

Childhood Fears

by Traci Pedone and Susan Ligon

Fear and anxiety lower your child's confidence and self-esteem if he doesn't know how to overcome them.

Set the stage for him to enjoy a freer, more fulfilling life.

- Increase your child's understanding of how these unwelcome fears can keep him from enjoying life. Common foes include fear of the dark and separation anxiety.
- Give him strategies for defeating them. Specifically:
 1. Communicate and pray with him about his phobias.
 2. Evaluate the atmosphere in your household. Determine whether you are contributing to your children's anxieties by living at a hectic pace or allowing a high level of stress at home.
 2. Regardless of the root of our children's fears, it is crucial that we validate their concerns. When a child knows he has his parents on his team — and knows he is taken seriously — he has more confidence to combat his fears.

Ways to Communicate

All of us have fears, many of which are centered on new experiences. As adults, we've developed coping mechanisms to aid us in dealing with fears and concerns. For our children, the world is full of new experiences. How can we help them over these hurdles?

Pray — Be sure to ask for God's help and intervention in your child's heart. Faith is the source of profound courage and peace.

Be There — Sometimes it's important to say very little and just be present. Hugs are worth a thousand words.

Listen — Have you truly "heard" what your child is trying to communicate? Doing so may save him a great deal of tears and frustration. Children sometimes have a hard time identifying their fears or nervousness, much less verbalizing them.

Be Honest — Our children need to know that we have fears, too. This will help them feel less isolated and embarrassed. We then can share with them some of the ways we've learned to cope with our anxieties.

Be Observant — Are there contributing factors that may be adding to the fear your child is feeling? Is he hungry, tired or over scheduled? Often a simple snack or nap works wonders.

Children are a gift from the Lord, they are a reward from Him.

Psalms 127:3