



HANDBOOK ON PARENTING

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Admonitions for Parents

by Saint John Chrysostom

1. Having children is a matter of nature; but raising them and educating them in the virtues is a matter of mind and will.
2. By the duty of raising them I mean not only not allowing them to die of hunger, as people often limit their obligation toward their children to doing. For this, is needed neither books nor rubrics, for nature speaks of it quite loudly. I am speaking of the concern for educating children's hearts in virtues and piety—a sacred duty which cannot be transgressed without thereby becoming guilty of the children's murder, in a certain sense.
3. This obligation belongs to fathers as well as mothers. There are fathers who spare nothing in order to secure for their children teachers of pleasure and to pander to their cravings as wealthy heirs. But so that the children would be Christians, so that they would exercise themselves in piety, is of little need to them. O criminal blindness! It is this very crude inattention that is responsible for all the disorder that causes our society to groan. Let us suppose that you have acquired large property for them. However, if they do not know how to conduct themselves sensibly this property will not last long with them. It will be squandered; it will perish with its owners, and will be their most grievous inheritance.
4. Your children will always be sufficiently wealthy if they receive from you a good upbringing that is able to order their moral life and behavior. Thus, strive not to make them rich, but rather to make them pious masters of their passions, rich in virtues. Teach them not to think up illusory needs, reckoning their worth according to worldly standards. Attentively watch their deeds, their acquaintances and their attachments—and do not expect any mercy from God if you do not fulfill this duty.
5. If the Apostle commands us to take more care for others than for ourselves, and if we are guilty when we neglect their benefit, then is it not a much greater guilt when this concerns those who are so near to us? Was it not I, the Lord will say to us, Who gave place to these children in your family? Was it not I Who entrusted them to your care, making you masters, guardians and judges over them? I gave you complete authority over them; I placed all care for their upbringing in your hands. You will tell me that they did not want to bend their necks to the yoke, that they threw it off. But this should have been averted from the very beginning; you should have mastered their first impressions placed the reigns on them before they had the power to break away from them. You should have bent their young souls under the yoke of duty, accustomed them to it, educated them in accordance with it, bound the wound when it first opened. You should have uprooted the tares when they first began to sprout around the young plant, and not have waited until they put down deep roots, when the passions have become uncontrollable and untamable through gradual strengthening in their formation.
6. The wise Sirach says: Hast thou children? Instruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth (Sir. 7:25). But the Lord does not only prompt us with this command through the lips of His prophet; he even takes our side, supporting the fulfillment of this commandment with the fearsome punishment that awaits those children who do not submit to the authority of their parents: Every man who shall speak evil of his father or of his mother, let him die the death (Lev. 20:9). He punishes with death those who become guilty before you, and you look tepidly at these sins that they commit against the highest possible authority. They are rebelling against God Him self, transgressing His commandments, and you look at this without the least displeasure, without the slightest criticism of your children. What does He have to lose from their offense? Nothing. But you, why should you not fear for your own selves? For whoever abandons the Lord will never respect either his own father or himself.

7. Children who are submissive and faithful to God in their obedience to His law will have found an abundant source of happiness, even in this temporal life. A poor man with Christian morals inspires respect and love from others. Meanwhile, with an evil and depraved heart, all your riches will not save you from the displeasure and aversion of everyone around you.
8. The youth to whom you give a good upbringing will not only enjoy general respect, he will also become dearer to you yourselves! Your attachment to him will not be a mere natural attraction—it will be the fruit of his virtue. For this, during your old age, you will in turn receive from him the services of his filial love. He will be your support. For just as those who do not revere the Lord also have contempt for their own parents, those who revere God, the Father of all men, will have every respect for those who gave them life.
9. Let us suppose that you fulfill the commandment of the law in every other respect, but being unfaithful in this one commandment you will be severely punished. Listen to this proof taken from the history of one ancient people. You will immediately see to what terrible punishment those fathers subject themselves who neglect their children's upbringing. Among the Jews was one priest who was respected for his meek character. His name was Eli. This priest had two sons who had given themselves over to every vice. The father did not concern himself with this and paid little attention, or if their depravity, having reached the limit, forced him to reproach them, he did it without the necessary fervor and authority. He should have punished them severely, thrown them out of his presence taken strict measures in order to put a stop to the outrage. He did nothing of the sort. He limited himself to giving them a form of admonition: Nay, my Sons, for the report which I hear is not good; do not so (I Kings 2:24). Is this what he should have said? They offended the One to Whom they owe their existence, and he still accepts them as part of his family? His admonition was useless and vain. No, this demanded not an admonition, but a strong lesson, severe torments, a treatment as strong as the evil. He should have used fear to root their young hearts out of this blindness. An admonition! Eli's sons had no lack of these. O useless words! O criminal meekness by which they became victims! A war began, and the wretches became the spoils of their enemy. When their father learned of their misfortune, he fell to the ground and, smashing his head, died.
10. I have just told you that fathers who do not take care to give their children a Christian upbringing are murderers of their own children. Is it not true? Who should Eli blame for his son's death? Himself. True, the enemy's sword slew them, but the neglect of their false father directed the blow. Abandoned by heavenly help, they appeared naked against the arrows of the Philistines. The father destroyed himself and them. Meanwhile, we see the same thing before ourselves daily. How many parents there are who do not want to take upon themselves this labor of correcting their unsubmissive and unruly children! They are as if afraid to upset their children by reigning in with stern words the vicious tendencies to which they have submitted themselves. What is the outcome? Their disorder increases; their impunity leads them to criminal offenses; they are brought to trial; and the wretches die at the hands of the executioner. You refused your personal rights over them and committed them to the severity of civil punishment, and human justice wielded its harsh rights over them. You are afraid to humiliate them with some light punishment in your presence; but what horrible dishonor shall befall you when your son is no longer around, and the father, hounded everywhere by accusing glares, no longer dares to show himself anywhere.
11. Therefore I beg you to take care for the good upbringing of your children. First of all think of the salvation of their souls. God has placed you as the heads and teachers over your families. It is your duty to watch, and to watch continually after the behavior of your wife and children. Listen to St. Paul. If your wives, says he, want to learn anything, let them learn it from their husbands. Educate your children in the teaching and instructions of the Lord (cf. I Cor. 14:35, Eph. 6:4). Imitate Job, who continually looked after his

children and offered sacrifices for mercy towards any secret misdeeds they might have committed (Job 1:5). Imitate Abraham, who concerned himself less with the acquisition of riches than with the keeping of God's law by every member of his house, and about whom the Lord witnessed: For I know that he will order his sons, and his house after him, and they will keep the ways of the Lord, to do justice and judgment (Gen. 18:19). David, when he was near death, wanted to leave Solomon the surest inheritance; he called him to himself in order to repeat the following wise instructions: that the Lord may confirm his word which he spoke, saying, if thy children shall take heed to their way to walk before me in truth with all their heart, I promise thee, saying, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel (III Kings 2:4). These are the examples that we should follow during our lives and with our final breath!

12. If good fathers would strive to give their children a good upbringing, then we would need neither laws, judges, courts, nor punishments. Executioners exist because we have no morality.
13. We spare neither labors nor means in order to teach our children secular sciences, so that they can serve well the earthly authorities. Only the knowledge of the holy Faith, the service of the Heavenly King are a matter of indifference to us. We allow them to attend spectacles but we care little whether they go to Church and stand within it reverently. We demand an account from them of what they learned in their secular institutes—why do we not demand an account from them of what they heard in the Lord's house?
14. Having made the necessary exhortation to children, the Apostle addresses himself also to the fathers, saying: You fathers... bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4). Do you want your child to be obedient? Then from the beginning bring him up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Do not think that it is not necessary for a child to listen to the Scriptures; the first thing he will hear from them will be, Honor thy father and mother (Ex. 20:12), and immediately you will begin to reap your reward. Do not say, Bible is for monks; am I turning my child into a monk? No! It is not necessary for him to be a monk. Make him into a Christian! Why are you afraid of something so good? It is necessary for everyone to know Scriptural teachings, and this is especially true for children. Not knowing divine truths, they do know something of the pagan stories, learning from them about wondrous lives, about heroes in their sight, who served the passions and were afraid of death. Such an example is Achilles, inconsolably dying for his mistress; another who gives himself over to drunkenness, and on and on! Therefore your children need remedies for these things, in the retribution and teachings of the Lord.
15. We are so concerned with our children's schooling; if only we were equally zealous in bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord! And then we wonder why we reap such bitter fruit when we have raised our children to be insolent, licentious, impious, and vulgar. May this never hap pen; instead, let us heed the blessed Paul's admonition to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Let us give them a pattern to imitate; from their earliest years let us teach them to study the Bible. He repeats this over and over again, you say, we are sick of listening to it. Never will I stop doing my duty!
16. Why do you refuse to imitate the holy men and women of old? Tell me! Especially you mothers; think of Hannah's example; look at what she did. She brought Samuel, her only son, to the temple, when he was only an infant! Who among you would not rather have a son like Samuel than one who became king of the whole world ten thousand times over? But it is impossible, you say, for my son ever to become as great as he. Why is it impossible? Because you do not really want it; you will not entrust him to the One who is able to make him great. And who is that? God. Hannah commended Samuel into the hands of God. The high priest Eli had no real ability to form him, since he even failed to form his own children. It was the mothers faith and zeal that made everything possible. He was her first and only child. She did not know if she would ever have another, yet she never said, I will wait until he grows up; he should have a taste of worldly pleasures, during his childhood at least. No; she rejected all these thoughts, for she had only one object: how from the very beginning she could dedicate her hearts delight to God. Be ashamed, you men,

at the wisdom of this woman. She gave Samuel to God, and with God she left him, and thus her marriage was blessed more than ever, because her first concern was for spiritual things. She dedicated the first-fruits of her womb to God and obtained many more children in return. She saw Samuel honored even in this life. If men return honor for honor, will not God do much more? He gives so much even to those who do not honor Him at all! How long are we to be mere lumps of flesh? How long will we cling to the ground? Let everything take second place to our care for our children, our bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. If from the beginning we teach them to love true wisdom, they will have greater wealth and glory than riches can provide. If a child learns a trade, or is highly educated for a lucrative profession all this is nothing compared to the art of detachment from riches; if you want to make your child rich, teach him this. He is truly rich who does not desire great possessions or surround himself with wealth, but who requires nothing.

17. This is how to discipline and teach your child; this is the greatest of riches. Do not worry about giving him an influential reputation for worldly wisdom, but ponder deeply how you can teach him to think lightly of this life's passing glories; thus he will become truly renowned and glorious. Whether you are poor or rich, you can do this; these lessons are not learned from a skillful professor but from divine revelation. Do not ask how he can enjoy a long life here, but how he can enjoy an infinite and eternal life in the age to come. Give him the great things, not the little things. Do not strive to make him a clever orator, but teach him to love true wisdom. He will not suffer if he lacks clever words; but if he lacks wisdom, all the rhetoric in the world cannot help him. A pattern of life is what is needed, not empty speeches; character, not cleverness; deeds, not words. These things will secure the Kingdom and bestow Gods blessing. Do not sharpen his tongue but purify his soul. I do not mean that worldly learning is worthless and to be ignored, but it should not be an exclusive preoccupation.
18. Do not think that only monks need to learn the Bible; children about to go out into the world stand in greater need of Scriptural knowledge. A man who never travels by sea does not need to know how to equip a ship, or where to find a pilot or a crew, but a sailor has to know all these things. The same applies to the monk and the man of this world. The monk lives an untroubled life in a calm harbor, removed from every storm, while the worldly man is always sailing the ocean, battling innumerable tempests. Although he himself (the worldly man) may not have any need (of instruction), it may be necessary to him in case he must stop the mouths of others.
19. Whoever enjoys great respect in the present life needs such an education even more. If anyone should serve in the kings palace—there, are many Hellenic philosophers, people who are haughty over their temporary glory. There, everyone is puffed up and arrogant; and if anyone is not, he strives to become so. How would it be if your son should enter this company as the best possible doctor with his medical instruments, able to tame the arrogance of each one, approaching each one and discoursing, treating the sick body, applying the plaster of Scripture, disseminating wisdom-loving evidence?
20. With whom shall a monk speak? With the walls of his cell, or his blanket? With the desert or the bushes? With the hills or the trees?! Thus he does not need the same teaching, in spite of the fact that he is striving to perfect himself in it—not in order to teach others, but to teach himself. What about those people who live in this (worldly) life? They are in total need of this teaching; for the worldly man is presented with more causes of temptation than the monk. And if you please, know, that with such an education a man will be the most pleasant of men. All will begin to respect him when they see that he is not irascible and seeking after power. Know this, educate your children in the discipline and knowledge of the Lord. And if some one be poor? Let him remain poor. It will never be the worse for him if he does not serve among the courtiers; to the contrary he could become the object of wonder. For if the Hellenists—who are a dime a dozen, cynics—who are accepted by those who cost a dime a dozen, philosophers (meaning Greek philosophers) or rather, philosophers only in name, dressed up in mantles with flowing

hair, are able to put many to shame; cannot the true lover of wisdom do much more? If a false appearance alone, the mere shadow of philosophy can so exalt a man, what can be said of the love for true and enlightened wisdom? Will not everyone begin to respect such a man? Will they not entrust to him without reservation their houses, wives and children?

21. Tell me, which trees are best? Do we not prefer those that are inwardly strong and are not injured by rainstorms, or hail, or gusts of wind, or by any sort of harsh weather, but stand exposed to them all without fences or garden to protect them? He who truly loves wisdom is like this, and his riches we have already described. He has nothing yet has everything; he has everything, yet has nothing. A fence does not provide internal strength, nor is a wall a natural support; they provide only artificial protection. What is a strong body? Is it not one that is healthy, whether hungry or surfeited, cold or warm? Or is it something that is dependent upon restaurants, tailors, merchants, and physicians for health? The truly rich man, the true lover of wisdom, needs none of these things, and that is why the blessed Apostle admonishes us to bring our children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
22. Therefore wealth is a hindrance, because it leaves us unprepared for the hardships of life. So, let us raise our children in such a way that they can face any trouble, and not be surprised when difficulties come; let us bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Great will be the reward in store for us, for if artists who make statues and paint portraits of kings are held in high esteem, will not God bless ten thousand times more those who reveal and beautify His royal image (for man is the image of God)? When we teach our children to be good, to be gentle, to be forgiving (all these are attributes of God), to be generous, to love their fellow men, to regard this present age as nothing, we instill virtue in their souls, and reveal the image of God within them. This, then, is our task: to educate both ourselves and our children in godliness; otherwise what answer will we have before Christ's judgment-seat? If a man with unruly children is unworthy to be a bishop, how can he be worthy of the kingdom of heaven? What do you think? If we have an undisciplined wife, or unruly children, shall we not have to render an account for them? Yes, if this happens it is because we did not take strict measures as we should have.
23. Neglect of children is one of the greatest sins, and it is the highest degree of impiety. And so that I might not seem to draw an unfounded conclusion, I will demonstrate this with experience itself, so that you will know that even though we may have everything we need, and all is beautifully arranged, we will nevertheless be subjected to the most extreme punishment if we do not take care for the salvation of our children. You know the story of the high priest Eli, written in the Holy Scriptures. He was an aged, well-known priest, who governed the Jewish nation faultlessly for twenty years, living during a time that did not demand great strictness (in life). Nevertheless he could not justify himself, but to the contrary, perished horribly and disastrously because he did not concern himself enough with his son's behavior; and the guilt of his neglect, like a great fault, over shadowed all of Eli's qualities and good works. How then shall we be judged, who live in a time full of much more love of wisdom, but who do not have his virtues? We not only do not instruct our children ourselves, but even take revenge upon those who wish to do so, and treat our own children more cruelly than any barbarians. For the cruelty of the barbarians leads only to slavery, to the razing and captivity of one's homeland—in general it is only a physical misfortune. But you enslave the very soul and, binding it like some kind of captive, thus commit it to the evil and fierce demons and their passions. You do this and nothing else when you yourselves do not prompt your children in anything spiritual, nor let anyone else do so.
24. Let no one say to me that there are many besides Eli who neglect their children but have not endured anything like what Eli endured. No—many have, and many endure even a good deal more for that very sin. For what is the cause of untimely death? What is the cause of our serious and long illness and of our children's? What is the cause of losses, misfortunes, distress, the innumerable multitude of evils? Is it not because we do not try to correct our vicious children? The misfortune of the elder (Eli) is enough to prove

that this is not mere conjecture. But let me tell you yet another word of our wise fathers. Thinking of his children, he says this: Delight neither in ungodly sons. Though they multiply rejoice not in them, except the fear of the Lord be with them. Trust not thou in their life (Sir. 16:1-3). For you will moan with untimely grief and will unexpectedly hear of their destruction. Thus, many, as I have said, endured much the same; if some have escaped (punishment), they will not escape it forever. If they have escaped it here, then the destruction will be on their heads, for they will endure very cruel punishments when they leave this world.

