

Teaching children to heal

An interview with two mothers from Australia

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Every caring mother or father yearns to impart to each child the kind of knowledge that enables that youngster to be happy and well.

Yet knowing what to share with the child, and how to do this in a loving and helpful way, often present some of the greatest challenges in parenting.

Two mothers, Jeanine and Elizabeth, who between them have five children, ranging in age from six to twelve, recently talked about the spiritual ideas they are teaching their children, and how and why they are doing so. For these mothers, such teaching is motivated by a desire for their children to know God and to discover their loving relation to Him.

Teaching God's care

Jeanine teaches her three children not to be fearful but always to feel God's comfort. She assures them: "God is Love. He looks after each one of us. No one is outside of His tender, loving care." Such spiritual instruction has practical meaning for this family.

For example, if one of the children is injured at school or play, the child responds by affirming that his or her identity is spiritual, made in God's image and likeness. Jeanine explains: "Because God is always with them, they can never be separated from His peace and goodness. His love envelops them. This understanding helps them realize how close they are to God." It also brings solace and healing.

In situations where the behavior of other children causes them concern, Jeanine's children have found this Biblical instruction helpful: "**Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good**" (Rom. 12:21). Putting this counsel into practice means acting as a peacemaker, refusing to react when another's manner is upsetting, and seeing each individual as God's child instead of as a discordant mortal. They've found that lovingkindness in thought and deed helps restore goodwill and promotes harmony.

Teaching listening to God

Elizabeth encourages her two children to study the teachings and rules for moral and spiritual growth, and also to catch the *spirit* of these teachings. For this family, that means sharing every activity of their day with God; talking with Him; and above all, listening for His loving and sure direction. This mother says that if a problem arises in the schoolyard or if one of her children feels sick or unhappy, they both know that God will provide them with immediate help and guidance.

Elizabeth points out: "God is good. He is ever present. He is always governing and directing. His messages assure us that we are not alone. God is here. We are safe and well." This is why she encourages her youngsters to turn to God by asking them, "Have you been listening to God? What thought is God giving you? What does God say?" This has practical results. Each time the child gets quiet and listens to God, healing quickly follows.

Making time to teach children how to heal themselves through prayer may seem daunting in the hustle and bustle of family life. So when does a parent find the opportunities to help a child learn these lessons?

Elizabeth: At least once a week, in the evening, Elizabeth and her young children curl up on the bed as a family, or sit at the dinner table and take turns reading the Bible stories and citations from *Science and Health* in the *Christian Science Quarterly*

Weekly Bible Lessons. She then asks them what the Bible stories mean to them and the children talk about the spiritual lessons they contain. This is an ongoing activity.

This mother feels that because the Bible Lessons have instructive and healing ideas in them for her, they also contain ideas that will be of help to her children. At bedtime, family members express gratitude for every evidence of God's love and goodness during the day. This helps to remind them that God is with them continuously.



my Bible Lesson is an engaging spiritual resource for teen and young adult readers. Bible notes, timelines, word definitions, and translations support and illuminate each week's Lesson



Jeanine: In the morning, as her children go off to school, Jeanine likes to give them a short, simple message that relates to the happenings of the day ahead. For example, she says that on days when there is going to be a test, "I remind them that God is the all-seeing, all-knowing, all-intelligent, one Mind. As God, Mind, knows all there is to know, and we reflect everything God is, then we have all the intelligence and knowledge we need. I found this lovely verse recently: '**All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children**' (Isa. 54:13). It's reassuring for me as a parent to know that God is their real Teacher."

She also likes to share this Bible verse with her children: "**[God] shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways**" (Ps 91:11). For her, this simple message helps the children to affirm in every situation the presence of God's government and His protecting power and all-encompassing love for them, the other children, and the teachers.

Both mothers say that when things haven't gone so well for one of the children, they take the time to sit down with the child and find a spiritual solution to the difficulty. This may involve helping the children recall the lessons they have been learning about God and their relation to Him. Or, both mother and child may pray together, remembering that God is always in control. Rather than ignore the trouble, they always seek a healing resolution. As responsible parents they continue to pray until health and concord are restored.

Spiritual ideas taught in the home and practiced in daily life, provide a foundation that leads naturally to healing. Children are able to be a healing influence wherever they find themselves.

Jeanine: Schoolteachers recognize how Jeanine's children care about others, and go out of their way to help those who are perhaps being picked on or bullied. This mother is grateful that what she is teaching her children enables them to be calm and caring voices for good.

Elizabeth: Teachers of Elizabeth's son, notice that if someone is hurt during school time, he is always the first one on the scene. He speaks gently to the injured child and allays his or her fear. He reminds them, "God is here. You're fine. God is here." He has also invited and brought quite a few children to his Sunday School for a visit, and he often speaks to his friends about what he is learning of God.

Many times Elizabeth's children have prayed for themselves and experienced healing as the result of their own prayers. When she has felt unwell, they have also prayed with her. Although the words may be big, her son reads the testimonies of healing in the *Sentinel* or *The Christian Science Journal* to her until she feels better. He knows that these proofs of God's love and care encourage, inspire, and uplift his mother's thoughts and help to bring healing.

Both mothers have definite reasons about why they teach their children "to love the simple verities that will make them happy and good," as Science and Health encourages (p. 236). Elsewhere on the same page the book states, "Parents should teach their children at the earliest possible period the truths of health and holiness."

Jeanine, who has been practicing Christian Science healing all her life, says: "I teach my children the spiritual concepts that my parents taught me as a child and their parents taught them, because they are meaningful to me. No matter how young you are, you have to realize that you are an individual and that you have to think for yourself. Your parents can only do so much for you. I hope that what my children are learning from me teaches them that they can be healers. That they can be instrumental in bringing about harmonious conditions and thus be an asset in the classroom or playground."

Elizabeth, who committed herself to practicing Christian Science spiritual healing in her daily life five years ago, says, "I teach my children to turn to God for healing because this method has worked for so many years. It has never let us down. There has never been a time when God has failed us. We've had so many healings. We've got so much peace in our lives and so much security. We just feel so loved by God."



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[Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures](#) by Mary Baker Eddy, is her textbook on Christian Science healing practice and her class textbook in teaching Christian Science healing.

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