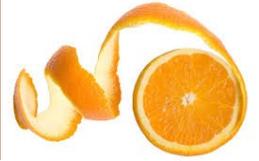


THE ORANGE PEEL



Parenting Class at OCC



If you didn't get in on the interactive parenting class at Orchard this time around then here's a sampler from this January's series.

Leaders led discussions on such topics such as the parent-centered (*not* child-centered) household, the God-given authority parents possess, and how to help children develop Biblical character traits.

Comments from parents included the following ideas and dilemmas:

- I'm tired of being afraid of how my children will react to discipline, so now I act (rather than just threaten) on the consequences I've set forth.
- Since everyone creates the mess (say, in the bathroom), everyone must clean it. Kids are adults in training, and they will soon realize that they are not just folding towels, but that they are adults in training.

Continued on p. 2

Fear Not

Jesus said of his visit on earth, "Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light..." (John 12:35-36)

I went for a walk on a gloomy day and found some of this enlightenment while placing OCC Christmas event hangers on people's doors. I chose a street of modest homes where a variety of attitudes were expressed through the way people chose to decorate, or not decorate, their homes for Christmas. On the "sunny" side, there were sweet little neighborly competitions involving the number of blowup snowmen and wire deer that could be squeezed on to a small front lawn. One home had oodles of toy and dolls carefully placed around the lawn: dolls in trees, on tables, and sitting like friends together on benches. There were three homes in a row with perfectly tended and identically landscaped lawns as though the neighbors conspired to bring uniformity and order to the street. Further along my walk, I was surprised that even the most economically strapped homes (you could tell this from lapsed landscaping care, broken toys in the yard) put an effort out to join their neighbors with extension cords and lights. There was an unfenced lawn that was adorned by three of the most prolific orange trees I've ever seen, oranges like brilliant suns.

Then there was the darker side of the neighborhood. These houses did not make the cut as contenders for the OCC hangers as some sat eerily vacant. One home paradoxically had Christmas lights, yet several "No Soliciting" signs and a mat that said "Go away." Four homes in a row threatened "Beware of dog!" Another home had a thin, straggly-haired man on his cell phone, loudly cursing someone as his girlfriend slunk away miserably. These places exuded fear and misery. (cont. p. 2)

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Stacy Lauzon makes quilts, mostly for kids, out of used jeans or pants. If anyone has any pants they want to discard, bring them to church and she will take them.

“Parents” cont.

- Make them work! The realization that this is just part of life creates an internal happiness.
- Some parents don’t want to suffer through the messy learning process of teaching their children how to do chores since it’s so quick and easy to do it themselves. But it pays off big time in the long run!

Parents: Camping Announcement

Looking for a fun getaway destination and a way to commune with others?

How about reserving a camping site at Dos Picos for Memorial Day weekend? The sooner the better as there are only 15 reserved sites.

Contact Laurie Shapiro:

“Fear Not” cont.

Goldenrod Street seemed a microcosm of our world, and even our inner struggle. Some people’s homes reflected fear and others reflected a sense of empowerment, putting “trust in the light” as each family decided to celebrate in their own way. “Take an orange if you need one — we have plenty,” the house with the small orchard seemed to say.

But it’s hard to put your trust in the light when you are fearful; one often wants to hide from the world and abide in anxiety. It seems to me that we must consciously fight the temptation to hide even if it means we get to avoid possible political, religious, and property disagreements, avoid making promises we may not keep. This year I found myself hiding out from some of my neighbors from whom I’ve grown apart (I had plenty of excuses for it.) But after my walk down Goldenrod Street, I decided that Christmas Eve was the time to liberate myself from this fear by bringing cookies to the very neighbors I’ve grown apart from. In one case my neighbors insisted I come in and visit and the stories we shared and the laughs we had were worth every beaten egg and minced walnut. Unbeknownst to me, my daughter was having a similar experience. She brought cookies to a neighbor who burst into tears and said “I’ve lived here thirty years, and no one’s ever done this for me.”

So I guess instead of embracing the darkness (I mean, who ever really *wants* to give up the “security” of power and control?), we must decide daily to let go and be “the light that shines in the darkness,” as instructed in John 1:5. It’s worth the solace you get in the end, even if it takes some extra effort.



Orchard Community Church collected over 100 sweaters for needy teenagers.

Way to go!