25. We must not act irrationally because God no longer sends prophets and does not wreak such punishments as that of Eli. Now is not the time for prophets; besides, He does send them even now. How do we know? They have (it is said) Moses and the prophets (Lk. 16:29). It was said to them (who lived at the time of Moses and the prophets) and it is said to us; and God says it not only to Eli, but through him and his suffering to all who sin as he did. God is no respecter of persons, and if He destroyed those of a less sinful household, then He will not leave unpunished those who have committed more serious sins.
26. God Himself takes great care over the upbringing of children. That is why He placed such a natural attraction in parents toward their children—in order to put parents in inescapable necessity of caring for their children. Subsequently, He created laws concerning their care, and, establishing the feasts, commanded us to explain their meaning. He summed up the meaning of the Passover in this instruction: And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying, Therefore the Lord dealt thus with me, as I was going out of Egypt (Ex. 13:8). He does the same in the Law. For, telling of the first-born, He adds again: And if thy son should ask thee hereafter, saying, What is this? then thou shalt say to him, With a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of beast; therefore do I sacrifice every offspring that opens the womb. The males to the Lord, and every first—born of my sons I will redeem (Ex. 13:14-15). Through all of this He commands him to lead the children to the knowledge of God. Even to the children themselves He commands much with respect to the parents, rewarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient, thereby making them even more dear to their parents. Actually, when someone makes us lords over someone else, by this honor he places upon us the greatest obligation to care for him, so that this alone without anything else is able to convince us that the entire fate of this person is in our hands, and we will not lightly dare to injure the one who has been thus entrusted to us. When he also becomes even more wrathful and displeased with us for breaking this trust than the offended ones themselves, and becomes a stern punisher, he thereby inspires us even more to fulfill our obligation. This is what God has done. To these two He has added a third, natural obligation, and if you like, it is the first. Namely, it is that parents, having received the commandment to educate their children, would not disdain His commandment by which God has bound them by natural obligation. If this tie should be held in contempt by the children, He has protected it from being broken entirely by His own punishments and by the parents. Thus He has subjected children to their parents and inspired love in the parents for their children. But there is also a fourth method by which God has strongly and closely bound us with them. He not only punishes those children who work evil against their parents but He also rewards the good ones. He does the same with parents, cruelly punishing those who neglect their children, while granting honor and praise to those who care. Thus did He punish the elder (Eli), who was worthy of praise in every other respect, but rewarded the patriarch Abraham for his care no less than for other virtues. For, speaking of those many and great gifts that He promised to Abraham, God names precisely this virtue as His reason for such a promise: For I know that he will order his sons, and his house after him, and they will keep the ways of the Lord, to do justice and judgment (Gen. 18:19).
27. I have said this so that you would know that God will not be condescending to those who are neglectful of those for whom He Himself takes such care. For it is impossible that one and the same God should do so much to save these (children), yet pay no attention when their own parents disdain them. He will not ignore this, but to the contrary, He will all the more fearfully display His displeasure and wrath, as it

actually happens. Therefore the blessed Paul insistently convinces us, saying: Ye fathers... bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). If we [4] are obligated to tirelessly care for their souls, as they that must give account (Heb. 13:17), so much more is the father (obligated to do it), who gave birth to the son, brought him up and lives constantly with him. For just as he can find no excuse for his own sins, he cannot find one for his children's misdeeds. The blessed Paul showed this same thing. Describing how those who have accepted authority over others should be, he requires care for their own children over all other requirements, so that we have no excuse for our children's unruliness (I Tim. 3,4, 5). And this is perfectly just! If evil in people is from nature, then everyone would have a right to excuse himself; but as we ourselves are impious or honorable according to our own will, then what good excuse could one present who has allowed his son, whom he loves more than anything, to come to impiety and dishonor? That he did not want to make him honorable? But not one father will say that nature itself insistently and incessantly inspires him toward this. Or that he was not able to do it? But this also cannot be said; for everything—that he took his son under his protection at a tender age, and that he alone primarily has been given authority over him, and that he constantly had him around—all of this makes the education of his son very easy and convenient. It means that the children's unruliness comes from nothing other than the insane attachment of the fathers to earthly cares. Paying attention only to earthly cares, and counting nothing to be more important, they involuntarily begin to neglect the souls of their children. I will say of these fathers (and let no one consider these words to be born of anger), that they are even worse than child-killers. The one only sunders the body from the soul, but the other casts them both into the fires of gehenna. Death is inevitable according to the natural order, but the second fate could have been avoided if the fathers neglect had not led up to it. Physical death can be ended instantly by the resurrection when it comes, but no reward awaits the lost soul; it will receive not resurrection, but will have to suffer eternally. This means that we not unjustly call those fathers worse than child-killers. It is not so cruel to sharpen the sword, take it in the right hand and plunge it into the little child's heart, as it is to destroy and degrade the soul, for there is nothing equal to the soul.

28. If the evil were only limited to the parents not giving their children any beneficial counsel, then the evil would not be so great. But you, parents, induce your children to do the opposite. Actually, when fathers convince their children to study sciences, you can hear in the course of their conversation none other than the following words: So-and-so, they say, is a low-born man of meager means, who perfected himself in eloquent speech and received a very high position, acquired a large property, took a rich wife, built a marvelous house, and has become fearsome and famous to all. Another says: So-and-so learned Latin, shines in the royal court and wields great influence there. Yet another points to someone else, and they all speak only of those who are glorified on earth. But of those who are glorified in heaven no one recounts; and even if one should recount them, he would be watched as a man who disturbs everything. Thus, when you instill this in your children from an early age, you teach them nothing other than the basis for all the vices, planting in them the two most savage passions—that is, love of money, and the even more blameworthy passion of vainglory. Each of these passions by itself can disorder everything in the child; but when they are both rooted together in the tender soul of a youth, then like two united stormy fronts, they destroy everything good and produce so many thorns, sand and dust that they make the soul fruitless and incapable of anything good. How do you think your son can escape the devils snares when he is young—living in Egypt, or among the devils army, not hearing a beneficial word from anyone, and seeing that everyone, especially his parents and educators, are leading him to the opposite? How could he do it? With the help of your admonitions? But you suggest the opposite to him and, not allowing him to think about love of wisdom even in his sleep, to the contrary constantly occupy him with the present life and its gain, and only assist him in his drowning. Or does it happen by itself? Absolutely not; a youth does not have the strength by himself to perfect himself in the virtues, and if something good is born in him, then this good is more likely to perish than grow under the torrent of your words. For just as the body cannot live long if it feeds on harmful food, so also the soul, when it receives such suggestions, cannot

think about something good and great; no, being disturbed and weakened as if by some infection, it will finally inevitably go down to gehenna and perish.

29. For you, as though you were intentionally destroying your children, order them to do exactly those things which make it impossible to be saved. Look first of all (at what is written). Woe, it is said, unto you that laugh (Lk. 6:25), but you give your children a multitude of causes for laughter. Woe unto you that are rich (Lk. 6:24), but it is your chief concern that they get rich. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you (Lk. 6:26), but you often spend all your living for the sake of human glory. Again, he who maligns his brother is in danger of hellfire (Mt. 5:22), but you consider anyone who silently bears offensive words from others to be weak and cowardly. Christ commands us to avoid fights and arguments, but you are constantly occupying your children with these evil affairs. He commanded in many circumstances to pluck out your eye if it leads to evil (cf. Mt. 5:29), but you especially befriend those who can give you money, even though they may be teaching extreme depravity. He commanded not to put away ones wife unless it be for adultery (cf. Mt. 5:32), but when you see that money can be had, you order that this commandment be disdained. He absolutely forbade oaths (cf. Mt. 5:34), but you even laugh when you see that this ban is observed. He that loveth his life, the Lord said, shall lose it, (Jn. 12:25), but you do all you can to draw children into this love. If ye forgive not men their trespasses He says, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses (Mt. 6:15), but you even criticize your children when they do not want to take revenge upon their offenders, and try to bring them to a state where they will want to do this. Christ said that if you do anything out of vainglory—fasting, praying, or almsgiving—it is all done to no effect (cf. Mt. 6:1), but you only try to arrange that your children receive praise. But why enumerate everything? If these vices already named are able not just collectively but even separately to prepare a thousand gehennas, and you, having gathered them together and laid this unbearably heavy bundle of sins on your children, send them with it to the lake of fire; how can they save themselves, carrying so much food for the fire?
30. It is bad enough that you prompt your children to do what is contrary to Christ's commandments, but you also mask them in beneficent-sounding names. You call the constant attendance of horse races and theaters social life, the possession of wealth freedom, audacity openness, dissipation humanitarianism, unfairness manliness. Then, as if this deceit were not enough, you call virtues by unattractive names: modesty is lack of education, meekness is cowardice, fairness is weakness, humility is slavishness, angerlessness is powerlessness. It is as if you are afraid that your child might hear the true name of these virtues and vices and therefore avoid the vices like the plague. For calling the vices by their real names does not a little to inspire aversion for them. I know many people who came to their senses this way, and, hearing these offensive names, became more modest in life. But you have deprived your children of this means of correction. And what is worse, you prompt them to do evil not only by your words but by your deeds—you build magnificent homes, buy expensive land, surround them with all manner of glitter, and by all of this, as with some sort of horrid cloud, darken their souls. How can I be convinced that they can possibly be saved when I see that you incline them toward the very things that Christ singled out as leading to inevitable destruction; when I see that you disdain their souls as something unnecessary, but concern your self with what is truly extravagant as though it were something necessary and important? You do everything in order to provide your son with a servant, horse and the best clothing; but you do not even want to think about making him good himself. No, having stretched yourself in cares over rocks and trees, there is not the slightest portion of your care left for souls. You do everything to make sure that there is a lovely statue and golden roof on your house, but that the most precious of all sculptures—the soul—might be golden, you take no thought at all.
31. Furthermore, wishing to acquaint our children with sciences we not only remove any conflicting teachings, but give them everything that will support it: we thrust mentors and teachers upon them, give them financial support, free them from all other occupations; and even more than trainers at Olympic

games, we scream at them about poverty that results from not studying and wealth from studying. We ourselves and through others do and say everything just to lead them to finishing their studies; and at that, we do not always succeed. But do modest manners and diligence over honorable behavior, in our opinion, come by themselves, regardless of all the many obstacles? What can be worse than this insanity—spending so much time and energy on what is easy as though it were impossible to succeed in it otherwise, while what is infinitely more difficult seems to us as something empty and insignificant that will come to us even as we sleep? For exercise of the soul in the pious life is so many times more difficult than the study of sciences, so much harder to fulfill than it is possible to say; it is the difference between action and words.

32. But why, you say, do our children need such wisdom and strict behavior? This is the very thing that is so all-destructive—that such an important matter, the support of our life, is considered extravagant and unnecessary. Having seen your son sick in body, no one would ask why he needs perfect and strong health. To the contrary you would take every measure to return his body to a good condition, so that the illness would not return. But when children have sick souls, they say that they need no treatment; and after such words they dare to call themselves fathers! What? you say, Shall we only seek after wisdom and let everything earthly fall apart? No, most respected ones, it is not love of wisdom but the lack of it that has destroyed and disrupted everything. For who, tell me, disrupts the present condition of things—those who live continently and modestly, or those who invent new and unlawful means of delighting themselves? Those who only try to grab other peoples things for themselves, or those who are content with what they have? Those who love mankind, who are meek and do not seek honor, or those who demand honor from their brothers above all obligation, and cause a thousand annoyances for those who do not rise when they enter, do not say the first greeting, do not bow before them, or do not agree with them? Those who love to submit, or those who seek power and positions of authority, and for this are ready to do and endure anything? Those who consider themselves better than everyone, and therefore think that they may say and do anything or those who consider themselves to be last, and thereby tame their unreasonable self-willed passions? Those who support harlots and defile the marriage beds of others, or those who are continent even with their own wives? Are not the first in human society those who are like tumors on the body and lashing winds over the sea, who with their lack of restraint drown even those who if left alone might have saved themselves? And are not the last those who are like bright lamps amidst thick darkness, calling the shipwrecked to their safety, and, having lit on high in the distance the lamp of wisdom, thus lead those who desire it into the peaceful harbor? Is it not those others who cause disturbances, wars and fights, and destruction of the cities, and captivity, and slavery, and loss of freedom, and murder, and innumerable catastrophes in life—catastrophes not only wrought on people by people, but also everything sent from heaven, for example: droughts, floods, earthquakes, inundation of cities, famines, pestilences, and everything that is sent to us from there? They debase the social order and destroy the general good; they bring countless misfortunes on others, obfuscate people who seek peace, draw them in and then tear them apart from all directions. Courts and laws, sentences and all manner of punishment were created for these people.
33. If we wanted to educate our children from the earliest age and give them to those who wished to educate them, our children would of course be able to stand in the very forefront of battle; because God would not disdain such fervency and zeal, but would stretch out His hand to complete the sculpture. When His hand acts, it is impossible not to succeed, or rather, it is impossible not to reach the highest degree of brilliance and glory, if only we fulfilled what depends upon us. If women have been able to incline God's help in the upbringing of children, how much more so could we do the same if we so wanted. In order not to over-stretch this homily, I shall pass over in silence all other women and cite only one, though I could have cited many.

