

486 02/16/09 A conversation about the economy

Last week, I suggested that we teach our children to recognize the difference between what they want and what they need. This is a useful lesson that every child should learn no matter what the economic climate at the time. However, it is especially important if we want to help our children endure what might be very lean times in the days ahead.

Our children are very aware of what is going on in our country's economy. If they do not listen to the six o'clock news at home, they will hear a somewhat distorted version of it from their peers at school. Many children will be worried by what they are hearing.

Even if your family has not faced unemployment or reduced income from a business, it is still a good time to have a family conference about the economy in general and the family's planned response to what might lie ahead.

Gather the family together and tell them what is happening and how you (the parents) are planning to face the challenges. You might say something like, "As you've probably been hearing, there are financial troubles in our country. That means that some people are losing jobs or businesses are not doing well. Right now we still have our jobs. However, we have talked about what is going on and have decided that we are going to cut back our spending some so we can save a little more money. That will do two things. It will give us a chance to learn to live frugally. It will also let us put away some extra money in case we lose some of our income.

"We want you to know that we're going to be okay. God has promised that he will care for us, and we believe that promise. Jesus told us that God even takes care of the birds of the air. And, we are more valuable to him than the birds. We need not worry about what we will eat or drink or what we will wear. (Matthew 6:25-34)

"So, as our family tries to spend less this year, remember that that does not mean that we're out of money. It just means that we are trying to be careful stewards of the money God has entrusted to us."