



April 2014  
Volume 87 Number 4

## From the Clergy Associate for Family Ministries

### April Message from the Clergy Associate for Family Ministries

Recently I stumbled across the following, which resonates with conversations we have engaged in recent meetings of the St. Elizabeth's Moms Group. I hope you will enjoy this as I did.

*A Child's Ten Commandments to Parents*  
by Dr. Kevin Leman<sup>1</sup>

1. My hands are small; please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture, or throw a ball. My legs are short; please slow down so that I can keep up with you.
2. My eyes have not seen the world as your have; please let me explore safely: don't restrict me unnecessarily.
3. Housework will always be there. I'm only little for a short time-please take time to explain things to me about this wonderful world, and do so willingly.
4. My feelings are tender; please be sensitive to my needs; don't nag me all day long. (You wouldn't want to be nagged for your inquisitiveness.) Treat me as you would want to be treated.
5. I am a special gift from God; please treasure me as God intended you to do, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to live by, and disciplining me in a loving manner.
6. I need your encouragement, but not your praise, to grow. Please go easy on the criticism; remember, you can criticize the things I do without criticizing me.
7. Please give me the freedom to make decisions concerning myself. Permit me to fail, so that I can learn from my mistakes. Then someday I'll be prepared to make the kind of decisions life requires of me.
8. Please don't do things over for me. Somehow that makes me feel that my efforts didn't quite measure up to your expectations. I know it's hard, but please don't try to compare me

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<sup>1</sup> They are found in Dr. Kevin Leman's books: **Parenthood Without Hassles, Well Almost**, published in 1979 by Harvest House Publishers and **First-Time Mom**, published in 2004 by Tyndale.

with my brother or sister.

9. Please don't be afraid to leave for a weekend together. Kids need vacations from their parents, just as parents need vacations from kids. Besides, it's a great way to show us kids that your marriage is very special.
10. Please take me to Sunday school and church regularly, setting a good example for me to follow. I enjoy learning more about God.

Leman's words echo the theme I discussed last month about teaching our children to shine with the light of God by our own example. Our children have great lessons to teach us when we are open to the possibility. We encounter God in moments when we make ourselves available to our children (not to mention others around us) and recognize the light of God that shines from within. Parenting truly is a spiritual discipline. What a blessing!

Faithfully,  
Cathy Quinn  
*Clergy Associate for Family Ministries*