34. There was a Jewess named Hannah. This Hannah gave birth to a son and no longer hoped to have another, because she was barely able to conceive this one after many tears due to her barrenness. Although her rival often chided her over her barrenness, she did not do as you do, but having received the child she kept him only as long as she needed to feed him milk. As soon as he no longer needed this food, she took him and immediately dedicated him to God, not asking that he ever return to his family's house, but leaving him to live always in the temple of God. And when out of maternal feeling she wished to see him she did not call the child to herself but came herself with the father to him, treating him carefully, like a sacrifice to God. This is why the boy became so valorous and great that when God turned His face from the Jewish people for its extreme impiety and pronounced no prophecies and sent no visions, this boy again attracted God with his virtue and begged Him to grant the Jews what they formerly had—to renew the prophecy that had ceased. He did this when he was not yet a grown man, but a little child. And the word of the Lord, says the Scripture, was precious in those days, there was no distinct vision (I Kings 3:1); meanwhile, God often revealed His will to Samuel.
35. That is how beneficial it is to always give your acquisitions to God, and to refuse not only money and things, but even your own children. For if this has been commanded of us with respect to our souls (cf. Mt. 10:37), how much the more to everything else? The Patriarch Abraham also did this, or rather, he did much more than this, and that is why he received a son with great glory. We especially have our children with us when we have given them to the Lord. For He will preserve them much better than we can because He cares more for them. Have you not seen how it happens in the homes of rich people? There the low-born servants who live with their fathers are not so respected or powerful as those whom the master has taken from the parents, appointed to his service and made guardians of treasures, giving them great good will and freedom. If men are so kind and well-disposed toward their servants, much more so will be the Unlimited Goodness, that is, God.
36. Let us allow our children to serve God, leading them not only to the temple, like Samuel, but to the very heavens to serve together with the Angels and Archangels. For anyone can see that one who dedicates himself to love of wisdom really will be serving with the Angels. Furthermore, such children will be representing with great boldness not only themselves, but us also. For if some children have received help from God for their fathers sake, so much more can fathers receive help for their children's sake; because in the first case the right to help comes only from nature, but in the second case it comes also from upbringing, which is much more important than nature.
37. I will prove both to you from Divine Scripture. Hezekiah, a virtuous and pious king but having no boldness according to his own deeds to withstand the great danger which threatened him, was saved by God for the sake of his father's virtue, as God Himself said: And I will defend this city as with a shield, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake (IV Kings 19:34). Paul in his epistle to Timothy said about parents: she (the woman) shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety (I Tim. 2:15). The Scripture praises Job because he was true, blameless, righteous and godly, abstaining from everything evil (Job 1:1), as well as for his care for his children (Job 1:5). This care consisted not in the collection of wealth for them, and not in attempts to make them glorious and famous, but in what? Listen to what the Scripture says: And when the days of the banquet were completed, Job sent and purified them, having risen up in the morning, and offered sacrifices for them, according to their number, and one calf for a sin-offering for their souls: for Job said, lest peradventure my sons have thought evil in their minds against God. Thus then Job did continually (Job 1:5). What justification will we have if we behave with such neglect? For if those who lived before the time of grace and the law, who never received any teachings on the upbringing of children, had such great care for their children as to tremble even over their secret sins—who will justify us, who live during the time of grace, have so many teachers, so many examples and instructions, but meanwhile not only do not fear for their

secret sins, but even ignore the obvious sins; and not only do we ourselves ignore them, but even cast out those who do not? And Abraham, as I said before, stood out for this virtue more than for his many other virtues.

38. Thus, having so many examples, let us prepare pious servants and slaves for God. If those who prepare competitive fighters for cities, or warriors for the king, are vouchsafed great honor, then what gift shall we receive if we prepare for God such valorous and great men, or rather, angels? We will do everything we can in order to leave them the riches of piety which abide permanently accompany us even after death and can bring great benefit not only here, but there (in the other world). Worldly riches do not accompany people into eternity, and they can even perish here before their owners, often even destroying them. But the riches of piety are permanent in this and the next life, and preserve those who acquire them in great safety. This is really so: whoever prefers the earthly over the spiritual will lose both, but whoever longs for the spiritual and heavenly will probably also receive the earthly. These are not my words, but those of the Lord Himself, Who promises to give us this good: seek, He says, first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you (Mt. 6:33). What can compare with this honor? Concern yourself, He says, with the spiritual, and leave everything else to Me. A loving father takes all cares of the household upon himself, the governing of servants and everything else, but advises the son to concern himself with love of wisdom. So does God. Let us be obedient and begin to seek the kingdom of God; then we shall see everywhere reverent children, and we ourselves shall be glorified with them, and delight also in present good things. Only you must love the future, heavenly things. If you are obedient, you shall receive a great reward; but if you are contrary and disobedient you will endure terrible punishments. For we cannot justify ourselves by saying: No one taught us this.
39. Untamed youth has need of many instructors and teachers, guides, observers and educators. Only with this effort can it be reined in. An unbroken horse, an untamed beast—that is youth. Therefore, if we place limits from an early age we will not need to use such great force; to the contrary, habit will become law. We will not allow them to do what is pleasant but harmful; we will not try to please them because they are children, for this brings more harm than anything to youth. But most of all we will preserve chastity. We should concern ourselves with this more than anything else, and pay the most attention to this. We will take wives for them early, so that they would unite themselves to their brides with pure and incorrupt bodies. This kind of love is especially ardent. Whoever was chaste before marriage is more likely to remain so after marriage. But those who learned before marriage to fornicate will do the same after marriage. For it is written in the Scriptures: All bread is sweet to a whoremonger (Sir. 23:17). That is why a crown is placed on the head—as a sign of victory, that they are entering the bridal chamber unvanquished, unconquered by lust. If someone prone to love of pleasure has given himself to harlots, then what reason does he have for wearing a crown on his head, since he has been vanquished? We will instill this in them, teach it to them and threaten them in various ways.
40. We have been given an important security—children. Therefore we shall take care of them, and take every precaution that the evil one may not steal them from us. Meanwhile, we do everything backward. We make every effort to insure that our fields be in good hands. We seek out the most experienced mule drivers and overseers, but we take no such precautions for what is the most precious to us and through which all other good things come, namely, that we might entrust our son to a man that would preserve his chastity. We take care to provide him with property, but take no care for him himself. Do you see what insanity has taken control of us! First of all educate your son's soul, and he will acquire possessions later. If his soul is bad he will not receive the slightest benefit from money. And vice versa, if he has been given the proper upbringing, then poverty will not harm him in the least. Do you want to leave him wealthy? Teach him to be good. For children who have not received the proper upbringing poverty is better than wealth; it will keep them even against their will within the bounds of virtue. However, wealth, even for

one who does not wish it, does not allow one to live a chaste life, but lures him into a countless multitude of crimes.

41. You, mothers, look after your daughters. This should not be difficult for you. Watch that they sit at home. First of all teach them to be pious, modest, disdain money, and not worrying too much about fancy dress. Give them thus to marriage. If you raise your daughter this way, you will save not only her, but the husband who takes her; and not only her husband, but the children; and not only the children, but the grandchildren. If the root is good the branches will spread out more beautifully, and you will receive your reward for this. Therefore let us do everything as though we are caring for the good not of one soul alone, but of many through the one. For at the time of marriage, they (daughters) should go forth from their father's houses as fighters from the place of competition; that is, they should know precisely the entire science, by which they might, like a leaven, raise all the ingredients to the increase of them.
42. Again, sons should also be so modest that they might be recognized by their good morals and chastity, and might earn great praise from men and from God. Let them learn to refrain themselves from extravagant possessions, to be thrifty and tenderly loving; let them learn to submit to authority. For they can in this way obtain a great reward for their parents. Then everything will be directed towards the glory of God and our salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be glory, dominion and honor now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Children and Television

by Novice Joseph

On any given night, tens of millions of Americans sit hypnotized by some kind of electronic device: stereos, television, or radios. Almost every school-aged child in the United States hungers for and receives his or her "media fix" on a daily basis. With the introduction of "Beta-Max" and cable TV into the American home, the future of Orthodox Christian family life and culture seems doomed.

The Effects of TV

Just what are the dooming effects of electronic entertainment (primarily television) on the minds and, more importantly, the souls of young Orthodox Christians? Let me suggest five crucial effects:

1. From questioning, curious, family-centered, book-and-art loving five-year-olds, most American children have, by the age of eleven, lost their ability to question their environment. One cannot ask a television for an answer. And schools do precious little, if anything, to promote curiosity or imagination. The television first hypnotizes, and then numbs, the imaginative capabilities of the young person. The young student, therefore, loses interest in books which approach life with any more complexity than that offered on TV (if, indeed, he reads at all). Creative writing, diaries, letter writing and the ability to discuss any topic for more than a few minutes -all of these diminish as the electronic device takes over.
2. By the age of ten, school children usually exhibit changes in speech patterns, as a result of watching TV. Either they become so passive that their verbal expressions are reduced to the minimum, or their speech—especially when describing events—increases in speed and becomes confused. Almost every parent has seen this phenomenon at one time or another. ("And then..., and then.... and then ") This is due in major part to the absorption of rapid-fire television language, where silence is non-existent and where a change in subjects is constant. By age eleven, having watched 4,000 hours of television, the normal American child has taken the majority of his English lessons from the TV screen, and not from school teachers or books. And there are few full paragraphs spoken on TV, almost no poetry, and no descriptive materials. Is it any wonder that the average eighteen-year-old American can hardly read or write?
3. Mythological television characters replace parents, relatives, the Saints, and Christ as role models. A normal American fourteen-year-old girl talks with her mother (in terms of actually discussing a subject in an intelligible way and in a sensible context) only about four minutes a week! Listen to your family's dinner conversations. Can they compete with hours of TV? Or for that matter, what do Church services mean to your children in terms of the thousands of hypnotic, mindless hours before the television? As family communication decreases, television watching increases. And as the TV devours more and more hours in young children's lives, almost nothing can compete with it for attention.
4. Creative silence, from which stem our relationships with God, the earth, and even our neighbors, is subconsciously discouraged by the ever-babbling television, radio, or stereo. Children and adults become increasingly "rattled" in the face of extended silence. Children learn that it is simply not fun to be silent. Prayer, of course, becomes boring. Church is unbearable. Quiet contemplation is unthinkable.
5. The major issues of life are twisted and distorted by the media, which are primarily interested in creating spiritless consumers, rather than spiritual producers. Love, war, death, prejudice, the world of work, history, the future, and, most importantly, God and the fate of the human soul—all of these issues are either twisted, distorted, or ignored. Children—and adults—do not view television in context. For

example, during the "Christmas Season" there may be, on any given night, a full length movie on the life of Christ, an inane situation comedy, and some show filled with mindless violence, half-sketched characters, and an infantile plot. The young child has no context in which to put the two shows, subconsciously admiring the criminal who evades the police as much as, or more than, Christ hanging on the Cross. The whole TV schedule is filled with a mixture of history, culture, and junk -with junk predominating at ninety percent of the material. A child equates it all: The Holocaust, Macbeth, the life of Christ, and "Magnum, P.I." Having no historical, cultural, or spiritual values, the good and the bad are swallowed up together, the good more than likely forgotten three days later.

What Can We Do?

What can we as Orthodox Christians do in the face of such an electronic onslaught? How can we compete with Hollywood and the mindless materialistic society that surrounds us?

Schools, unfortunately, offer very little in terms of strengthening the Orthodox family, teaching cultural, historical, and literary skills, and in imparting spiritual and moral guidance to our young. Indeed, a young child in America is lucky to have one teacher in twenty who is capable of preparing the child for an active, productive Orthodox life. Most teachers are television-trained non-readers. They are materialists in their approach to society. And one is more than likely to find that teachers, if they have even heard of the Orthodox Church, are opposed to the Orthodox form of child-rearing.

The battle of the mind versus the media is one which must ultimately be waged in the home and in the Church. The relationship between our society and Orthodox culture is, in many ways, far more dangerous than the relationship which existed between pagan Rome and the Early Church. In pagan Rome, Christians gave up their bodies to society, but retained and elevated their souls. Modern society wants both body and soul! The task before the family and before the Church, therefore, is no small one. Nor will the battle be won by those who are weak or compromising.

There are some practical strategies that we can use in defeating the deleterious effects of television on the development of our Orthodox children. Young children in America are introduced to society, as we previously noted, by means of television and by means of the heroes and champions promoted by the media figures who are anything but inspiring and who almost always violate the true Christian view of man. If there are any non-media figures in their list of heroes and champions, these more often than not come by way of coloring books, fairy tales, and sometimes inane school books, these latter sources themselves often influenced by media personalities and the media "mind-set."

In this process of development, at least for Orthodox children, Church and prayer play some role. But by the time that the child reaches eight years old, the effect of the media bombardment is such that the Church and prayer rank almost last in his priorities. Any parish Priest can verify this fact. And the reason for this, again, is that there is no reinforcement for religious belief in the media-created and media-dominated world in which the child operates. What one must do is substitute television and normal reading with activities that are conducive to good Orthodox development. Before the age of eight, the following activities should be seriously considered by every Orthodox parent. They are activities that help to form the soul and to create a world-view that is compatible with that which one encounters in Church and which promotes prayerful introspection (of which children are really quite capable).

1. Instead of art by way of infantile coloring books and school projects, which tend to treat children as though they were artistic morons, teach your child to draw and to paint Icons. Start with teaching the child to trace Icons. In almost every town in America there are public libraries with large Icon books or with loan systems through which such books can be ordered. Start with just the face of Christ, the

Theotokos, and the Saints, then move on to other parts of the Icon. In this, exercise, you should teach the child to begin with a prayer, to sketch a cross at the top of the paper on which he is working, and to go without an afternoon snack or evening dessert, so that the child will learn something about the sacred nature of iconography. One should stress to the child that, the more effort he puts forth in prayerfully sketching holy figures, the more that God will reward that effort with a good product. This, too, helps the child to understand better the mystical nature of an Icon.

In order to teach your child perspective and drawing from nature, have him trace, draw, and paint scenes from nature by the great masters of western and oriental painting. In this way he will understand the diversity in perspective and learn to appreciate other cultures. Chinese and Japanese painters, moreover, are quite skilled in portraying landscapes and animals, which children especially love at a young age. Drawing will thus acquire the same importance that printing did, when your child first printed his name. These early skills will help to prepare the child for later skills in painting and, most importantly, will have helped him to learn to see something which the media can never do. We might also stress that, in approaching secular art as something separate from iconography, the child intuitively learns that iconography is not an art form as such, but a spiritual skill which is tied to spiritual vision.

