

Involving Children in the Pro-Life Cause

by Jim Tuttle

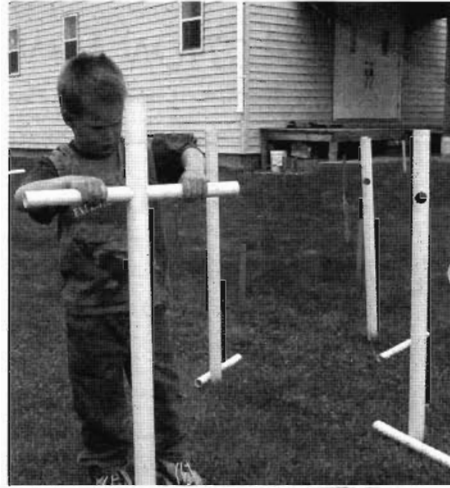
When is the best time to win the mind and heart of another person to the pro-life position? Without question, it is when they are very young. It is when they first begin to think cognitively and even before that. The younger the better. But how best do we teach them?

There are many ways to influence youth, but I want to let you know about one way that I think is powerful. A minister once told me that a key principle in training up the next generation can be illustrated by a baseball diamond. The goal is to bring our children "home," and "home" is the place in life that they love and serve Christ. To get them to first base, we instruct them. To get them to second base, we involve them. To get them to third base, we inspire them. And finally, to get them home, we invest them. (By investment we mean we guide them into that vocation or position in life that God has for them in which to serve.)

There is much wisdom in this simple word picture. Instruction on the pro-life issue must begin early and so also must involvement in the pro-life issue. Involvement is critical to training up the next generation of pro-life advocates. Involvement is essential to getting to the next "base" of inspiration. Ultimately we will do what we become inspired to do, and we become inspired, not by intellectual abstractions, but by life's experiences.

The Cemetery of the Innocents is an excellent way to get kids involved in the pro-life cause. It was exciting to see one young fellow in Floodwood, Minn. enthusiastically trying to place the crosses outside Floodwood Baptist Church. I really do not know much about this young man, yet I cannot help but think that he will remember this day for quite some time. He had a lot of questions. What a great teaching opportunity. In and of itself, putting up the crosses isn't going to make him pro-life or cause him to believe in the sanctity of human life. But if, at home, there is already a strong conviction and teaching about the sanctity of life, this experience will help cement that conviction.

The Bible teaches that we should



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instruct our children when we "walk by the way" (Deut. 6:7). What that means is that we need to do things together with our children. And not just any old thing but things that have meaning and import to them. Things that will show them the truth about God and Life. If we are going to win the battle for the sanctity of human life, our best long-term strategy is to win

the next generation. And the only way we will win them is to involve them.

It is important to bring your children to the events that are organized to inform and challenge the culture. We might think that they will not understand or that they might be bored or even that it isn't right to involve our children in political controversy. But what our children really need to see is what we are passionate about, what we really believe. If we get involved ourselves, if we make the effort to take a stand, if we make the effort to show up at a rally or an event and bring them with us, they too will, in the end, come to believe and understand the deeper truths behind the event. And, on the other hand, if we never involve them or ourselves, we will have taught them just as well another message - one, perhaps, that differs from what we might want them to believe.

What a blessing to see this young man working hard to put up the crosses. The next time you have a chance to go to the street, or participate in a rally or prayer vigil, bring a child.

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