



**MU Australia**  
Part of the World Wide Mothers' Union



## Good Parenting and Grand Parenting

We are all concerned that our children should be healthy, have sound marriages and get good jobs but sometimes we neglect the most important thing of all - teaching them how to know our Lord, Jesus. The great thing about being a grandparent is that you get a second chance to talk to your family about God. Families were so important in God's plan that he set them at the very centre of his covenant with Israel. Of course, to be really effective persuaders, parents had to be constantly reminding themselves what God had done for them and what God would continue to do.

Copyright Judith Nichols  
MU Australia

## 1. Introducing a good granny and a really scary granny.

### Read 2 Kings 11:1-3

- § Athaliah was the daughter of the notorious Jezebel. She had married into the royal family of Judah. She, like her mother, had no allegiance to the *God* of Israel
- § Share your recollection of your grandmother? What is a bad grandmother?
- § What do you think motivated Athaliah?
- § What do you think motivated her stepdaughter Jehosheba, Joash' s aunt?
- § You can read to the end to find out the happy outcome for Joash (but not for Athaliah.)

### Now read 2 Timothy 1:3; 3:14-16.

Timothy, the protege of the apostle Paul. was the product of a marriage between a Jewish woman and a Greek father.

- § Who were the women involved in his godly upbringing?
- § Look at both passages. What did these women do for Timothy and what was the outcome?
- § Some people are so worried about "cramming religion down their throats" that they hold off speaking about their faith to their children. To what extent does this passage provide a corrective to this view?
- § Do you think the kind of religion that children were taught might be the problem? Discuss.
- § What is so important about the Scriptures in this passage?
- § What lessons are there for grandparents to learn here?
- § How can we go about providing children with the Scriptures?
- § What problems may be faced and how can they be overcome?

## 2. How and what are children to be taught?

### Read Deuteronomy 6:7-10

Israel took these words literally and bound the word of God to the forehead. This was the easy way out.

- If *God's word* is to permeate every aspect of our lives how can we engage with our children and grandchildren? Do you ever read and discuss what they are reading or listen to their music (as opposed to condemning it outright)? E.g. The music that young males listen to is often full of violence and despair.
- How can we point to the Creator as we are enjoying his Creation with our families?
- "The greatest witness to children and young people is a life lived entirely in accordance with what is professed. We need to know what we believe so we can talk about it then we need to live it out in our lives." Discuss this.
- What are some steps we can take so that children don't just see our faith in terms of attending church ceremonies

### Read Deuteronomy 6:20-25

- "What is the meaning of ..." suggests that children were regularly exposed to teaching from God's word in their homes. How can we encourage this?

Note that this needs to be planned and prioritized.

- How might you do this with your grandchildren?
- Children should feel secure and free to ask questions. What else might you do to make times of Bible reading and prayer together, warm and special?

### Deuteronomy 29:29

- What do you think this means?
- What are the things that are revealed?
- How can we access them?
- When we recognize that we have been brought into a relationship with God through Jesus' death on the cross we know certain things about which we can be confident. Can you suggest some?
- One of the "things revealed" is 1 Peter 3:18. We can be very sure of this. How can we pass it on?

### 3. Public worship

a) **In the Old Testament Read Deut 31:12** - In Israel there was also a communal context for the teaching of God's word. Children were to be brought to a public hearing of God's law at the Feast of Booths in the Year of Release. The liturgy and rote learning formed an important part of the continuum of learning from one generation to the next e.g. in Deuteronomy 31:19 they were told to learn the Song of Moses as a witness between them and God.

b) **In the New Testament** - In the New Testament Christians were to assemble together to sing, have fellowship with one another, to hear God's Word and to celebrate the Lords supper.

- Little children love rote learning and repetition. Teaching them texts and songs can be very helpful. Look at the article in *MiaMia* for December 2003 on "Blended Families " for some helpful suggestions on books, videos and topes for children. These are useful as an occasional present for children or for you to keep in your home for visitors.
- Have a look at a Colin Buchanan video in an MU gathering then pass it round the group so people can show it to their grand-children. Teach some of the songs on that video. An excellent new one is the *Baa Baa Do Baa Baa* version
- How can you make church more interesting for visiting families and for your own family? E.g. Explain what is going on. Show them how to use the Prayer Book. MU Publication has a good leaflet from Mary Sumner House on making worship more interesting for children.
- Provide activities for them if they become bored. (But not noisy toys)

### 4. The Families of the New Covenant.

#### Read Luke 8:19-21

What do you think is the point of this passage? Jesus warned his followers about making an idol of families.

When we become sons and daughters of God we become member of a universal family. Even Jesus biological family had no special place in his kingdom.

- Yet we have also seen that how we live as families is important to God. The Gospel spread through households. The early church met in the homes of believers. Go back and look at the words of 2 Timothy 1:3; 3:14-16. Why is God's word so important?
- As in the Old Testament so in the New the direction is for families to teach their children about the saving power of God and to lead by word and example. How can we do this better?