2. Instead of reading the usual children's material (fairy tales and the incredibly far-fetched literature available in the public school system), read to your children each night from the lives of the Saints, from the life of Christ, and from the Old and New Testaments, weaving the Icons that the child is working on into the stories. In fact, there are some texts of the Bible illustrated with Orthodox Icons, which is an excellent way to reach children with verbal and pictorial images at the same time.
Many children under eight years of age are terribly afraid of the dark and of death. They think, indeed, about metaphysical as well as physical matters—albeit in a somewhat crude way. The lives of Saints especially give the child a healthy view of the interaction of the Physical and metaphysical, helping him to overcome his fears. The questions which the children will have, after reading the lives of the Saints, will astound you in their directness and force. Both the child and the parent will thus grow spiritually.
3. If your child has a vivid dream or some striking experience, have him tell it to you and tape record it. If you do this, and then let the child go back and write about the experience after a few weeks, while listening to the tape, he will be able to see how his emotions change over time, how time changes our perceptions of events, and how we naturally forget much. It will also teach your child to read and to write better. Ask the child, in these writing exercises, to keep a word bank. What words cause him to smile? To frown? To be happy? To think about God? Your child will thus make associations between words and the mental world—something that television will never allow him to do.
4. Attend Church services on Saturday night and on Sunday morning. It is important for your child to be away from the "prime-time" television shows, which tend to concentrate their perverting messages into inane and harmful "features." The Orthodox Church's cycle of services gives you an opportunity to do just this, by always attending both Vespers and Matins and Liturgy. These services will help the child to understand that God belongs to the night and the day (thus helping him overcome his fear of the night), that God is not just someone whom we remember on Sunday morning, and that the Church is for every season, day, and time. The more that your child is in Church, the more that what he has learned about Icons and the holy heroes and champions about whom he has read will impress him.
5. Use the library extensively. There is no excuse for anyone in America to claim that he cannot find materials to help instruct his children. Even tiny towns have excellent libraries. You can even use tapes and records available through the library to introduce a child to classical music and the like. All of this will distract him from America's notorious "idiot box," the television. It will also provide him with an alternative to the sterile and sometimes stupid books that the common child finds at school.

6. Your children should know the nature of hard work and of physical exercise. However old-fashioned it may sound, hard work builds character. If anyone doubts this, simply think about children who do not work. They become hopelessly incapacitated. As well, exercise helps keep the body alert, which in turns helps keep the mind alert, which in turn helps keep the soul watchful.
7. Stress fasting and good eating habits. One of the most pernicious parts of television is that it exposes children to foods full of chemicals and sugar, the result being poor physical and mental health. Teach your children to fast each Wednesday and Friday and to eat good foods. As a result, their minds will be healthier and they will be less attracted to media idiocy. One way that the media are able to keep their control over the mind is by weakening it, by forming poor eating habits through commercials.

If these steps (and others that the reader may come up with on his own) are followed, by the time your child reaches the "magic" age of eight, he will be able to confront the temptations and perversions of society and the values which are taught in a media age. He will have an Orthodox outlook and an Orthodox way of approaching the trials of the world. His moral life, his spiritual life, and his personal life will be formed in an atmosphere that, while at odds with the world, will nonetheless feel familiar to him. How this attitude is maintained through the teenage years will be the subject of our last comments on children and television.

Brother Joseph was formerly an elementary school teacher and high school physical education instructor. He has worked extensively with underprivileged children in Chicago and San Francisco, and with Indian and Eskimo children in the Alaska public school system.

From Orthodox Tradition, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 14-16, and Nos. 4&5, pp. 19-22.

Offend Not These Little Ones: On Toys and Children

by *Rassaphore-monk Hilarion*

Everything that can corrupt in example or depictions be put away. It is well known how powerfully corrupt images act upon the soul no matter in what form they might touch it. —Theophan the Recluse, The Path of Salvation

Statistics tell us that 80% of all toys are sold in the period leading up to Christmas. The amount of money involved is immense. In the last three months of 1985, one of the major toy manufacturers, Mattel, spent \$40 million on advertising alone. [1] By 1985, it was estimated that \$842 million was being spent annually by parents on war toys, [2] which, although now the most popular type of toy, still only represent one of many different kinds of toys available. Needless to say, profits, too, are enormous and where there is a potential for high profits there one will find the most sophisticated methods of marketing and advertising employed. And who are the targets of this marketing and advertising? Certainly not parents! At this very moment advertising campaigns are underway to make profits from the sale of toys during the Christmas season of 1989, the largest ever. Every parent will, to a greater or lesser degree, be affected by these campaigns. What should our response be? As Orthodox Christians, how should we view the question of toys in general? We will try in the following article to give some suggestions.

Anyone who thinks about the question of childrens' toys will sooner or later come up against broader questions involving the up-bringing of children in general, and in particular the role of the parents themselves in this process. What is clear is that the question of toys cannot be looked at in isolation. On the one hand, how a child plays is ultimately bound up with his Christian spiritual formation, and on the other hand, the forces behind the marketing of toys are exploiting the dark and hidden areas in the child's mind, which we as Christians understand to be the domain of our fallen nature.

The responsibility of parents begins at infancy. Bishop Theophan the Recluse, in a work that should be carefully studied by every parent and which has been translated into English under the title of *The Path of Salvation*, speaks very clearly about the environment parents must create if they wish to guide their children toward the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Theophan says:

Through Baptism, the seed of the life in Christ is placed in the infant and exists in him; but it is as though it did not exist. Spiritual life, conceived by the grace of Baptism in the infant, becomes the property of the man and is manifest in its complete form in accordance not only with grace, but also with the character of the rational creature from the time when he, coming to awareness by his own free will, dedicates himself to God and appropriates to himself the power of grace which is in him already by receiving it with desire, joy, and gratitude. Up to this time also the true Christian life is active in him, but it is as if without his knowledge; it acts in him, but it is as if it were not yet his own. But from the minute of his awareness and choosing it becomes his own, not by grace only but also by freedom.

St. Diadoch, explaining the power of Baptism, says that before Baptism sin dwells in the heart and grace acts from outside, but after baptism, grace settles in the heart and sin attracts us from outside. [3]

Because of the more or less prolonged interval between Baptism and the conscious dedication of oneself to God, the beginning of Christian moral life is lengthened into an indefinite period during which the child matures and is formed as a Christian in the Holy Church in the midst of other Christians, as previously he had been formed bodily in the womb of his mother.

After Baptism, parents and sponsors must lead the infant into a gradual awareness of the grace-given powers within him, and further to a joyful acceptance of the obligation and way of life which they demand. Then, when the child's powers begin to awaken, one after another, parents and those who are responsible for raising children

must double their vigilance, because, although the longing for God will grow and increase, at the same time the sin which dwells in him will also not sleep. The inevitable consequence of this for the child is the commencement of an inward warfare. At the same time, parents must also engage in this battle with the sin that dwells within the child.

It is precisely at this point that unscrupulous interests enter the conflict. They have well analyzed the vulnerability of children at this point in their lives and have been quick to exploit the failures of parents, confused by the disintegration of Christian ideals in our society and perplexed by the latest trend in "child psychology," and often themselves the products of an anarchic childhood. Add to this the advent of television and the phenomenon of families where both parents work all day pursuing full time careers, and for whom the presence in the home of other members of the extended family is regarded as an intolerable imposition, and we have the root cause of the current attack on the innocence of childhood. The almost universal result of this state of affairs is that the television has filled the gap left by the parents. It is into this gap, through the agency of television, that the influences so injurious to the Christian upbringing of children have infiltrated; through this agency that unscrupulous interests are moving the minds of children with the express purpose of using them in the commercial exploitation of their parents.

This situation is the front line in the warfare which the parents must wage with the sin that dwells within the child. Developing senses furnish material for the child's awakening imagination, yet the imagination, although a gift from God, can be influenced and perfected by outside forces. More and more the influence is coming from television. Preschoolers spend more time watching television than it takes to get a college degree. By the time of graduation from high school, the average child will have spent approximately 11,000 hours at school and 22,000 hours in front of the television! [4] Sleeping is the only activity in which children now spend more time than watching television.

The nexus between toys and television is very strong. Up until recently, the three major networks, NBC, ABC, and CBS, did not air programs (primarily cartoons) created by toy companies because they recognized them for what they are—extended commercials designed to sell toys and not to entertain children. However, it is the content of these cartoons which is even more alarming. They often contain subtle, sexual overtones, which many claim are harmless. Women, for instance, often wear a minimum amount of clothing suggestively arranged over exaggerated physical attributes. Men too are frequently exhibited in the same way—totally remote of even the most remote vestiges of modesty. The story lines of many cartoons have their origins in humanism (a religion which teaches that man is his own god and man is the measure of all things) and/or Eastern religions, most often Zen Buddhism and Hinduism. Occult and satanic symbolism is ubiquitous. The toys that these "commercials" are intended to sell often come with little comic books which are laden with the same thinly veiled sensuality, occult themes, and satanic symbolism.

In many cases there is no problem with the toy itself, the danger lies in the occult and the often violent images connected with it, which are conveyed to the child via television cartoons, and now also movies. The child "knows" how to play with the toy because he knows its abilities and characteristics, as seen on television. He no longer has to use his imagination to bring the toy to life. This has already been done by the cartoon. The child will visualize the same situation he has just watched. If it is loaded with violence or occult symbolism or practices, then the more he uses these things in his play, the more the occult and the violent will become part of his life. At a simply practical level, this spoon-feeding of images inhibits the development of a child's imagination, because under normal circumstances a child would project his own imagination into a toy. With cartoon-based toys, the child knows all the necessary information about the toy before he picks it up, the cartoon having pre-programmed him to play with the toy in a certain way.

Cartoons and the toys associated with them should not be taken lightly. Cartoons, filled with violence, the occult, and improper and sensual images, should be considered unsuitable for children of any age.

Children see dolls as images of humanity, so parents must not give in to children's sometimes relentless demands to buy dolls which are grotesque, represent the idea of precocious teen-age sexuality, or are connected with occult practices. Unfortunately, however, children can often be quite persistent, and most parents are generally inclined to give in. Parents, however, must on no account allow children access to those toys, books, or cartoons containing corrupt concepts. The child's imagination preserve the objects of the imagination in the memory. How unfortunate is the child who, closing his eyes, or being left alone, or going within himself is stifled and haunted by a multitude of improper images.

Why, we may ask, are so many toys and cartoons based on occult symbolism? To answer this question we must consider the people who are creating them today. They are a far different breed from the makers of the past. Many of the creators of toys and script writers of The cartoons which accompany them have come out of the 1960's generation, during which time many were involved in the drug culture and Eastern religions—some, indeed, still are. Few are practicing Christians and many were themselves raised by television. Therefore, since the ideas for toys come from man's imagination, then, if their thoughts have been corrupted by hedonistic and humanistic values, so the toys they design will bear the these influences.

A word needs to be said about films, which also compose the atmosphere surrounding children's play. The top money-making films today focus on the preternatural manifestations of the kingdom of darkness. Designed for adults were such films as *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist*, *Omen*, and *Poltergeist*: for children, the *Star Wars* Trilogy, *E.T.*, *Ghostbusters*, and *Gremlins*. The *Star Wars* Trilogy, since it first appeared in 1977, has generated sales from *Star Wars* licensed products (i.e. primarily toys) of \$3 billion! [5] George Lucas, the producer of *Star Wars*, admits being strongly influenced by Carlos Castaneda's *Tales of Power*—a cult book of the 1960's and 70's which chronicles the (what many thought to be true) story of Don Juan, a Mexican Indian sorcerer. Furthermore, *Star Wars* introduced many viewers to Zen Buddhism through the characters of Yoda, known as "Zen Master." Yoda taught Luke Skywalker, a type of Buddhist monk, about the "everpresent Force"—a term used in witchcraft down through the ages to describe the power witches receive from Satan! Lucas himself has said, "People in the film industry don't want to accept their responsibility that they had a hand in a way the world is loused up. But for better or for worse, the influence of the Church, which used to be all-powerful, has been usurped by film. Films and T.V. tell us the way we conduct our lives, what is right and wrong."

One might be inclined to say that even *Snow White* and *The Wizard of Oz* have some frightening elements, but the difference between these and more recent films does not necessarily lie in the content, but rather in the way the story is told. "Disney" films presented a world in which there was a moral order. There was a sweetness in the way the stories were told several levels removed from the vivid realism of *Indiana Jones*, for instance. In pursuit of ever-larger audiences, film makers have escalated the amount of violence, brutality, arid sensuality, and aimed it at ever younger and younger audiences.

Disregarding the often anti-Christian content of these films, it remains that through them children are being taught that the demons they regularly depict are real—and not only real, but often friendly and helpful if approached in the right way—and this idea is being reinforced by the toys which are based on the Films.

In *The Path of Salvation*, Theophan the Recluse says:

"The whole attention of those who have responsibility for the Christian child should be directed to not allowing sin in any way to take possession of him again (i.e. after Baptism), to crushing sin and making it powerless by every means by arousing and strengthening the child's orientation toward God."

How is this to be done? It is something that must be pursued from the very moment the child's awakening powers begin to focus, and according to all indications this is very early. It is also evident that a great influence for good is exercised on children by frequently taking them—from the earliest age—to church, by having them kiss the holy Cross, the Gospel, the icons, and by covering them with veils. Likewise, at home frequently placing the child under

the icons, frequently signing him with the sign of the Cross, sprinkling him with holy water, burning incense, making the sign of the Cross over his food, his cradle, and everything connected with him. The blessing of the priest, the bringing into the house of icons from the church, the service of molebens, and in general everything from the Church, in a wondrous way warms and nourishes the life of grace in the child and protects him from attacks by invisible, dark powers ever ready to infect the developing soul. Likewise, the spirit of faith and piety in the parents should be regarded as the most powerful means for the preservation, upbringing, and strengthening of the life of grace in children. But every effort will come to nothing and be made fruitless by unbelief, carelessness, and impiety on the part of the parents. The inward influence of the parents on the child is especially important. Where parents are "too busy" to spend time with their children, the children will learn through other sources. If parents cannot strictly control their children's viewing of the television, let it be banished from every Christian household, let no book or magazine depicting improper or violent scenes be permitted to cross the threshold. Let the child be surrounded by sacred forms and objects of all kinds, let his first memories be of the soft light illuminating the icons in his room, the smell of incense and the sound of sacred music. Let everything that can corrupt in example and depictions be put away. And so let the child grow in an atmosphere sanctified by piety.

However, training in piety, though foremost in child development, alone is not sufficient to help children battle the onslaught of the world. There should be an alternative to the dark culture that is inflicted on even the youngest and most delicate souls. If the child is exposed from the earliest age to the finest examples of western Christian culture, then by the time he is old enough to discern and choose between good and evil his soul will already have formed itself sufficiently and will feel revulsion for contemporary culture. Cultivating the child's taste for classical music, art and literature will give him not only an alternative to modern culture, but, what is more important, will act as a stepping stone in elevating the soul towards the higher, spiritual culture of the Church.

But of course children must play. How should we arrange this in the Christian home? Up until this century, children did not need complex toys. Fascinating adult activities took place all around them in plain view. The child could wander down the street practically empty of traffic to watch the blacksmith at work shoeing horses, the baker bread, baking along the river bank women washed clothes and fishermen repaired their nets or put out in their boats. Today, children have no such freedom to wander about and even if they did, gone are those things which from the beginning of history fascinated the childish eye. Still, left to themselves with simple materials, children will explore and expand a plaything's imaginative potential beyond anything an adult could possibly conceive. modern experts say that the best possible toy for a child between the ages of two and ten is a very large, heavy cardboard box, perhaps painted in various colors, which according to mood can be a house, a car, a boat, an airplane, a fort, a train, etc., etc., etc.. It can be pushed, pulled, carried or driven. A box can be anything! It is utterly unlike the typical over-complex, mass-produced toys which can do only one thing. It must be borne in mind that the more a toy is pre-structured, the more it inhibits imagination and creativity.

