

142 07/15/02 Teach children to pray and seek God's guiding

This week concludes a series on helping your child choose a career. I have addressed the importance of career choices, how God calls people, the importance of balancing one's gifts with other skills and the responsibility that comes with gifts. I want to address some concrete ways to discover one's gifts when they do not seem obvious.

My first recommendation is to teach your child to pray and read God's Word as he seeks to discover his gifts and God's will for his life. From a very early age, teach your child to open his Bible to look for answers to his questions. When he is a teen, it will be natural for him to seek God's will as he makes decisions about his life.

There are additional ways that a parent can help a child discover his gifts. When you see that your child does something exceptionally well, talk to him about related jobs. Take him places where he can see people using those skills. If you notice, for instance, that your son has exceptional understanding of how things work, help him explore careers where that skill would be useful: robotics, electronics, mechanics and fiber optics. Do that in the library, on the internet, at universities and in the field. Most people are happy to talk about their careers with a young person.

With your child, become a student of careers. Talk about what people do on their jobs as you go around town. As your child becomes older, explore college catalogs. You will learn about careers by course descriptions and job placement information. Develop the habit of asking people about their jobs whether it is the phlebotomist who draws your blood in the lab or the buyer for the local department store where you shop. There is an abundance of career information around you in your everyday life.

Finally, if your child is still confused and nearing high school graduation, consider some career testing and counseling. Many colleges and universities offer that service to potential students at no charge. A word of caution about testing is that, ultimately, your child must listen to his own heart as he prayerful considers the test results. Testing should be considered only a starting point.

My blessings on you and your child as together you discover his gifts and God's plan for his life.

