilege and an opportunity to eternally raise a soul towards heaven.

The parent-child relationship, while vastly different from all other relationships in most ways, is in one way, just like all the rest. It is hated by the devil.

Because we were created to be in relationships with one another, in a fraternal walk towards eternity with the Father, Satan would like nothing more than to destroy all relationships. He knows that if he can cause trouble in the parent-child relationship in particular, he can not just get us to open doors to sin and destruction, but he can create generational patterns of brokenness and separation from God.

The Bible calls Satan the "father of lies" and tells us that he and his demons throw "fiery darts of suggestion" at us to tempt us toward sin. Relationships provide the enemy with ample opportunity for inserting lies and making ungodly "suggestions."

100% of the people who come to Whole Catholic for coaching have areas in which they need to forgive their parents...even the ones with "perfect parents." These principles will not make your parent-child relationships perfect, but they will act as a guide to help you navigate all stages of parenthood with virtue. Give them a try and watch your relationships with your children grow healthier and stronger, right before your eyes.

May God bless you and all of your relationships richly.

In Him,

Amanda Bagwell

P.R.O.T.E.C.T. *for Parents*

The seven safeguards that will help you defend your parent-child relationships against the attacks of the enemy can be found in the acronym, P.R.O.T.E.C.T.



P R O T E C T

Put Relationship First

Recognize the Need

Observe Issues with Charity

Talk Less, Smile More

Expectations Are Key

Carry Their Burdens, Well...Help Them Carry

Take on a Common Enemy

P

Put Relationship First

For relationships to thrive, it's important to prioritize the person over any potential problem. Our Catholic faith teaches us to value the dignity of all human life, including those who think and act differently than us, those who may sin against us, and those who lack the skills to behave according to our expectations, including those under our parental authority.

Commitment

Faithfulness to my relationship with my child, and both or our relationships with God, outweigh the importance of any any problem we may be experiencing. I will not allow any problem to override the principles of faith by which we strive to live.

Question

- Am I allowing any problem to negatively affect my relationship with my child?
- Am I taking up an offense to anything my child is or is not doing?
- Am I acting in a way that represents God and His heart towards my child?



Scripture

"It is good sense to be slow to anger, and an honor to overlook an offense." (Proverbs 19:11)

R

Recognize the Need

In moments of upset, our developed executive functioning skills are unusable to us, and on top of that, a person's executive functioning skills are not fully developed until somewhere between 25-30 years old. The human virtues are the same. The Catechism says that "human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith," (CCC 1804) putting them in the same developmental category as executive skills. While they are moving through the stages of development, your child is always looking for you to model and "lend" them the skills and virtues that they need to develop.

Commitment

In each instance of "misbehavior" instead of acting from a place of anger or frustration, I will strive to see the need and missing skills or virtues. I will lend my own skills to my child with patience and love. When correction is needed, I will be firm, but kind, offering helpful skills, rather than punishing a lack of skills.



Question

- What are my child's natural skill and virtue strengths?
- How might I encourage them to use and further develop these?
- What skills or virtues might my child be missing?
- How might I help my child develop the skills and virtues they are lacking?

Wisdom of the Saints

It is easier to become angry than to restrain oneself and to threaten a (child) than to persuade him. Yes, indeed, it is more fitting to be persistent in punishing our own impatience and pride than to correct the (children). We must be firm but kind and be patient with them. I give you as a model the charity of Paul, which he showed to his new converts. They often reduced him to tears and entreaties when he found them lacking docility and even opposing his loving efforts.

- St. John Bosco



Observe Issues With Charity

Offenses taken up against another person are ripe breeding ground for demonic activity. When issues go unresolved, we can open the door to the enemy by making unrighteous judgements, holding on to false expectations, and harboring bitterness. To observe issues that may arise with charity, we must strive to see others through the eyes of God, attribute positive intent to their words and actions, and communicate with temperance when we feel upset.

It's vital that when we have a discipline encounter with our children that we remember to observe the issue with charity. Instead of seeing only the problem through our limited understanding, we can ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the situation, helping us to see our children through the eyes of the Father.

It's also important that we teach children to observe others with charity when they have difficult relational encounters. We can do this by modeling the language of positive intent, out loud, when the world doesn't go our way.

Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it." (Luke 17:33) - CCC 1889

Commitment

I will not allow any problem I have with my child to go unresolved to a point festering bitterness or uncharitable behavior. I will choose to see my child through a lens of love and teach them to look at others with the same compassion.

Question

- Am I allowing uncharitable thoughts to ruminate in my mind or heart, or result in uncharitable behavior?
- Am I choosing to see my child through the eyes of Christ or am I harboring bitterness or resentment toward their behavior?