Researchers divide play and toys into four main categories: 1) toys that stimulate imaginative play; 2) toys that stimulate intellectual development; 3) toys that stimulate physical development, and 4) toys that are used to explore, examine, and experiment! It is important when buying toys to be sure that there is a good variety in the selection. Something for a quiet time to which a child might apply a good deal of mental energy or interact with others to play; books and puzzles for intellectual development, and perhaps building blocks and art materials to develop skills. It is important to aim for balance and diversity when buying toys.

In conclusion, one should be aware of the forces of evil which are now concentrating their energies on the exploitation and corruption of children and banish these influences from the home. it is also important to remember that parental behavior and love is a primary influence on children and, however, unfashionable it may be to say it at the moment it must, nevertheless, also be said in the strongest and most unequivocal terms possible—a woman's place is in the home with her children! Even if this means being financially less well off—this is a fleeting consideration. We must remember that small, eternal souls depend on the direction their parents give

them now in childhood, for "it is in accordance with the taste of one's own heart that the future eternal mansion will be given and that the taste in one's heart there will be the very one that is formed here!"

Endnotes

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2. "Coalition on TV Violence Says War Toys Now the Most Popular," Religious News Service, July 16, 1985.
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From Orthodox Life, Vol. 39, No. 6 (November-December 1989).

Train up a Child in the Way He Should Go

by Fr. Andrew Moore

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Before offering a brief homily on this beloved passage of Holy Scripture, I ask you to consider two statements which came to mind during my preparation.

When I was growing up in South Alabama, often a child became unruly or a teenager behaved quite badly especially in public. Someone would shout, "Who raised that child?" The reply came quickly, "Aw, he wasn't raised — he just grew up!"

Recently, I overheard a young mother speaking to her belligerent, disobedient toddler, "Honey, I would never make you do anything you don't want to do."

"Train up a child in the way he should go ..."

How vitally important is this godly counsel in our contemporary world — especially for Orthodox Christians.

This passage assumes there is a way in which a child should go. He may not want to go that way. Others (peers, playmates, friends or enemies) may not want him to go that way. Circumstances may not be such that he finds it convenient to go that way. But there is a way — there is a way — there is a way. Those of us who are charged with the care of these children — parents, priests, teachers, godparents — must see to it that they find that way and are trained to live in that way.

Training is not always easy, seldom comfortable, rarely fun and often painful. The Hebrew term here means to make narrow or to constrict. Motivation, instruction and discipline are elements of training. While it is hard, training is never abusive nor hateful. The child is not demeaned or belittled. The goal of training is health, not harm; it is to save, not to slay.

"Train up a child in the way he should go ..."

The Holy Prophet Isaiah spoke of this when he said, "Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, 'This is the way, walk in it'" (Is. 30:20).

Jesus called the first disciples to that way when He cried, "Follow Me ..." (Matt. 4:19). In the midst of that blessed journey, He challenged those spiritual children, "Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24). He was training, He was leading, He was guiding them in that ever-narrowing way. Near the end, his words surely pierced their souls: "You will indeed drink My cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with" (Matt. 20:22). No, it was not easy. It was the way of agony, suffering, rejection and even death; but it was the way — the narrow way — the only way that leads to life. Jesus loved them too much to let them go another way.

At his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, St. Paul also found that way with pain. The voice came from heaven: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goals" (Acts 26:14). But as he walked in that way and responded to the intense training at the hands of the Lord, St. Paul began to see the plan and purpose of it all. Some years later, in a letter to his children in Corinth, the blessed Apostle wrote, "... for the love of Christ compels me ..." (II Cor. 5:14). To the churches of Galatia he testified, "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

"Train up a child in the way he should go ..." because we love our children so much.

Few, if any, moments in my life are more etched in my memory than the morning of February 22, 1987. My forehead was pressed against the Holy Altar at St. Ignatius Church in Franklin, Tennessee. Saidna PHILIP's hand lay heavy on the back of my head. I didn't know then what I know now about that service, but in that holy moment I became a child and he became my father. I knew somehow that I was being called to a way. It was no longer my way but his (my bishop's) way. My brothers and sisters, there is surely a way given to us — the Orthodox Way, the way of the Apostles, the way of the Fathers, the way of the Martyrs, the way of the Ascetics, the way of the Church, the way of the Creed, the way of the Canons. It was the way in which I must now go; indeed the way for all of us. There is no other. No matter what the cost, the pain, the disappointments, the heartaches ... it was the way I should go and my beloved bishop would train me up in that way and I would follow. Thanks be to God! My dear wife Dannie and I have been abundantly blessed with six wonderful children. We have not done everything we should as parents and what we have done has been imperfect at best. However, we have loved them deeply and, above all else, we yearn for them to love and serve God. Training them to that end has been a lifelong effort with laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, fun and frustration, winning and losing. But in the doing of it all, one thing was clear — we must save them whatever the cost. Our love for them must go deeper than the lure of popularity, the "in thing", the "everybody's doing it" and all the rest.

Let me share with you an incident which summarizes these thoughts. Some years ago, our parish held a retreat in the North Georgia mountains. Late one afternoon, a terrifying scream from across the lake broke the quietness of the day's end. As we rushed toward the lakeside, our son, John, ran to us amid tears and gasps of pain. A young friend's fishing lure had found its way into John's hand and the treble hook was buried deep in the flesh. Somehow, in the midst of the prayers, fears, confusion and distress I heard a voice — you know, that heavenly word. "If you are going to help him, you are going to have to hurt him." Quietly I said to John, "Son, trust me, I'm going to hurt you because I want to help you." Taking hold of that hook, I pushed it even deeper into his hand. I knew it was so painful but he stood there. Trusting me through the tears he stood there. Then, with a slight turn, that hook just came right out! Words will never be able to describe how it felt when we carried John across the field to the cottage. He was quiet, arms around my neck, and asleep when we got back. He had been hurt but now he was healed.

Train up a child in the way he should go — whatever the cost.

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

*From Word Magazine Publication of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
October 1988*

Young Children in the Orthodox Church: Some Basic Guidelines

by Presbytera Juliana Cownie

Part One: At the Divine Liturgy

"Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of God." (Luke 18:16)

Of course, we Orthodox Christian parents want to bring our children to Christ. We bring them to be baptized, they are present with us at the Divine Services, they receive communion regularly. Isn't that enough? No, we are still holding them back if we are waiting for them to absorb Orthodoxy by osmosis. Their bodies may be in the church, but their minds and spirits are far away. They come into the presence of the Lord but they do not know where they are or Who He is. Their boredom and restlessness should tell us this but, unfortunately, we often render ourselves oblivious to the messages the children are sending. We ignore their behavior, hoping that this is merely symptomatic of youthful ignorance and that time will take care of the problem. In fact, it will. When they are older, these children will leave the Church, a church of which they have never been made to feel a part. They will leave and we will be answerable to God for their departure.

We have a responsibility to our children and to meet that responsibility we must stop listening to worldly wisdom and listen instead to eternal wisdom. The world tells us to indulge our children and make sure that they are never uncomfortable or unhappy. If we heed this kind of philosophy, we will feed our children's egos and starve their souls. God, in His infinite love for mankind, allows us to suffer terrible hardship and grief for the sake of our eternal souls. We are afraid to allow our children to suffer a temporary aggravation for the sake of theirs. The world has taught us to have no confidence in our ability to teach and discipline our own children. We want teams of child psychologists to approve our every action and we fear losing the love of our children every time a conflict arises. Even when we are willing to admit the Church into our child-rearing decisions, we have a tendency to want to hand over all of our responsibilities to some hapless individual who suggests having Protestant-style Sunday school sessions during the Divine Liturgy. This is nonsense. Our children are our responsibility and we can begin all by ourselves with two basic principles:

1. We must instruct our children from the day they are born in Orthodox Christian life BY OUR EXAMPLE, in our every thought, word and deed.
2. We must concentrate, from their earliest childhood, on teaching our children basic civilized behavior, without which any further education, either secular or religious, will be impossible.

This is not at all complicated or difficult. The key is consistency.

Now, let us proceed to examine how we can apply the above principles at a Sunday Liturgy. Please remember that Divine Liturgy is a culmination of all the prayer and worship that takes place in the home during the week. If Sunday is the only day your family gives a thought to God, do not be surprised if your children feel confused and out of place. They cannot be expected to put on a show of piety once a week. They only know how to act out of heartfelt belief and habitual prayerful expressions of love for God. Let that be our first example to them and proceed then to preparations for Sunday Liturgy.

Preparing for Sunday Liturgy

On Sunday morning, the family should get up in a timely manner, so that all can be properly prepared to go to Church. Large families sometimes find it difficult to have all the children washed, dressed, and brushed in time without a lot of nagging, arguing, and rushing around frantically trying to attend to last minute details. A little

organization can go a long way toward a serene beginning to this holy day. First of all, have each child's church clothes laid out the night before, already inspected by a parent so that there will be no last minute arguments about inappropriate, mismatched, stained or torn apparel. Children four years old and older can certainly dress themselves. Older siblings can help the younger ones.

Good grooming is important, both from a spiritual and a psychological standpoint. Dress a child in playclothes and he will be prepared to play. This was once a guiding principle behind school dress codes and is a reason that many public schools nowadays are requiring uniforms. Little boys should wear suits to Church, just as the men do (or should). It is not necessary to spend a fortune. A hand-me-down or a thrift shop bargain will suffice as well a new suit to fix the idea in the child's mind that he is wearing special clothing to a special place where he is expected to act like a man. Not only will the suit serve to instill in him a sense of dignity, but it will also restrict his movements somewhat so that sloppy, casual behavior is rendered far more difficult. Dress shoes go with a suit. Not only do tennis shoes look ridiculous on someone attired properly for Church, but they contradict the message (which should be reinforced constantly) that Church is not a place to play.

Little girls should wear nice dresses and dress shoes. Even from infancy, their heads should be covered. Some people who are misinformed about Orthodox tradition may try to tell you that girls do not need to wear a scarf or hat until they are twelve. Perhaps this has become confused with the age children are usually confirmed into the Roman Catholic Church or they think that the head covering somehow signals to the community that the girl will soon be available for marriage.

Whatever the source of the misconception, it has no basis in Orthodox tradition whatsoever. Girls and women should arrive at Church with their heads covered, stand throughout the service with their heads covered, and leave Church the same way. This is done for spiritual purposes concerning modesty and humility. Therefore, do not be misled into believing that the headcovering needs to be worn only when confessing or communing (another popular myth).

Girls, no matter what age, should NEVER wear pants to Church (or anywhere else, for that matter). It is easy to fall to the mistaken idea that toddlers should be exempt from such a rule. Yes, they are cute and they crawl around on the floor but little girls are not puppies. They will grow up to be women, hopefully women worthy of praise and emulation. It is much better to train a child correctly from a very young age than to impose something suddenly at an arbitrary stage of maturity. The very fact that it is arbitrary and based on personal opinion rather than any teaching of the Church will create feelings of rebellion in the child for which you may have difficulty finding an adequate response. In any case, if your concern is primarily that the weather is cold, have the child wear leggings or tights under her dress.

Boys and girls should be clean and their hair brushed. Even a very small child experiences anticipation and a sense of awe about an event for which they are being so carefully prepared. When a child is allowed to go to Church looking unkempt, dressed in whatever assortment of clothes that came to hand that morning, that child will look and feel like an afterthought - someone who had to be dragged along when the parents wanted to go to Church. No one should expect an "afterthought" to be terribly thrilled about the idea of attending services or to be very cooperative when he gets there. Another important aspect to be considered is that, fair or not, the child will be judged by the adults at Church according to his or her appearance and treated accordingly. Warm approval and compliments from adults other than his parents can have a very positive and encouraging effect on a small child. He will not receive any such attention if it does not appear that even his parents think enough of him to do more than toss some wrinkled clothes at him in the morning.

The tone of parental expectations and familial participation can be set during communion prayers before the family even leaves for Church. As at all prayer times in the icon corner, the children should be expected to stand quietly and reverently. Even very small children should be with their parents at this time because even if they do not understand the words of the prayers, they do understand the serious attitude of the parents. This will help to

accustom them to particular behavior whenever prayer is being said, thus preparing them to be quiet and attentive in Church. Children who are old enough to read should be allowed to read some of the communion prayers. This will help them to understand that, as they mature, they will be expected to take on some of the responsibilities of adults. Spiritually, psychologically, and emotionally they will respond with enthusiasm to this invitation to become a contributing member of the family Church.

Entering the Church

Before arriving at Church, it may be necessary to remind the children that they are about to enter a holy place. Laughter and loud speech must cease before we even approach the Church, as it is inappropriate, disrespectful and may distract those already inside the Church. We should all enter quietly and reverently. The reason we get up on Sunday morning in a timely manner is so that we will arrive BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS. Showing respect for God, the Church, the priest, and the Church community, we thereby set a good example for our children to follow.

Children should be taught from earliest childhood how to reverence icons properly. Their first act upon entering an Orthodox Church should be to reverence the icons in an orderly and pious fashion as they have seen the adults do. Parents should help very small children by holding their hands and going through the motions of making the sign of the Cross with them until they are able to do it by themselves. Small children should be watched carefully and guided as they reverence the icons. Left to themselves, many children who have not completely grasped the idea that these actions are serious will show off or make a joke out of making the sign of the Cross. They do this, perhaps, out of self-consciousness but it cannot be tolerated. A firm correction must ensue followed by a demand that the child make the sign of the Cross properly. If he cannot or will not obey, the parent should take the child's hand and guide him through the proper motions.

Candles are not playthings, lit or unlit. Neither are they teething-rings. Churches and monasteries purchase candles for a specific purpose - so that the people can light them and set them before the icons in remembrance of prayerful intentions. Once lit before an icon, the candle itself is considered holy and must be dealt with reverently. Children who are old enough and have shown a certain degree of maturity may be allowed to light their own candles before the icons, but only under the watchful supervision of the parents. If, however, the child makes a game of this, the privilege should be revoked until such time as he understands what he is doing. A note of caution is in order here. Candles are open flames which can cause injury to the child. Little girls with long hair are particularly susceptible to setting themselves ablaze. Always stand next to your child as he handles the candle because a moment of inattention on the part of the child (or the parent) can have serious consequences. Let us also refrain from sending bored children to "tend" the candlestands. The distraction often created by adults noisily blowing out candles and tossing them into a box is bad enough, but the effect is magnified when the job is undertaken by a child who craves diversion.

Because we are all one family in the Church, we have a responsibility to one another. Therefore, it is appropriate for other members to help look after small children who stray from their parents or who appear to be acting in rebellion to their parents' wishes. This should not be interpreted by the parents as interference or someone passing judgement on their ability to control their children. It is well known that familiarity breeds contempt and that children will often mind a stranger rather than their own parents. This is also often necessary to keeping good order in the Church. Naturally, the primary responsibility for children's behavior rests with the parents but if they are absorbed in the service and do not notice their toddlers playing at the candlestand or their older children slouching against the wall, it is perfectly appropriate for an adult or older child to intervene. Rather than be offended, the parents should thank those who care enough to take action.

The Service Begins

Once the service begins, our participation requires that we, as Orthodox Christians, stand, listen attentively to the service, and make the Sign of the Cross whenever Christ, the Holy Trinity, the Theotokos, or the saints are mentioned by name. Our children are also Orthodox Christians and we do them great spiritual harm when we do not teach them how to participate in the service. How tragic it is to attend Divine Liturgy and see children left to themselves to play in the choir loft or on the stairs, or stuck in a back corner somewhere with a pile of toys. This conveys a powerful message to the children that Orthodoxy is for adults only and that Christ and His Church are not concerned with children at all. This is untrue and unfair. They have been baptized and they need to be brought into the fullness of the worship. This is not necessarily easy, however. Toddlers can be especially trying because they become easily frustrated when their movements are restricted. At first, we may be able only to keep them within arm's reach and quiet their louder outbursts. While we have to allow them a certain latitude, we must very clearly define specific boundaries to their movements and their behavior. All children (including toddlers) need and crave such boundaries. This defines their world and gives them a sense of security. If no boundaries are defined, a child will ultimately wander aimlessly throughout the church until somebody stops him. This is natural. However, this aimless wandering is unsettling for a child because he has no secure place where he can feel he belongs. So we set the boundary for the child close to us, within arm's reach, so that we can effectively enforce the boundary. The boundary will be tested, we can be assured of that. The child needs to test his limits to verify that they are real. Expect any limit set to be tested many times. Because of this, consistency is essential. As many times as the child tries to wander, we must bring him back. Any time the child makes a loud disturbance, we must insist he be quiet. If he chooses to persist or become even louder, we must immediately take him outside and discipline him in such a way that he will connect going outside with something unpleasant. We should take note that rebellion does not always manifest itself in a noisy way. Silent sobbing and sullen disobedience are just as indicative of self-will as tantrums and just as spiritually destructive if not corrected immediately. Frankly, early rebellion is best dealt with by administering a spanking. As controversial as this subject has become, an explanation is in order here.

A surprising number of parents have fallen for the trendy philosophy that spankings cause children to become hostile and violent. The fact is that most small children learn very quickly from situations in which pain is the consequence for wrongful actions. If they touch a hot stove, tease a grumpy dog, or shut their fingers in a door, pain ensues. They do not hate the stove or try to pick a fight with the dog. They simply avoid the action which led to the painful consequence. Spanking as a consequence to rebellion is therefore much more comprehensible to a small child than lengthy emotional appeals to their better nature (which has not yet been developed) or long periods of being ignored followed a furious pounding (which is not only abusive but confusing to the child).

A spanking is to be reserved for use in response to willful defiance, whenever it occurs. Period! It is much more effective to apply it early in the conflict, while the parent's emotional apparatus is still under control, than after ninety minutes of scratching and clawing. (James Dobson, Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. p.157)

When a parent attempts to apply the method described above, he must expect a certain amount of criticism from other members of the community. For some reason, people want to see a well-behaved child without ever seeing the discipline applied. Some will say the parent is being too harsh, while others will complain that the child is unruly. We cannot expect to please everybody. We must set our own standards for our children's behavior and hold them to those standards on a consistent basis. This approach will teach the children proper behavior and will ultimately gain them much praise when they begin to act like civilized human beings. The praise will be the more so because such behavior is so rare nowadays.

Food should never be brought into the church in the form of snacks and drinks to keep small children quiet. (By the same token, teenagers should never be given gum to keep them quiet either.) For one thing, it is uncanonical.

The only food consumed in the church is Holy Communion, Antidoron, and the Artos. The eggs for Pascha and grapes for Transfiguration are brought in only to be blessed. Other foods are forbidden by the canons. Besides, it is just not a good idea to bribe children with snacks. This teaches the child an unhealthy attitude toward food which can promote obesity and creates a bad habit which is very difficult to break. Imagine how difficult it will be to teach such a child how to fast for Communion and Antidoron when he is of age.

School age children should be required to stand throughout the Liturgy, except at the reading of the Epistle and during the Homily. Standing does not mean leaning against the wall, slouching with hands in pockets, or hanging on to a parent (or anybody else). Children need to be standing reverently with their hands at their sides or folded in front of them. If the parent senses that the child is unwell or unusually tired, then it is for the parent to indicate when the child may sit down. We must not allow the children to make such decisions for themselves. This is an opportunity to train them in obedience. There is a world of difference between a self-willed child deciding that the service is too long and that he must take a rest, and the parent permitting a necessary rest. The key is who decides what is necessary. Orthodox spirituality is based in obedience, as manifested in the obedience of the Theotokos and each of the Saints. Even in the smallest acts, teachings of the Church are imparted to children.

The same parental discretion must be used in allowing children to leave the church to go to the bathroom. Generally, it is a good idea to be sure that each child goes to the bathroom before entering the church. In most cases, no one should need to go again until the conclusion of Divine Liturgy. Children are very apt to use the excuse that they must go to the bathroom so that they can leave the church and play for awhile. In cases where the parent discerns a real need, the parent should accompany the child to and from the restroom to insure against any dawdling. This will also discourage any false alarms.

Should the parent need to leave the church for any reason, the children should remain in the service under the supervision of the other adults there. In such cases, it should be understood that the other adults have the authority to issue corrections and administer discipline where necessary. Neither adults nor children should leave the church during the reading of the Gospel, the Great Entrance, or at any time during the consecration of the Gifts. To leave at these times is very disruptive and irreverent.

At Communion

Babies and toddlers should, of course, commune every Sunday and Feast Day and they require no particular preparation beforehand. By their demeanor, however, the parents convey their personal sense of reverence for the Mysteries to the child. As the child matures, the parents' responsibility increases. When the parents and the Priest feel that the child is articulate enough and able to understand right from wrong, it is time to have the child go to Confession. There is no specified age when this should occur. Some local churches have arbitrarily chosen the age of seven, but this is merely a guideline and should not be considered absolute. Some children are able to confess at a very early age, while others may need more time. The same holds true for fasting before Communion. The parents should accustom their child to the idea, first of all, by their example. When the parents observe that the child does not seem to require food as frequently (for example, the child is able to play all morning without showing interest in food), they should help the child understand that we do not eat or drink in the morning before we commune. Again, this is a matter of parental discretion but our goal is to strive to teach the child to put off gratification of physical appetites in favor of a higher, spiritual good.

It has been mentioned several times here that children must learn to move and speak reverently in the church. This must especially be emphasized when they approach the Chalice. In some churches, children are communed after the adults. This helps them to learn humility and respect for their elders. In whatever order the people are communed, however, children should not be allowed to push in front of others, fight among themselves, or in any way be disruptive. They MUST be made to understand that they are approaching God Himself and that those who partake unworthily (or with an unworthy attitude) do so to their detriment. Because parents risk taking this condemnation onto themselves, they should be vigilant of their child's behavior at all times. Should the child

misbehave as he is approaching the Chalice, the parent would do well to take him out of the communion line and not permit him to commune that day. Communion is a sacred privilege, not a right. The child will learn a tremendous spiritual lesson when he learns not to take this privilege for granted.

The child should approach the Chalice silently, arms folded across his chest. He should open his mouth wide so that the Priest can easily put the spoon in the child's mouth. The child should then close his mouth around the spoon and wait for the Priest to pull the spoon out. If some of the Mystery should spill on the child's lip or chin, he should let the person holding the Veil wipe it off.

After communing, the child should move to the place where the Antidoron is being given. There he should take one piece of Antidoron and put it directly into his mouth, cupping his other hand under his chin to avoid spilling crumbs on the floor. If any crumbs do fall, the parent should consume them. A small child should wait for someone to assist him, rather than risk knocking bread on the floor. Children should be told that Antidoron is holy and should be treated reverently.

Until the child eats a full meal, he must not be allowed to put anything in his mouth which will be taken out again, such as his thumb, his pacifier, lollipops, or chewing gum. This is done out of reverence for any trace of the Mysteries which might remain in the child's mouth. For the same reason, the child should be discouraged from spitting. Should a baby spit up after Communion, a tissue or paper towel should be used to clean up and then taken directly to the Priest so that he can properly dispose of it by burning.

After Divine Liturgy

Children, as well as adults, should refrain from socializing until they are outside the church. If there is a place provided for children to play, now is the time. Children who have stood quietly throughout the Divine Liturgy should be praised for their good behavior and allowed to burn off some energy before the Agape meal. There is a time and place for everything and just because we do not allow children to play in the church does not mean that we do not understand their need to play.

If there is a meal at the church after Divine Liturgy, children's good manners can make for a very pleasant social experience, while bad manners can make the meal difficult for everybody. If the food is being served buffet style, children should always be served after the adults. Small children will need their parents to make up a plate for them, but even older children may need parental supervision to be sure that they do not take more food than they can eat. Of course, nobody should take any food until the blessing has been given by the Priest. The parents should take responsibility to clean up any mess made by their children. Older children and teenagers should be encouraged to assist in serving the food and cleaning up after the meal. This will help them to feel that they are a part of the community.

In Conclusion

It is quite natural for parents to become discouraged when initial attempts at disciplining children appear to fail miserably. None of what has been written here can be accomplished overnight. There is no "instant" formula for teaching children reverent and civilized behavior. Patience and, above all, consistency are absolutely essential in attaining the desired results. This consistency must be based on a sincere desire to set a proper example so that we, the parents, demonstrate the best of Orthodox behavior.

True Orthodoxy is reflected in a way of life which is practiced in the home on a regular basis. To have children live one way at home and then suddenly to expect them to act differently in the church is an unrealistic (and, frankly, hypocritical) approach. If, during the course of the week, the child has not been expected to stand quietly at

prayers, act respectfully to his parents, and exhibit good table manners, why should we be surprised if he acts badly at church?

There is no reason to be afraid to set high standards for our children.

When we have high expectations, children not only gain self-esteem by meeting those expectations, but they come to love and respect those who set them. Children want the House of God to be a place of awe and mystery. Though young children may have difficulty being attentive during long services or understanding what these services mean, they yearn to be taught and naturally seek to understand anything for which their parents show a deep reverence.

Traditional Orthodoxy is a priceless pearl, a gift which we bestow upon our children. If we act as though we are depriving our children in some way by insisting that they adhere to the teachings of the church, we are blaspheming. When we bring our children to Christ, we must not forget that we are bringing them into the presence of the King of Kings. We do no service to our children when we deprive them of the means of understanding this blessing. To give them the false impression that they are equals with their "friend, Jesus" is to give them a counterfeit Christ. We love our children and therefore we want to bring them to Christ as He truly is, in all of His glory. To give them less is to give them a stone in the place of bread.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? (Luke 11:11-13)

Our job as parents is to teach our children how to ask.

Part 2: The Orthodox Child at Home

Uprooting Self-Will

As has been stated before, the child will do nothing at church which he has not learned at home. Children, not being hypocritical by nature, act according to what they have been taught by their parents. Curiously, parents are often unaware of what they have really taught their children until they see the results manifested in public. That is why this book began with the child at Divine Liturgy—with all the incipient problems highlighted. It is often easier to choose to blame the traditional Orthodox Church for making the church atmosphere uncomfortable for parents of uncontrollable children. But if we are honest with ourselves, then we are forced to take a hard look at our home life and our methods of discipline in order to find out where we went wrong.

What most of us will find when we view our child-rearing methods through an Orthodox perspective is that we have allowed the child to develop a powerful self-will. We have come to expect disobedience rather than obedience from the child. Indeed, we have often conformed ourselves the child's will, striving to mold ourselves to the child's every whim and desire, desperate to win and hold the child's love and approval.

What's wrong with this picture? It is a perfect photographic negative of what Orthodox family life is supposed to be. Black is white and white is black whenever we embrace worldly standards of parenthood. This also means that we are calling good (strict discipline and high standards) evil (repressive, fanatic) and evil (no discipline, low standards) good ("affirming", understanding of "differently-abled" children).

Self-will, once it is firmly established, is so antithetical to Orthodoxy that it will render spiritual growth impossible. It is the responsibility of the parents to impose their will upon the child, even in the smallest details, even in the seemingly insignificant areas of the child's life.

The will of the parents should be imprinted upon each step— of course in a general way. Without this, the behavior of the child can easily become corrupted. After enjoying himself according to his own will, the child always returns unwilling to obey even in the smallest things; and this if it happens only once—what then can one say if this part of bodily activity is completely neglected? How difficult it is later to uproot self-will, which so quickly seats itself in the body as in a fortress. The neck will not bend, the hands and feet will not move, and the eyes will not even wish to look as they are told.

But on the contrary, a child comes out ready to obey any kind of order when from the very beginning he is not given total freedom in his movements. In addition, there is no better training in being the master of one's body than by forcing it to exert itself according to orders. (St. Theophan the Recluse, Raising Them Right, Conciliar Press, 1989, p. 34.)

Take, for example, a toddler who becomes obstinate about food. The child is given a healthy breakfast but he refuses to eat because he would rather play at that moment. He screams and cries and thrusts the food away from him. Fine. Let him get down. A parent cannot and should not force a child to eat. However, the child should not be offered any more food until a specific time determined by the parent, preferably the next mealtime. If the parent becomes obsessive about the child's eating habits to the point where the child is fed on demand, the child will learn:

1. The world revolves around me. My desires supersede those of my parents and they must act according to my will.
2. It is important that I never feel hungry or uncomfortable in any way.

How could one expect such a child to respond to the idea of fasting when he comes of age? It is especially important that the child not connect the idea of "love" with the idea of "instant gratification." Otherwise, all attempts at helping the child to grow spiritually will be greeted as frightening portents of abandonment.

From very early childhood the child must learn that he will eat food given by a parent or permitted by a parent at the time decided by the parent. He will play when and where the parent decides. A child must learn from infancy to look to his parents for guidance and not to his own will. We must be careful here to note that overcoming self-will is not easy at all. We must expect to struggle and sometimes have unpleasant confrontations with our children. This can certainly be exhausting but if parents give in to their children's demands, even once, spiritual ground is lost that is very difficult to regain. A child who cries in order to get his way, for example, will cry for everything once he finds that this method moves the parents to sympathy. This so-called "sensitive" child is merely a manipulator of the feelings of others. To cater to this kind of manipulation as though it were a touching character trait is to develop the child into a self- involved cry-baby who will be unable to "cope" with anything he chooses to avoid.

Daily Life

The Orthodox family gets up in time to say their morning prayers together. If this means missing some sleep, bear in mind that it is not only a good spiritual discipline for the adults in the family, but a tremendous example to the children of where the family's priorities truly lie. Of course, extenuating circumstances might render this schedule impractical. If a member of the household works nights, for example, he should be allowed to say his prayers later.

In our culture, breakfast is likely to be a hurried, informal meal. However, this is no excuse to forget either the blessing or one's table manners. If the children are attending public school, chances are that they have picked up some fairly deplorable habits which must be vigilantly corrected. As with any other meal, complaints about the food must not be tolerated. The day should start with a nutritious meal but that does not mean that the mother must become a short-order cook catering to each individual whim.