Scripture

"Be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, and do not leave room for the devil." (Ephesians 4:26-27)



Talk Less, Smile More

Practice the acronym, SHH. Children need to be **seen**, **heard**, and **held**.



To help children feel seen, we notice them with descriptive language, guide them with assertive language, model for them through our own behavior, and provide safe and predictable routines that value their development, needs and gifts.



To help children feel heard, we remain present and attentive in our interactions with them. A meaningful connection requires this devoted presence, along with eye contact, touch, and an element of playfulness or enjoyment. Facial expressions and body language are key, as is helping them to know that they are seen, heard, and valued.



To help children feel held, we choose to see in them the good and dignity with which they were created. We set and hold boundaries in love. We model the expectation of virtue in our own behavior and interactions, and the success that we hold for them. We encourage them to grow in their relationships and gifts. We walk alongside them to solve problems and move forward.

E

Expectations Are Key

Trust is important in all relationships. For trust to be built and maintained, people have to be able to rely on the word and actions of the other person in the relationship. This is key when it comes to expectations. Children must be able to rely on their parents to set and hold reasonable expectations for them in all areas of life. This will teach them how to work towards goals, handle successes and failures, and how to set expectations for themselves and others, when the time comes.

Expectations must be: (1) in line with the teachings of the church, especially those outlined in the Bible and the Catechism regarding how parents are to raise their children, (2) developmentally appropriate, honoring the dignity of each stage of development that God designed us all to go through, and (3) communicated clearly, again in a way that aligns with their development.

When children fail to meet our expectations, or when we find that the expectations we have set are unreasonable, instead of insisting on getting our own way, it's important that we remain patient, reevaluate the needs, and bear all things in love.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7



Commitment

I commit to setting and holding expectations for my child that are in line with Church teaching, developmentally appropriate, and communicated clearly.

Question

- What expectations are developmentally appropriate for my child?
- Have I communicated expectations clearly?
- Am I holding them to any false or unreasonable expectations?

C

Carry Their Burdens

Well, *help* carry them.

Children aren't born knowing how to solve problems. We learn these skills through experience, practice, and relationship, and they don't fully develop until between the ages of 25-30.

That means your children will need your help. They need to see you solve problems and handle upset. As humans, we learn from experience, not lecture. They need you to walk alongside them as they are learning to use these skills at developmentally appropriate ages, and they need you to help them pick up the pieces and try again when it doesn't go well the first time...or the 100th.

"(4) For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, (5) so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. (6) Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them...(13) Contribute to the needs of the holy ones..." (Romans 12:4-6,13)

Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them. -CCC 2223



Commitment

I commit to noticing my child's areas of struggle and helping to carry their burden, and learn how to carry it on their own, by lending the skills and virtues they need help developing. I will also encourage them to do the same for others.

Question

How can I use the strengths God has given to me to lend strength to my child and help bear their burdens while they are learning and developing?

Scripture

"Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

T

Take on a Common Enemy

"For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

- Ephesians 6:12

Commitment

Your enemy is my enemy. Our enemy is not another person, but it is Satan. I will help to defend you against every attack or assault, by using my spiritual gifts and through prayer.

Question

- How can I protect my child from attacks of the enemy?
- What is the enemy trying to steal from my child, myself, our family in this problem/situation? (He most often attacks in areas of gifting.)



Wisdom from the Church

"In difficult moments I will fix my gaze upon the silent heart of Jesus, stretched upon the cross, and from the exploding flames of His merciful Heart, will flow down upon me power and strength to keep fighting." -St. Faustina

Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones." -CCC 2223



Mary, I ask that you hold my child
in your arms of intercession.

Advocate on behalf of their
deficiencies. Lead them to an even
closer relationship with Jesus, and
pray that they may receive the
graces they need, in order to do
"whatever He tells them," so that
they may fulfill the will of the
Father in their life.

*In the name of the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, Amen.*



Prayer for Healthy Family Relationships

Lord Jesus, we pray for You to send angels of sufficient number, rank, power, and authority, to surround our family. We pray for You to give these angels charge to fight back every principality, power, and demon off and away so that we can experience the every gift and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our relationship.

Lord help us to PROTECT our relationships by remaining faithful; acting with honesty, patience, and charity; holding reasonable expectations; helping my child carry their burdens, and remembering that we fight against a real spiritual enemy.

We also ask for Mary, our Mother to hold us all in your arms of intercession, draw us closer to your Son Jesus both individually and corporately, and pray for us to receive the graces you know we need to have a healthy and Godly relationship.
Amen.

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