After breakfast, when various members of the family have made their way to work or school, the traditional Orthodox mother will find herself at home with her smaller children. Or, if she is homeschooling, all her children will be there with her. The children will not be at a day care center while she is at work because then we would not be discussing the traditional Orthodox home. Frankly, the concept of a mother dropping her children of each day at an institution in which a few underpaid employees attempt to supervise several children at once is antithetical to the idea of Orthodox homelife. The mother who wants to instill true Christian spirituality in her children must be there to see to it herself.

Though cleanliness and orderliness in the home are important and should not be neglected, the Orthodox mother should avoid the use of television as a babysitter while she attends to household chores. No matter what the sponsors of children's shows may try to tell us, there is very little on television which is actually instructive or substantial. The rapidity with which the images are shown have a mind-numbing affect on a toddler and afford them little opportunity for interactive play. Television does, however, become addictive and parents who indulge this addiction usually end up experiencing the very unnerving phenomenon of their small children demanding to see "their" programs and throwing tantrums when their demands are not met.

Far more instructive is the constant verbal communication that should be taking place between mother and child. This is how a young child learns to speak correctly. If the child is allowed to play in the same area of the house where the mother is doing her chores, they can have a lot of positive interaction without the mother having to leave her tasks and devote her entire attention to the child. In addition, some time should be set aside for the mother to read stories and play games with the child. A mother is her child's first and best teacher provided she does not turn her responsibilities over to the television set.

This is also a good time to introduce children to concepts of beauty and harmony, particularly in the area of music appreciation. Without worldly biases, small children inately love that which is lovely. Peaceful and intricate melodies not only calm babies and small children but help them to form a preference for that which is beautiful. As the child grows, he will come in contact with cynical peers who identify their world view with nihilistic noise. The best protection an Orthodox parent can offer is to instill in the child a love of beauty and a belief in good, as embodied by the Orthodox Church and expressed in many ways by those who love God.

What else can a young child learn at home with his mother? Other than the basic skills necessary for functioning as a social being, the Orthodox child is forming a conscience and it is critical that this conscience be formed correctly. He must not be shielded from the fact that he is a fallen creature capable of sin and in need of repentance. This self-knowledge must be cultivated. The mother must be strong and look at her child in the light of what is best for his eternal soul. She must:

1. Firmly insist that every command she gives to the child, even the seemingly least significant, be obeyed. If obedience is not forthcoming, there should be immediate and unpleasant consequences. A mother who sighs and smiles after such a transgression, saying, "I just can't get him to do a thing I say," has abdicated her responsibility for the child's soul.
2. Teach the child to respect other people's property. This may mean that the mother will find herself endlessly repeating, "Is that yours? No, that is not yours. Don't touch." This will not only help instill a certain humility in the child (I am not the center of the universe. Everything does not belong to me), but it renders the child far more trustworthy in situations where he is not under constant supervision.

3. Teach the child to ask permission. Anyone who has visited an Orthodox monastery knows that the monks ask a blessing of the abbot before they do anything - begin their work, go out on an errand, take a drink of water. This not only helps the monks spiritually in accepting authority and acting in obedience, it helps the abbot maintain good order in the monastery. If a monk were to take food without asking, how would the abbot know whether the brothers had enough food for the evening meal? The same is true in the Orthodox household. If a child must ask permission before eating, then the mother knows how much food he has eaten and whether or not he might make himself sick by having more. If the child must ask permission before he goes out to play, the mother knows where he is and will not spend time frantically searching for him.

Permissiveness is not kindness. A young child who has bonded to his mother from infancy desires to please her. His willfulness and rebellion do not make him happy; they are merely traits of fallen humanity. Some modern theories teach that it is wrong to make a child apologize when they have done something wrong. They surmise that since the child is not able to feel genuine contrition, we make the child into a hypocrite by forcing them to say what they do not feel. The baptized Orthodox Christian child does indeed feel the inner imbalance of his soul when he has sinned. He must be taught to recognize the source of that imbalance and to express the repentance that is necessary for him to be restored to harmony with God.

What frost is for flowers, so is the transgression of the parents' will for a child; he cannot look you in the eyes, he does not desire to enjoy kindnesses, he wishes to run away and be alone; but at the same time his soul becomes crude, and the child begins to grow wild. It is a good thing to dispose him ahead of time to repentance, so that without fear, and with trust and with tears, he might come and say, "I did something wrong." (Ibid, p. 43.)

In the evening, the family is reunited. The evening meal should be taken together. Sadly, our society has largely abandoned the concept that it is important for the family to come together in joyful fellowship at the end of the day. Frantic accommodation of various schedules, snacks taken in front of the television, grazing from the refrigerator — these have taken the place of meaningful conversation and the bonding of parents and children around the dining room table. Let it not be so for the Orthodox family. The hectic pace of life being what it is, the evening meal may be one of the few times we have during the work week to relax and enjoy one another's company. This is where children learn how to make congenial conversation and have a chance to tell the important events of their day. It should be an opportunity for everyone at the table to talk about the things that interest them with the people they love most. This is not the occasion for the mother to tell her husband about the transgressions of the younger children, or for heated arguments of any kind, or for adolescent sullenness, or for complaints about the food. Informality within the family does not mean that we are free to be our rudest and crudest with those who must put up with us. It means we are free to express our love and interest in those with whom our lives are entwined.

At whatever time is most suitable to bring the entire family together, we say our evening prayers. This may be followed by the daily scripture reading or a reading from the lives of the Saints. These are very beneficial for children as it gives them spiritual heroes to emulate. If, when we begin the practice of spiritual readings, younger children become squirmy and inattentive, we must not be discouraged. They will soon accept whatever is routinely done and will understand what is said better with time.

In Conclusion

For Orthodox Christians, every day is dedicated to God. Our earthly concerns must always be secondary to our spiritual concerns. This is what our children must see and experience always. When there is a Feast Day of the Church, the Orthodox family must make every attempt to be present at the services for the Feast. If this means missing school or work, the sacrifice of that time will only help to underline the fact that worship of God is a

priority. When, for some reason, it is impossible for the family to attend services on a Feast Day, they should make an effort to either say some of the prayers from the services in their icon corner at home (if they have the books) or teach the children the significance of the feast day and read the appropriate scripture readings from the Bible. At all times, the children should be made aware of festal and fasting periods and what is expected of them during these periods. The more they know of the cycle of the Church calendar, the more Orthodox children will feel themselves to be a part of the greater Body of Christ.

Part 3: The Orthodox Child in the World

At School

To be honest, the atmosphere which prevails in the average public school is not exactly conducive to promoting civilized behavior, much less Christian conduct. The greater part of what the Orthodox parent tries to convey to the child at home will be quickly unlearned at school because of the child's desire to fit in with the herd. Hypocrisy and shame will often have the child leading a double life if the parents are not extremely vigilant and careful. Ideally, Orthodox children should be schooled at home but the ideal is not always attainable. Accordingly, here are some guidelines for helping a child maintain his identity as an Orthodox Christian within the public school system.

1. Have your own dress code and enforce it. Children express their identity by their outward appearance. Many inner city schools are moving to curb gang involvement and discipline problems by issuing uniforms and banning make-up and jewelry. Thus far these methods have proven quite successful. Even if your child's school has not instituted such regulations, you should insist that your child be attired modestly and without unnecessary adornment. Girls should be wearing dresses or skirts. If for the sake of modesty, a girl needs to wear shorts, they may be worn under the dress. The use of hairspray and the wearing of boyish or distracting hairstyles should be discouraged. Boys should be wearing clothing that fits them properly and should have their hair properly trimmed. There is a mistaken notion among some Orthodox Christians that boys who serve as candle-bearers or readers must wear their hair long as a monk or priest does. This is not true and should not serve as an excuse on religious grounds to violate existing school dress codes.
2. Emphasize the importance of keeping fasts at school. Temptations will be many and will come not only from the child's peers but from teachers who want to treat the children (almost always on a Friday). Provide tasty sack lunches on fast days. It is not usually too difficult to give the child something more desirable than the usual cafeteria fare. Bring fasting treats to school parties which are held during a fast period. Let the teachers know about Orthodox fasting practices at the beginning of the school year so your child will not experience discomfort at having to explain concepts he may be unable to articulate. Above all, let your child know you are proud of him when he has refused something he would like to have eaten. He will remember that encouragement when future temptations arise.
3. Make the child think always in terms of acting as a Christian and pleasing Christ with his behavior. If the child does something wrong at school, he should admit it and be willing to take the consequences. A child who blames others for his behavior or lies to escape punishment is developing a pattern of moral cowardice. A parent who blames others for the child's behavior (The teacher doesn't like him. It was the other kid's idea. He just went along), or shields the child from the fair punishment he deserves is training him to be a moral coward, or perhaps training him to be immoral. Encourage the child to forgive the children who wrong him and tease him. Help the child to try and see things from the perspective of the teacher who always seems so grumpy and hands out so much homework. Never give the child an excuse for not meeting their obligations at school. If he misses class to attend Divine Services, make it clear that

he must make up the work. Try to have a good relationship with the teacher so that if problems arise, the communication lines are open to discuss them.

4. Teach your child that he must never be ashamed of being an Orthodox Christian. Wearing a cross, saying a blessing before eating, refraining from blasphemy or cruelty, these are all things which set him apart from an unthinking crowd of young people who have no idea who they are. Do your best to convince him that confusion and fear of ridicule are not enviable motivations for living.

As a parent, do not be deceived into believing that the school owns your child or has any right to dictate to you how your child should be educated or what values he should be learning. If the school is offering a course which you find morally objectionable, have your child excused. If the school will not excuse your child from the course, withdraw your child from the school. Whether or not you choose to argue the merits of a particular class, your child should not be subjected either to morally questionable material or to the ensuing controversy should you decide to fight to have the material removed.

At Other People's Homes

Specifically here, we are referring to homes of non-Orthodox friends, though some of the ideas deal with manners which would apply in anyone's home. Most Orthodox Christians in America do not live in Orthodox communities. Our children will undoubtedly have friends who not only know nothing about our religious beliefs but know very little about any kind of religious beliefs. Even the idea that our children may not be allowed to do whatever they want to do whenever they want to do it may leave them incredulous. If we tell our children that they may only associate with those people whose values are identical to our own, they may be waiting a long, lonely time for such people to appear. What is more, they will either develop into unbearably self-righteous judgmental prigs or they will reject us as such.

However, just because the child is in a different environment, he should not adapt his behavior to suit the surroundings to the extent that he ceases to be an Orthodox Christian in the presence of his friends. In fact, if the environment renders it impossible for him to act as a Christian, he probably does not need to be there. This sounds like a difficult balancing act but usually it is merely a matter of putting two key ideas into practice:

1. The child should act in the homes of others as he does in his own home. That is, he should be obedient to the adults in authority, ask permission, and respect the property of others.
2. The child should not judge non-Orthodox people by Orthodox standards. They do not sin when they do not fast on a Wednesday or a Friday. The child need only remark about Orthodox fasting rules in reference to himself when offered something he may not have.

If there is good communication between Orthodox parents and their children, visits by the children to their friends' homes should not be a source of anxiety. The world is a strange place, however, and we sometimes do well to err on the side of caution. Be sure your child tells you if anything goes on in the home which is disturbing to him and act accordingly. Serious problems, such as drunken or out of control adults on the premises, require that the child not be allowed to visit the home. Lesser problems, such as the family saying no blessing before they eat, require that the child learn to say a quiet blessing for himself and remember his friends in prayer that they may ultimately come to know God.

In some homes, television is watched rather indiscriminately and music is played which contains some rather vulgar or even blasphemous lyrics. If your child has been brought up in the proper atmosphere of piety and has developed a real appreciation of beauty, he will be repulsed by these things. Depending on the circumstance, the child should be encouraged not to spend play time watching television with his friends. But if the friend watches only family type programs, it will do no harm to allow the child this form of occasional entertainment. If, however,

these friends seem to spend all their time in front of the set, or they encourage your child to watch objectionable shows or listen to inappropriate music, then these are not friendships worth cultivating. At the same time, we need not insist that the child leave the house just because an older brother of the child's friend listens to rock music in his room or the parents watch a questionable sitcom in the den while the kids are playing in another room. Let him take his leave only when he is placed in uncomfortable proximity to the disturbing imagery.

If the child's friends lead him into unruly behavior by their example and he is unable to resist the temptation to act as they do, then it is time to deny permission to the child to spend time with such friends. A child cannot learn too soon that being led into sin by one's friends can result in negative consequences. This lesson, among others, helps build a child's strength of character and individuality.

On Vacation

Ideally, the Orthodox Christian family should spend some vacation time each year at an Orthodox monastery or convent. These visits are especially important in helping children establish positive role models and sparking in them an interest in monasticism. For all Orthodox Christians, monastics represent a spiritual ideal which help us to put into perspective the very few sacrifices required of us as lay people. When children see monks and nuns acting in obedience and humility, being of cheerful service to others, and gladly spending long hours in prayer, they understand much better the attitudes and actions required of them. Of course, we always hope that some of these children will decide to become monastics themselves but it would be unrealistic to expect them to evince such a desire if they have not had the opportunity to see this life for themselves. Whatever sacrifices of time and money it may require, a visit to an Orthodox monastery or convent should be a priority for every Orthodox family. Of course, there are other types of vacations. Those taken with the family are not so much a problem for Orthodox children. The family will naturally say morning and evening prayers together and keep the fasts wherever they are. But what about vacations spent with non-Orthodox or nominally Orthodox relatives?

It does sometimes happen that a relative wishes to have a child come and stay with them during a vacation, but knowing that this relative has a somewhat low opinion of the traditions of our faith, we feel reluctant to let the child go. Whether we should or not depends on whether the relative will allow us to set some ground rules for the visit. If the ground rules will be respected, these visits should not be a problem. We must insist:

1. That the child not be harassed about any aspect of his faith. Make it clear that negative remarks about fasting, prayer, the child's traditional appearance (i.e. a girl not being allowed to wear pants), the child's interest in monasticism, etc. constitute harassment and will render another visit by the child to this relative improbable.
2. That the child be allowed to fast on fast days. Peanut-butter sandwiches and fruit are perfectly acceptable. It should never be implied that the relative go to great expense or trouble to entertain a fasting child. This is another area where it will stand the child in good stead if he has learned not to complain about food.
3. That the child be allowed to attend Church on Sundays, if possible. This needs to be gauged by the individual parent. If the relative is not Orthodox and lives far from an Orthodox Church, perhaps it would be better for the child to say his prayers in the relative's home. If the relative is Orthodox but considers vacations to be time off of Church, one can afford to be more insistent as the example is a terrible one for the child.

Equip the child with the necessary prayer books, icons, and prayer rope so that he will have no excuse to miss saying prayers and remind him that the relatives will only take his religion as seriously as he does. Do not

encourage him in judging his relatives or treating their beliefs with disdain. The more truly Christian he acts, the more interested in Orthodoxy they will be.

In Conclusion

There are no guarantees that applying any of the above suggestions will result in our children remaining in the Orthodox Church into adulthood. This is a sad fact but one which must be faced. We live in difficult times and our children face myriad temptations. We cannot ultimately force Orthodoxy upon them. They must choose it for themselves. We are, however, accountable for what kind of teachings they receive during their formative years. If we have done our job, the chances are greater that they will remain Orthodox or, if they leave the Church, that they will come back. They will not come back because they like us so much or because we filled every minute of their childhood with fun. They will come back because their hard experience in the world will teach them some respect for our strictness and because we told them the truth even when it hurt. There can be no other definition of love for a Christian than a sincere desire for someone's salvation. The love we bear our children must be according to that definition at the expense of any other which the world may try to impose upon us.

Is it remarkable that there are so few who are being saved among those who have led a bad youth? This example more clearly than anything else indicates in what great danger is a person who has not received good rules in his youth and has not beforehand dedicated himself to God.

What good fortune therefore it is to receive a good, truly Christian upbringing, to enter with it into the years of youth, and then in the same spirit to enter into the years of adulthood. (Ibid, p. 71.)

This monograph was originally published by the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies.

Youth, Values, and Inquiry

by Fr. J. Allen

The first requirement, almost a pre-requisite, for teaching teens or youth at any age, is a knowledge of their situation. One must know how a young person thinks and reacts in his world.

What is his situation? We must remember that these young people are not yet adults and are, yet, no longer children. They fall somewhere between. This awkward position creates a great psychological and spiritual strain; it is awkward because they are not really sure of where they are or in which world they belong. There have been many new books, in fact, which are devoted to just this area. The one that comes immediately to mind is *The Waiting Game* by Roy Fairchild, which is presently being reviewed by the O.C.E.C. and which shows, at once, how teens must keep this balance, and yet how to keep the balance is itself the problem.

If we can quickly scan the interests of youth during these years of dilemma, we see a strong emphasis on dating, sex, peer relationships- the whole question of priorities or even more, questions of tomorrow. Who will I marry? Who will be my mate? How will I live my life? And they are not protected from pressure to make such decisions. In sixth and seventh grades they are already being asked: What do you want to be? Decide now so that we can map your course of study. This is the pressure of American society! A younger child might answer in a rather light way — "... a fireman, a policeman" — but at this age it is already a very serious question. And then we have the question of drugs and the whole area of intense social interests; the war, racism, the rape of the environment. We must also remember that this is the very first generation that has never known a time when world annihilation was not possible. We talk about wars, World War II, the War of wars, and yet they were somehow fought "over there" — not here, and therefore not really present, at least, as a threat of annihilation. Now we live in the age of the atomic weapon — the push of the button, the nod of the head; the distance between the enemy and myself is a distance which allows me to escape having to look at the blood that flows from my enemy. I do not mean that one stops for the moment and consciously says, "Isn't it terrible. I can be wiped out tomorrow!"

This may indeed happen, but I am suggesting that it is more of an undercurrent of thought, something that lurks in the deep part of the conscious mind, or maybe even in the unconscious. Whatever the case may be, it is real and present. It touches their lives in a multidimensional way. Every problem that they face can be subsumed under this ever-present yet discreet condition.

Now, considering all this, i.e. their situation, their world, their reaction to all these stimuli, our greatest challenge, as the Church, is to teach values. What is involved when one asks how to teach values? How does one begin? I think so many times we start from the positive point of view. I realize that modern educational psychology says we should begin in a positive way; perhaps in this case, considering the great "humanitarian" trends of today, we can begin from the opposite approach. I am opting here for an approach that may even begin in a negative way. I do not mean that we should return to our churches and dictate, "Don't do this." or "Don't do that." Rather, my use of the word "negative" refers to the use of the concept of sin as a beginning point. Strange as that may sound, it makes sense. Our young people have an idea of what love is. I think they also know what life is. Although they may not have the maturity to see all the ramifications involved, their ideas of these "positive" qualities may be even truer than our own. First of all, if our preaching as priests and your teaching as teachers is not loaded with life and love, it will surely be ineffective. This is the fundamental concept of the Christian life.

But what if we indeed begin by teaching the concept of sin? I think it is very important that we realize that we cannot begin to teach the concept of sin from a point of view of law; i.e. that sin is only the breaking of a law. Instead, sin must be taught as the gradual breakdown of a relationship; a breakdown, an alienation, a separation, a real "split" between God and man, between man and man. Of course, this is the whole story of Adam, the biblical history of the "breakdown" in humanity that occurs when man decides to separate himself; "thus sin

entered the world," as St. Paul tells us. I am sure that this is where we should be going if we begin with sin as a concept.

Now, if sin is this disturbance, this breakdown, its main focus is not on law, is not on "guilt"; we cannot use guilt as a threat, as a way of telling them to avoid sin; it will not work. The Church, in fact, more often than not, says the ways things should be done and does not preface its teachings with "You should not ..." She says, "Let us love one another ..." or "Let us stand aright ..." She speaks always with these "should" words; "Let us ..." She has, therefore, this natural inclination away from the use of guilt based upon some law, and instead emphasizes value based on "other." The disturbance is precisely between me and an "other"; just the opposite of "Let us love one another." That "other" may be God or may be man. The other may be the world, or rather, the loving of the world in order not to be imprisoned by it, in order to care for it, to make it God's world. We are obligated to teach this, Martin Buber knew this when he spoke of his "I and Thou." But the Church knew long ago, that if we speak about any law, it is the law of love for an "other." She emphasizes this before any law. "Let us love one another."

Now we see immediately the concept around which all values are centered: the Image Deo, the Image of God, which every man has and for which he deserves our care. Sin is the neglect of that image. This is why Christ said. "If you say you love me and not your brother, you are a liar!" Teens can understand this. They will react first to this before any law based on guilt.

The whole point is this: if we are speaking about law, we are speaking about a static thing. Laws are fixed. They are "don'ts." If we are speaking about love, we are speaking about a dynamic. Now, if sin is based upon law, then our understanding of love is static. But, if sin is based upon the breakdown of love, that love is understood as a working and dynamic relationship. Consequently, if one teaches value by guilt or law, there is no chance for love to work: no forgiveness, no change, no growth. Values established on love allows us all this. It gives to teens a tangibility, an action to be taken. Love means a love with "skin on it." Very often we quote things which speak about love "in general." For example, "God is love." But, although this is true, who understands it? It is a most difficult concept for teens to grasp. But love with "skin on it" is what the Apostles preached. This they can relate to. This exactness and specificity is what the Church means when she says, "Let us love one another that with one accord we may confess." And then the Creed: "I believe ..." How important this exactness is! We are not speaking about love "in general"! Before we even say what we "believe," before we even speak of the "unity of faith" we must love with this exactness—an exactness that says "one another." One can see how the Liturgy speaks! We cannot afford to miss this liturgical speaking.

The Agents of Value — Image

We must also be aware of the "agents" which are always in the air and always shaping the values of youth. Our youth, needless to say, are bombarded with agents which press upon them, which give to them what psychologists call their "self-image."

If we speak about agents, we must begin with television. Television dictates fashion, dictates bias, dictates the entire concept of the contemporary "self." Those involved in teaching value concepts to young people must simply be aware of the images that are in front of their students' eyes. Changes in the images of television, as this great medium, should guide changes in our teaching approach.

For an example of how the television image has changed, let us look at the change in popularity of particular types of shows. On top of the popularity list for a while, was the "Dragnet" type of show: Joe Friday, legal, the code book type, the bad guy loses out. But now it's the "Mannix" type: not establishment, but moral: the bad guy still loses out. Now somebody can exist outside the law and still be moral. This is the new moral image! And the signs of it are all around. This takes us exactly back to the original point: don't tell them to be good because the law says so. First of all you cannot tell them that because they know that there are laws which are simply no good. Abortion, number one, based on American-British jurisprudence, they are told, is acceptable just because the law

allows it. We should be happy that they find their criteria not in the law alone, but rather from a "sense" of what is moral.

Sociologists have pointed out that television has entered four major stages. These stages have had a great effect on our "self-concept." They speak in terms of a "white wasp" stage; this is the Hopalong Cassidy image. All white was good-black was bad. Secondly, a "stereotype" stage; Amos and Andy best describes this-drinking beer and smoking cigars on the front porch. One belonged in a particular societal role. The third stage is similar to the second; the "regulation" stage-the doctor, the lawyer-Ben Casey, the hospital was the most romantic place to be. The fourth stage, which we are in today, is the "respect" stage-the Mannix type, of which I made mention. One can see how television has evolved and how the "self-concept" has, in a like manner, evolved. Who knows what is next?

We have not said anything in terms of what is good or bad in these agents, the television types. But one that seems to be a danger is the emergence of the newest popular type: the group hero. What is popular today? The Mod Squad or Mission Impossible or The Doctors, etc. ... Here one sees the group. It used to be the individual hero, 007, or Cheyenne, the one that gave a certain concept of individuality.

This concept of individuality is missing today, and I am afraid that it is dangerous-even in the Church. I'm not speaking now in terms of community; I'm speaking in terms of collectivity — the concept of doing things as the group does them, regardless of what that "doing" involves. "All the kids are smoking pot, so I smoke pot." etc. This is what everyone is doing. This is what the "mob" is doing-and we all know the danger of a mob psychology. One belongs to a collective out of need only-need which very often removes any concept of oneself. But in community — in communion-one belongs out of need and love which never removes the concept of self. In the Church, one can be at once his "self" and part of the greater whole; "Let us commend ourselves and each other ..."

The point is that the contemporary image is a horizontal one — no one is to stand out. But there is a vertical image also, one which is a call to individuality. Remember, it used to be that television spoke to this need for individuality in the Cheyenne type. The appeal to "group action" does not have to be bad, but can be a potential danger when it does not allow for action as well.

There are also agents, right in the Church, which we may use to emphasize this need for individuality. It is unfortunate that we often neglect these agents which can combat the negative influences, such as this contemporary lack of individuality. First of all, iconography is an ever present form. Notice the icon of the Theotokos. The idea of individuality, of the Divine Spark, the Image Deo, as being within man is found in this solitary Byzantine figure. She answered the call, the voice from within, the vocatio, the vocation with which she was presented. She had to be an individual in terms of her society. That voice from within is the Divine Spark of God. In a Byzantine icon there is no outside source of light. There are no shadows;; shadows are present only if there is an outside source of light. The light within, that which makes a person an individual is here emphasized. That may be why the halo around the Byzantine icon is never a saucer-shaped halo standing above the figure, but shaped in such a way as to express this "inner light." The Byzantine halo is connected to the body to emphasize this teaching. A Western picture, unlike the icon, has the light coming from without. There are shadows. There are many figures, rocks, stones, trees, etc. Unfortunately, we who are adjusted to Western art, have often missed the value of this solo Byzantine figure which emphasizes that which is given and planted in man at creation: the image of God. It is that image which gives us our "person," our individuality. We should not miss this agent.

Another agent is found right within the words of the Liturgy. We are constantly using the plural, i.e. the words "we" and "us." We say, "Let us pray to the Lord," or "Let us lift up our hearts." We should never forget this; it expresses the whole idea of fellowship. But we must never forget that the Liturgy expresses a sense of individuality within that fellowship. We say, "Pistevo," "I believe." "I" as a responsible person; "I" as an individual, who has received ordination by the laying on of hands at Baptism, who has been Chrismated as a person, as an individual, now state what I believe.

The point is that we must be able to find ways and agents which can tell our teens that they can step out from the negative and collective goals of their world. If they do not know this they will accept that one study showed to be the typical American societal goals. They may be good, but they have little with which to satisfy the soul: success, prestige, money, power and security. Not that these are unimportant or invaluable; we are speaking now of priorities. Christ said: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. How important that word "first" is!

Ideas for Methodology

I think that we can turn our attention now to methodology. We cannot be all-inclusive here, but some ideas can be discussed.

Up until now there has been a "gap" between methods used in our public schools and those used in our Church schools. I am speaking now of the value of Inquiry. Very few of us, up until now, have tried to use or even turned our attention to this method of inquiry as a teaching method. We, more often than not, "talk at" students. And usually our talking at them is done in the context of reading and discussing. Both of these learning sources, i.e. reading and discussing, are valuable, but they are no longer enough. We ask questions such as: What is this or that? Yet, we can never forget that exciting learning, excited learning, begins with inquiry. And the whole Christian experience is exciting; beginning with the Liturgy and with the life of man; beginning with the concept that there is something wrong with the world, and that we as Christians cannot allow that "wrongness," which we call separation, to decay our souls. Excited learning means to inquire into that nature of reality. I'm not saying that we should not proclaim; we must proclaim as the Church. But inquiry is the most natural way to learn. A young child uncovers, touches, sometimes breaks things, but in doing so, he inquires. That which he discovers is more valuable than anything that can be told to him, for he discovers the reality of his world. The point is his: that if we as the Church, really believe in the reality of what we teach, we will not be afraid or insecure to allow our students to inquire. We talk about love or agape. We pray for the world or for the sick and the suffering, but what about visiting the old age home or the orphanage? Then we would be inquiring into the reality of those things for which we are praying.

There are many ways in which to work inquiry into our curriculum, but it takes imagination and effort. To begin with, just listen to the word of the Liturgy. They are pregnant with the possibilities for inquiring into the world.

Inquiry implies a number of skills. Some of them are: 1) observing, 2) analyzing, 3) inferring, 4) hypothesizing and 5) reaching conclusions or generalizing. Look at each of these skills. How can we incorporate them? Every lesson should include these basics to make it a lasting one.

Dr. Theodore Kaltsounis has published a list for using inquiry as a method. The article is entitled, "Swing Toward Decision Making" in *The Instructor* (April, 1971). Ask yourself the following group of questions. I've chosen those that seem to fit the O.C.E.C. curriculum best. The answers to all of the questions should be positive, if we are using inquiry as a method. This is a test for teachers to check themselves as to their use of inquiry:

What is most important is that values, which is where we began this discussion, are to be internalized so that they affect every situation. Inquiry, in turn, is the best way to such internalization. Our efforts must not only be placed upon specific values, but also upon the value process. We teach values in everything that we do and say, either explicitly or implicitly. In fact, many times our implicit teachings (those gleaned by our students from examples we set for them through our own behavior and attitudes) are the most effective.

We must never forget, in addition, that the Christian life is an on-going process, guided by the attitudes and values we hold — a life always developing and growing. Youth, values, inquiry: the people, the task, the method. This is a great challenge, but the reward belongs in the most gratifying category. For every student who, guided by a process of inquiry into the reality of a Christian life, who through examination of his own values and attitudes as

they govern this life, decides to live a Christian life in its fullest sense — as an individual and as one of many fellow men in communion with God, this can only be one more giant step taken toward righting what is wrong with the world — toward making it more like what God's world should be.

1. Do you believe that students can learn by themselves and from each other? Do you guide them in this direction?
2. Is your classroom full of items that tend to excite students and arouse their curiosity to the point that they are anxious about learning?
3. Does the learning environment that you have set for your students extend beyond the limits of the classroom and into the outside world?
4. Does your teaching show that you are aware of differences in students? Do you provide a variety of avenues—reading, audio-visual, role-playing, outside experiences, etc. ..., for reaching the same objective?
5. Do you confront the students with, or assist them to ask, questions that go beyond repeating what they have read or seen? Are they stimulated to analyze, explain, and evaluate situations? Do you provide a variety of opportunities for them to apply what they are learning?
6. Do you allow students to suggest solutions to particular social problems and important issues that have not been resolved?

*From Word Magazine Publication of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
January/February 1972 pp. 7-10*